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# **Women Face Barriers in Recruitment and Progression**

## **Underrepresentation in the Corporate World**

Women continue to be underrepresented throughout the corporate world, particularly at the top. A new report highlights professionals' and employers' views on the barriers limiting women’s opportunities and the steps businesses are taking to address the gender gap.

## **Study Insights**

PwC conducted a study based on a survey of 328 respondents from 18 countries and 4,792 employees from 70 countries. Among the respondents, 82% were female. The study found that women are less likely to reach higher levels in the corporate hierarchy compared to men:

**· 4% gap** at entry level

**· 13% gap** at managerial level

**· 17% gap** at senior manager/director level

**· 21% gap** at vice president level

**· 26% gap** at senior vice president level

At the C-suite level, this gap becomes even more pronounced.

## **Pipeline and Employment Challenges**

The disparity in representation at the start of the corporate ladder creates a pipeline issue, making it difficult for businesses to retain and promote women. This leads to a greater challenge in attracting and developing talent, as current corporate practices often favor men, leaving women’s potential underutilized.

## **Discrimination in Recruitment**

While there is a small 4% discrepancy at the start of the pipeline, this becomes increasingly skewed toward men at higher levels. The report suggests that discrimination and biases in recruitment and promotion cycles play a role. The study found:

**· 21%** of women, compared to **5%** of men, experienced gender discrimination during recruitment.

**· 19%** of career starters and **22%** of job hunters noted discrimination, with **25%** of job movers reporting the highest levels of perceived discrimination.

At the senior level, **27%** of women believed they had fewer opportunities than men.

## **Regional and Generational Differences**

The perception of gender bias is also influenced by generation and region. Among female millennials, **28%** believed that employers favored male candidates, an increase from 2011. This concern is more prominent in Switzerland (**46%**), Brazil, Ireland, the US (**40%**), and the UK (**38%**).

## **Other Barriers**

In addition to discrimination, other barriers exist, including:

**· 38%** of employers citing a lack of qualified female candidates.

**· 24%** of employers, along with **22%** of male and female respondents, noting that certain industries are not attractive to women.

**· 45%** of women pointing to gender stereotypes in the recruitment process.

**· 42%** of women highlighting concerns over maternity leave.

## **Business Initiatives to Reduce Gender Discrepancy**

Companies are increasingly implementing practices to improve female representation. Key initiatives include:

**· 49%** of businesses training recruitment professionals to focus on inclusive recruitment efforts.

**· 52%** ensuring diversity in interview panels.

**· 40% to 50%** reviewing job descriptions to ensure inclusive language and training interviewers in unconscious bias.

Less common practices include:

· Offering enhanced commission for diverse hires.

· Implementing blind applications (**27%**).

· Leveraging diversity associations to access talent segments (**36%**).

## **Attractive Employer Traits**

When asked about what makes an employer attractive, respondents highlighted:

**· Opportunities for career progression** as the top factor for career starters.

**· Competitive wages and financial benefits** for job hunters, career movers, and returners.

**· Flexible work arrangements and work-life balance**, particularly important for job hunters and returners.

Bob Moritz, Global Chairman of PwC, noted the importance of formal career progression plans to motivate and retain employees, emphasizing the need to access the complete talent pool to remain competitive.

# 

# **Women and Leadership: A Study of Gender and Vision**

## **Leadership Evaluations: The Gender Assumption**

It has been widely assumed that women in business face persistent gender bias, especially when it comes to leadership evaluations. However, a recent study challenges this assumption. Over the past five years, Insead’s executive education program collected thousands of 360-degree leadership assessments. The results, surprisingly, indicate that women, as a group, often outperformed men in many key leadership competencies.

## **Areas of Leadership Strength**

Women demonstrated stronger capabilities in several leadership dimensions compared to their male counterparts:

**· Communication and collaboration**

**· Emotional intelligence**

**· Decision-making**

These strengths point to the evolving role of women in leadership positions, where they are increasingly seen as more empathetic and effective communicators—qualities crucial for leading diverse teams and fostering innovation.

## **The Challenge of Envisioning**

Despite excelling in many areas, the one notable gap where women consistently scored lower than men was in “envisioning.” This refers to the ability to recognize emerging opportunities, trends, and the capability to set a new strategic direction for an organization. The lower scores in envisioning suggest that while women are strong in present-day leadership tasks, they may face challenges in being seen as visionary leaders who can drive long-term change.

## **Barriers to Leadership in Pakistan**

In Pakistan, the challenges women face in leadership roles are compounded by additional social, cultural, and economic factors:

**· Cultural Norms**: Traditional societal expectations and conservative gender roles still play a significant role in limiting women’s participation in leadership, both in the corporate world and in public sectors.

**· Limited Access to Education**: Though there have been efforts to increase female participation in education, particularly in urban areas, many women in rural areas still struggle to access quality education, limiting their upward mobility in professional fields.

**· Glass Ceiling**: While women are making progress in entry-level jobs and mid-management roles, there remains a significant gender gap at the executive and boardroom levels, with few women rising to the top ranks of corporations.

## **Progress and Opportunities for Women in Pakistan**

Despite these challenges, there has been notable progress:

**· Women in Public Sector Leadership**: Pakistan has seen women rise to prominent roles in politics, such as Benazir Bhutto, the first female Prime Minister of a Muslim-majority country, and Asma Jahangir, a leading human rights lawyer. These examples have inspired more women to pursue leadership roles in both the public and private sectors.

**· Entrepreneurship**: The rise of women entrepreneurs in Pakistan is also creating new opportunities. Women-led businesses are gaining traction, particularly in technology, fashion, and social enterprise sectors. Efforts by organizations like the **Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry** and **Karandaaz Pakistan** have focused on mentoring and providin by g financial support to female entrepreneurs.

## **Steps Toward Greater Representation**

In Pakistan, businesses and public institutions are beginning to recognize the importance of gender diversity and leadership:

**· Inclusive Leadership Programs**: Multinational corporations operating in Pakistan are increasingly offering leadership training programs aimed at women, helping to equip them with the skills to take on senior management roles.

**· Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives**: Local companies, especially in sectors like banking, technology, and telecommunications, are beginning to implement more structured diversity and inclusion programs. These include unconscious bias training and flexible work arrangements, aimed at encouraging female participation in leadership.

## **The Road Ahead**

While women continue to make strides in leadership roles globally, the challenge of being recognized as visionary leaders remains. In Pakistan, overcoming societal norms and ensuring equitable access to education and resources are crucial steps in narrowing the leadership gender gap. As more organizations prioritize diversity, the future may see a significant shift in how leadership is defined and who gets to lead.

# 

# **Why Your Employees Are Missing Out on Important Information**

## **The Impact of Poor Internal Communication**

Poor internal communication can negatively impact teamwork, employee engagement, and overall business growth. In this article, we explore the common obstacles that prevent employees from staying informed and provide best practices for improving communication within the workplace.

### **Challenges in Employee Communication**

Unless all your employees are located in the same office building and required to be there every day, you are likely to encounter communication breakdowns. When employees feel uninformed or disconnected from company news, they tend to become disengaged. Two major factors contributing to disengagement include:

· Lack of understanding of the purpose or meaning behind their work.

· Failure to see the big picture driving the company’s mission.

Effective internal communication can help bridge these gaps and increase employee engagement.

### **Key Reasons Employees Miss Out on Important Information**

**Disorganized Communication Channels**Employees often have to deal with multiple communication channels, such as:

o Mobile apps

o Social networking (e.g., company Facebook groups)

o Flyers in break rooms

o Word-of-mouth and in-person meetings

o Chat apps like Skype or Google Hangouts

o Company intranet

When information is scattered across various platforms, it can be confusing for employees to know where to look. This disorganization can result in important messages being missed or ignored.

**2. Distributed Workforce**With the rise of remote work, more employees spend at least part of their time working from home or outside the office. According to a **Business Insider** report, by 2020, 50% of the workforce was expected to work remotely at least some of the time. Additionally, part-time or hourly workers, who may not have a company email address, can also miss out on crucial communications if there isn't a centralized system in place to reach everyone.

**3. Information Overload**Employees receive a large volume of messages every day, and it’s easy to become overwhelmed. For instance, being cc’d on non-essential emails or receiving irrelevant notifications can lead to people skimming or ignoring messages. In 2019, the **Email Statistics Report** predicted that employees would receive an average of 126 emails per day. With so many messages, critical information can easily get lost.

**4. Difficult Access to Information**Some communication platforms may not be user-friendly or easily accessible. If an employee is working remotely with weak internet, they may not be able to access the company intranet. If the communication system isn’t mobile-optimized, employees may only check their messages when they’re at their desktop computers, leading to missed updates.

**Demographic Preferences**The preferred methods of receiving information may differ based on the age group of your workforce. Millennials, for example, may prefer using mobile apps to stay connected, while older employees might stick with email. Failure to consider these preferences can lead to employees not engaging with the company’s communication channels.

## **How to Improve Employee Communication**

One effective solution to tackle these challenges is to implement an internal content hub. A tool like **Haiilo**, which also includes a mobile app, centralizes company news and updates, making it easy for employees to access information from any device.

### **Benefits of an Internal Content Hub:**

**· Centralized Communication**: Instead of disorganized channels, a single platform provides employees with access to all important information at the right time.

**· Accessibility for Remote and Part-Time Workers**: Even employees without a company email can access communications from their desktop or mobile devices.

**· Streamlined Messaging**: Employees can subscribe to specific channels relevant to their roles, reducing information overload and ensuring they receive only pertinent updates.

**· Mobile Optimization**: A mobile app allows employees to easily check messages with a single tap, ensuring they stay informed no matter where they are.

By adopting an internal content hub, you ensure that employees receive the right information at the right time, helping them stay connected and engaged with the company’s mission.

# 

# **Why Gender Equality Matters in Business Success**

## **The Gender Gap and Economic Impact**

According to the World Economic Forum's **Global Gender Gap Report 2020**, North America may not see gender equality for another 151 years. The report highlights how gender parity can significantly influence an economy's ability to thrive. In fact, **McKinsey & Company** found that narrowing the gender gap could add between $12 to $28 trillion to the global GDP. As a society, allowing the gender gap to persist results in substantial economic losses.

## **Recognizing Gender Inequality**

To bridge the gender gap, we must first understand what gender equality looks like in the workplace. Key indicators include:

### **1. Equal Pay**

Wages should not be based on gender (or any other characteristic such as race, age, or sexual orientation). For instance, early in my career, I discovered that I was being paid less than my male counterparts simply because they were perceived to have more financial responsibilities due to having families.

### **2. Equal Treatment**

Women often face exclusion in male-dominated environments. For example, during my tenure as the only woman on a 14-person executive team, crucial decisions were frequently made informally, in spaces like golf courses or during breaks. These spaces were often exclusive to men.

### **3. Equal Representation in Leadership**

Leadership teams and corporate boards should have a balanced representation of men and women. Many women are stuck in lower-level positions due to a phenomenon known as the **"broken rung,"** where women are not promoted to managerial roles, hindering their progression to senior leadership.

### **4. Equal Access to Career-Building Opportunities**

Historically, many mentoring and career progression programs have excluded women based on outdated assumptions, such as women leaving their jobs after starting families. As a result, women often sought opportunities elsewhere where their professional growth was prioritized.

### **5. Benefits That Reflect Employees' Needs**

Offering flexible work schedules, paid time off, and options for remote work allows employees to balance their personal responsibilities, such as child or elder care, without sacrificing their careers.

## **The Business Impact of Gender Equality**

Businesses and nonprofits that actively support gender equality tend to make better business decisions, leading to more profitability. Studies show that diverse teams make better decisions 87% of the time, whereas less diverse teams are more prone to making poor choices. McKinsey & Company analyzed over 1,000 companies and found that those with greater diversity in their executive teams tend to see higher profits and long-term value.

Moreover, companies with low diversity rates are **29% more likely to experience financial underperformance**. In other words, a lack of gender and racial diversity can harm a company's bottom line.

## **Real-World Examples of Gender Equality in Action**

When women are given opportunities for growth, they can significantly contribute to a company's success. For example, as the only woman on senior staff, I initiated programs that promoted equity and diversity, such as a mentoring program and a diversity leadership council. Within two years, departments led by women became the highest-performing with the lowest turnover rates.

## **Employee Retention and Job Satisfaction**

Companies that prioritize gender diversity tend to attract and retain top talent. Despite an increasing number of companies identifying gender diversity as a priority, many fail to reflect this in their culture and policies, leading to dissatisfaction among employees. McKinsey & Company found that companies with a strong commitment to gender diversity are better at retaining both men and women.

## **How to Close the Gender Gap**

Nonprofits and businesses alike can close the gender gap by making equality a strategic objective. Leaders should foster an environment of open communication where issues like inequality can be discussed and addressed. Boards should also reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

In terms of compensation, salary offers should be based on the role itself, rather than previous earnings, which helps mitigate historical pay inequalities, especially for women.

## **Conclusion**

Closing the gender gap requires action at both the organizational and public policy levels. Organizations like **Lean In**, **McKinsey**, and **Paradigm for Parity** have outlined specific steps businesses can take to drive change. It’s time to unlock the full potential that has been overlooked for centuries and create a more equitable future for all.

# 

# **Why Diversity Programs Fail**

## **Summary**

After Wall Street firms repeatedly had to shell out millions to settle discrimination lawsuits, businesses began to take diversity efforts seriously. However, these efforts have not yielded significant results. Women and minorities continue to face challenges in the workplace despite increased attention and investments in diversity programs.

## **The Historical Context**

Businesses began prioritizing diversity following a series of high-profile lawsuits in the late 1990s and early 2000s. For example, Morgan Stanley paid $54 million, and Smith Barney and Merrill Lynch each paid over $100 million to settle sex discrimination claims. These legal settlements prompted many firms to implement diversity training and other programs. Despite these efforts, equality has not markedly improved, particularly in financial services and other sectors.

## **The Shortcomings of Traditional Diversity Programs**

### **Inadequate Progress in Representation**

Although some progress has been made, such as a slight increase in Hispanic managers and a small rise in the proportion of Black men in management, overall diversity remains limited. For instance, the proportion of Black men in management increased only slightly from 3% to 3.3% from 1985 to 2014. In the tech industry, white men continue to dominate despite calls for greater diversity.

### **The Limitations of Conventional Approaches**

Many diversity programs rely on outdated methods that have proven ineffective or counterproductive. Traditional approaches often include:

**· Diversity Training:** While intended to reduce bias, many diversity training programs fail to produce lasting changes. Studies have shown that the positive effects of such training are short-lived and may even activate bias or provoke backlash.

**· Hiring Tests:** Approximately 40% of companies use mandatory hiring tests to combat bias. However, these tests are often applied selectively or ignored, resulting in continued bias in hiring practices.

**Performance Ratings:** Managers sometimes use performance ratings in biased ways, reinforcing existing disparities rather than addressing them.

## **Moving Beyond Traditional Methods**

### **Effective Alternatives**

Research indicates that companies achieve better results when they adopt more effective strategies:

**· Engaging Managers:** Involving managers in problem-solving and increasing their contact with diverse employees can lead to better outcomes.

**· Promoting Social Accountability:** Encouraging a culture of fairness and accountability can improve diversity outcomes.

**Targeted Recruitment and Mentoring:** Initiatives such as targeted college recruitment, mentoring programs, and self-managed teams have shown to enhance diversity.

### **Case Studies and Evidence**

Studies analyzing data from over 800 U.S. firms reveal that companies that move away from rigid control tactics and focus on engagement and accountability see more positive results in diversity.

## **Conclusion**

The current state of diversity programs demonstrates that traditional methods are insufficient for driving meaningful change. For diversity programs to be successful, companies must adopt more innovative and inclusive approaches that go beyond mere compliance and actively engage all levels of the organization in fostering diversity.

### **Annual Performance Ratings**

**Prevalence and Purpose**

o More than 90% of midsize and large companies use annual performance ratings.

o Ratings aim to ensure fair pay and promotion decisions and provide a litigation shield.

**Problems with Ratings**

o Studies show raters tend to lowball women and minorities.

o Some managers give everyone high marks to avoid hassles or keep promotion options open.

o Ratings don’t boost diversity; there’s no effect on minority managers over five years, and the share of white women in management drops by 4%, on average.

### **Grievance Procedures**

**Objective**

o About half of midsize and large firms have systems for employees to challenge pay, promotion, and termination decisions.

**Challenges**

o Managers may retaliate against or belittle employees who complain.

o 45% of nearly 90,000 discrimination complaints to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in 2015 included charges of retaliation.

o Employees may be discouraged from reporting discrimination, leading to a false sense of no problem within the organization.

o Protective measures like grievance systems can sometimes lead to more biased decisions as people believe policies ensure fairness.

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**Impact of Grievance Systems**

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o Adoption of formal grievance systems often leads to a decline in managerial ranks of white women and all minority groups except Hispanic men, by 3% to 11% over five years.

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**Alternative Approaches**

o Flexible complaint systems with informal mediation might reduce retaliation and promote accountability without public rebuke.

### **Tools for Getting Managers on Board**

**Engagement**

Engaging managers in solving diversity issues can create cognitive dissonance and lead them to become diversity champions.

Participation in college recruitment programs targeting women and minorities can lead to increased representation of these groups in management.

Mentoring helps by addressing biases and offering opportunities for advancement, which enhances the mentor’s belief in the protégé’s merit.

**Mentoring Programs**

Effective mentoring programs boost diversity in managerial ranks and increase representation of underrepresented groups.

### **Contact and Interaction**

**· Impact of Contact**

o Historical experiments show that contact across groups can reduce bias.

o Self-managed teams and cross-training programs increase contact among diverse individuals, leading to more equitable hiring and promotion.

### **The Downside of Diversity Labels**

**· Backlash**

o Mentoring, self-managed teams, and cross-training can increase diversity without triggering backlash.

o These strategies yield positive results compared to mandatory diversity training and legalistic grievance systems.

### **Social Accountability**

**Concept and Impact**

Encouraging social accountability can reduce bias by making decision-makers aware that their actions will be scrutinized.

Transparency in performance ratings and pay raises can diminish racial and gender disparities.

**Task Forces and Diversity Managers**

Corporate diversity task forces and diversity managers promote accountability and drive improvements in representation.

Successful examples include Deloitte’s task force that significantly increased the proportion of female partners and Bank of America Merrill Lynch’s public diversity numbers.

### **Conclusion**

**· Effectiveness of Strategies**

o Traditional strategies to control bias, like mandatory training and legalistic grievance systems, have largely failed to improve diversity.

o Genuine progress in diversity requires strategies that engage managers, promote contact between groups, and foster social accountability without punitive measures.

This structured approach should make it easier to understand and reference the key points from the content.

# **The Root Cause Of Diversity, Equity And Inclusion Burnout, And How To Fight It**

Entrepreneur, Certified Diversity Executive & Biz Strategist using an equity lens to help achieve business outcomes | The Diversity Movemen

Remember that chief diversity officer you hired two years ago? Or maybe you called them your director of culture, chief people officer, or head of supplier diversity. Everyone was so excited when you first brought them on board—eagerly signing up for training, joining employee resource groups (ERGs), and getting involved in company-wide efforts to change.

Flash forward to now. Your diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) budget isn’t as big as it used to be, and learning opportunities are few and far between. Your company ERGs haven’t met in months. Virtually nothing has changed with regard to how you operate and communicate with colleagues on a day-to-day level. It seems like your DEI practitioner—and frankly, half of everyone else in your organization—is burned out, feeling disconnected and tired of hearing the word "diversity."

How did we get here? And perhaps more importantly, how do we get back to a place of being energized for our company’s DEI efforts?

## **What Do the Numbers Tell Us About DEI Burnout?**

A recent survey from Work Vivo found a staggering 98% of human resources professionals have felt burned out at work in the last six months, with almost four in five (78%) open to leaving their jobs. Meanwhile, a majority of workers report a “lack of meaningful progress” on racial equity, despite increased investment in DEI.

DEI leaders are experiencing mass burnout driven by low engagement, low budgets, lackluster support from management, and a general sense of performative activism that can be extremely discouraging.

## **Identify Root Causes to Identify Real Solutions**

In my experience as a certified diversity executive and business growth strategist, there are six main “umbrella causes” of DEI burnout. While these issues may present differently across different organizations, DEI burnout can generally be chalked up to one of the following structural problems:

### **Lack of Resources and Authority**

An effective DEI strategy isn’t free! Leaders need the right resources to implement change. This means allocating appropriate time and money, investing in necessary tools for implementation, and also affording DEI leaders the authority to effect change.

### **Working in a Silo**

Your organization can only hope to operationalize DEI as part of its DNA when all teams are committed to doing the work together. Placing 100% of the responsibility onto DEI employees—and only DEI employees—is unfair and ineffective. It often creates an unreasonable workload for DEI hires.

### **Lack of Community**

DEI practitioners are often facing the same issues as all other employees, including microaggressions, harassment, and discrimination. The difference is that DEI leaders frequently lack a network they can turn to for support. Encourage your diversity leader to connect with a cohort of fellow practitioners for idea sharing and support.

### **Lack of Training**

Some organizations don’t realize that DEI roles require specialized training and a high degree of expertise. You can’t just expect someone to perform well in a DEI role because they are the only multicultural person on your team. Put some real thought into what you need to look for when hiring a DEI leader.

### **A Disconnect Between Values and Operations**

What’s the point in making your leadership team sit through all those diversity courses when women are still being interrupted in meetings and managers are still showing unconscious bias in their treatment of employees? When it comes to DEI burnout, there’s often a missing link between strategy and everyday implementation.

### **Too Much Focus on Optics Over Change**

Social justice movements have fueled a reactive urgency and pressure for DEI initiatives, forcing many diversity leaders to focus on vanity metrics and social media messaging over sustainable, long-term change. This isn’t to say your company can’t engage in public-facing DEI work, but keep in mind how demoralizing DEI work can feel when leaders act more like PR agents than internal changemakers.

## **Re-Energize Your Organization’s DEI Efforts**

It’s never too late to renew your commitment to diversity and inclusion as organization-wide values and reinvest in programs that will benefit your business through greater innovation and stronger bottom lines. Here are my best solutions for stopping DEI burnout in its tracks:

### **Be Proactive, Not Reactive, About Social Justice Issues**

Don’t just wait until an issue makes headlines to start caring about it. Take a look at the current socio-political landscape and decide which hot-button issues your company may need to address.

### **Develop a DEI Strategy That Aligns with Your Corporate Strategy**

Integrate DEI initiatives into your everyday flow of work. Start thinking about DEI from a business growth perspective, rather than as an independent channel of your business. For example, how might unconscious bias be showing up in your promotion process? Looking at things from this perspective will enable you to better operationalize DEI in the day-to-day workflow.

### **Bring the Data (Not the Drama) to Ask C-Suite Leaders for Appropriate Resources**

If you are the DEI leader, come prepared with key talking points, data and metrics, and positive outcomes that align with corporate goals. Develop your executive presence, and build a powerful case to describe what’s in it for them.

### **Facilitate Opportunities for DEI Practitioners to Join a Larger Community**

Gaining a sense of community, as well as valuable training resources, will go a long way in preventing burnout.

## **A Final Note to DEI Leaders**

As important as it is for your company to provide the right support and resources, it is equally important you commit to practicing self-care. DEI is challenging and high-stakes work. You deserve to take a break from it every now and then. Remember, taking care of yourself—and having an employer that takes care of you—is not a luxury. It’s a necessity. Focus on the long-term goals and celebrate short-term wins! You’ll do a better job remembering how important self-care is all along the way.

# 

# **The Five Stages of DEI Maturity**

## **Summary**

Many organizations take significant actions in the realm of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) inspired by what they see other companies doing—such as publicly declaring themselves champions of people of color or implementing ambitious top-down DEI strategies. However, these grand gestures often fail to produce meaningful results if the organization isn't prepared. DEI is not a short-term project, and rushing into large-scale initiatives without a solid foundation can result in failed objectives, leaving minority employees and community members marginalized. Many companies that made pledges in 2020, for example, struggled because they lacked the infrastructure to support new DEI initiatives effectively.

Over 40 years of academic research and practical experience show that companies typically progress through five stages of DEI maturity: Aware, Compliant, Tactical, Integrated, and Sustainable. Understanding which stage a company is in helps focus efforts and improve DEI outcomes.

## **Stage One: Aware**

The journey towards DEI often begins with a trigger such as a lawsuit, investor pressure, or a traumatic event like George Floyd’s murder. This awareness prompts introspection and a desire for change.

Companies in the aware stage are often either long-established firms that have neglected DEI or start-ups focused on survival at the expense of strong human-capital practices. At this stage, companies might make high-minded public statements about their DEI intentions, but real progress requires honest internal dialogue, especially among leadership. Questions to consider include:

**· Why does DEI matter to us personally?** Understanding personal experiences with diversity and discrimination is crucial for building a shared foundation of trust.

**· Where do we want to go?** Setting a clear internal vision for DEI helps in directing efforts. While a comprehensive approach is ideal, initial focus should be on a specific target, whether it's improving employee diversity, community relations, or brand reputation.

For example, Iora Health's co-founder, Alexander Packard, realized the need for a deliberate DEI approach after George Floyd's murder. Conversations with Black leaders revealed gaps in support for minority employees. This led to a clearer DEI vision centered on serving a diverse patient population and supporting team members.

## **Stage Two: Compliant**

At this stage, companies meet industry and government requirements for diversity, such as EEOC laws in the U.S. or settlement terms from DEI-related lawsuits. Compliance often focuses on meeting external standards rather than internal culture.

About a third of companies are in this phase, where compliance can drive meaningful changes due to its concrete goals. However, many remain stuck here, lacking deeper cultural shifts and genuine inclusivity. Companies at this stage might:

**· Set goals beyond compliance targets.** Use compliance requirements as a springboard for broader DEI efforts.

**· Align DEI with organizational goals.** Demonstrate how DEI can help meet business objectives, even as you maintain a focus on the ethical importance of respect and opportunity.

Denny’s, for example, surpassed the terms of its consent decree by enhancing its diversity training and hiring practices. This commitment extended beyond the initial settlement, leading to significant cultural improvements and a positive reputation shift.

## **Stage Three: Tactical**

Organizations in the tactical stage engage in DEI initiatives that are often bottom-up, driven by employee resource groups (ERGs) and grassroots efforts. Although these companies may have some top-down strategy, DEI efforts tend to be inconsistent across the organization.

At this stage, companies might:

**· Define a comprehensive DEI strategy.** Develop an overarching plan that unifies all DEI efforts and connects them with short- and long-term goals.

**· Standardize practices.** Learn from departments that have made progress and replicate successful policies across the organization.

**· Connect DEI work across all levels.** Establish a feedback loop between employees and leaders to ensure alignment and cultural improvement.

Slack, a company in the tactical stage, fosters DEI through ERGs and decentralized efforts. The company has made strides in standardizing DEI processes, such as creating guidelines for interview questions that improved gender diversity in technical roles.

## **Stage Four: Integrated**

Once an organization has aligned internal and external efforts and connected top-down and bottom-up initiatives, it reaches the Integrated stage. At this level, the organization has defined its DEI strategy, developed a culture of inclusion, and closely examined the impacts of discrimination and inequity on both internal and external stakeholders. Companies at this stage can genuinely claim that "DEI is part of everything we do."

Despite achieving this milestone, humility is a common trait among companies in this stage. Reaching this level often requires experimentation to determine what works and what doesn’t. Leaders of companies with established DEI programs must remain open to changing course if their current approaches are ineffective.

There is also a concern that the success or efforts may be fleeting. DEI progress can often be tied to specific events, favorable market conditions, or the passion of a particular leader. To advance beyond the Integrated stage, leaders must consider what systems and structures are necessary to ensure that DEI efforts persist beyond a single leader’s tenure or current market conditions. The company must build programming that removes the burden of maintaining DEI efforts from individuals in underrepresented communities.

To move into the Sustainable stage, companies must challenge the status quo and undertake actions that were previously untried. Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of DEI initiatives on people and the business is crucial. An important misconception is that minority-owned businesses don’t need to invest heavily in DEI. However, DEI extends beyond mere representation; every organization must be intentional about equitable systemic structures, such as hiring and promotion, and focus on fostering a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture.

## **Stage Five: Sustainable**

Organizations that have deeply embedded DEI efforts into their corporate DNA have entered the Sustainable stage. These organizations’ DEI initiatives endure through economic challenges and leadership changes, with leaders adopting a mindset of continuous improvement.

A notable example is Intel. In 2015, then-CEO Brian Krzanich announced a $300 million, five-year plan to achieve “full representation” by 2020. This plan included initiatives like a $4,000 bonus for employees who successfully referred candidates from marginalized groups and a $5 million partnership to develop a high school computer science curriculum for the Oakland Unified School District. Within six months, the number of female and minority hires exceeded the initial 40% goal for the year. By the end of Krzanich’s tenure, hires from underrepresented communities had increased by 31%, and Intel’s female workforce grew by almost 43%.

Despite Krzanich’s resignation in 2018 due to a policy violation, his successor, CEO Robert (Bob) Swan, continued to advance ambitious DEI goals. For instance, in 2020, Intel pledged to increase women in technical roles to 40% and double the number of women and underrepresented minorities in senior roles by 2030. After Swan's departure in 2021, Intel’s commitment to DEI remained steadfast. The company extended its Inclusive Leaders program, integrated inclusion content into its Manager Academy training for 13,000 managers, and required all hiring managers to receive training in inclusive hiring practices. Furthermore, it implemented initiatives to increase the number of women hired for technical roles and tied the increased representation of women in these roles to annual performance bonuses for all employees. DEI has become integral to Intel’s culture.

The work of DEI is ongoing. Without continuous vigilance, even organizations with sustainable DEI systems can regress. True commitment to DEI involves ongoing reassessment of strategies and initiatives as the organization evolves and as global conditions change. For example, opening a new office in India introduces new DEI challenges, just as global events may reveal previously unrecognized inequities.

Regardless of the stage of your DEI journey, understanding your current position helps focus on the right questions to progress forward.

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# **The Failure of the DEI-Industrial Complex**

## **Summary**

Despite the increase in organizations adopting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives and the proliferation of DEI firms and practitioners, the big, poorly kept secret is that the majority of these initiatives are less effective than many make them out to be. On one hand, there is a lack of...

## **The Efficacy of DEI Initiatives**

There’s a big, poorly kept secret in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) industry: the actual efficacy of many flagship services, talking points, and interventions — such as unconscious bias training, racial sensitivity workshops, the “business case for diversity,” and resume anonymization — is lower than many practitioners claim.

Unconscious bias training rarely changes actual behaviors and has little impact on explicit biases. A meta-analysis of hundreds of prejudice-reduction interventions found few that unambiguously achieved their goals. Many popular interventions risk backlash, which can sustain or even worsen the inequity they attempt to address.

Even “the business case for diversity,” a decades-old rhetorical framing and justification for DEI work, has been found to backfire on marginalized groups’ feelings of belonging and weaken support for diversity programs when organizational performance drops.

## **Lack of Standards and Accountability**

Much of the problem rests with the extreme lack of standards, consistency, and accountability among DEI practitioners. Few practitioners measure the effectiveness of their interventions, and there is little agreement on what skills and competencies are necessary to become a “good” practitioner.

Another major contributor is that organizations continue to fund interventions that do not work. Organizations often fund one-time, “inspirational” events to “raise awareness” of inequity but are less enthusiastic about medium-to-long term interventions that change incentive structures, shift power balances, or reimagine personnel processes like evaluation, promotion, and conflict resolution.

As long as organizations seek out short-term solutions like 60-minute unconscious bias and racial sensitivity training, practitioners will continue to provide these services, rationalizing that an imperfect intervention is better than nothing at all.

## **The DEI-Industrial Complex**

The result is that organizations can take credit for “taking action” on DEI, while DEI practitioners make their livelihoods from these high-demand services. The only losers are employees experiencing discrimination, harassment, and exclusion, who remain unchanged regardless of the number of DEI trainings they attend.

This exploitative relationship, which purports to end inequity but instead sustains it at great cost to marginalized populations, has a name: the DEI-Industrial Complex. To end it, organizations must become conscious, high-information consumers who hold themselves and the practitioners they work with accountable for work that measurably decreases inequity and improves outcomes for marginalized populations.

## **Recommendations for Improving DEI Work**

### **Identify DEI Challenges Before Prescribing Solutions**

Too many organizations begin their DEI journeys with arbitrary interventions that lack clear objectives. Employees are likely to view such initiatives as an indication of a longer-term strategy, leading to disappointment when no such plan exists.

Instead, organizations should start by identifying the challenges they aim to address with DEI efforts. For instance, a bystander intervention training is more effective if employees aren’t speaking up when they witness discrimination. A leadership coaching engagement should focus on respectful communication and emotional intelligence if leaders need support in these areas.

To arrive at these conclusions, organizations should listen and learn through DEI audits, employee surveys, focus groups, and other data collection methods, including disaggregated demographic data.

### **Find the Right Specialist(s)**

The demand for DEI generalists has led to the proliferation of cookie-cutter DEI firms offering similar services. Recognizing that DEI solutions should be based on specific challenges should lead organizations to be more selective about the specialists they engage.

For example, a targeted unconscious bias training for decision-makers like hiring managers is more effective than a general training for all employees. To find such specialists, organizations should conduct thorough research and vetting beyond just visible “DEI influencers,” seeking professionals with specific experience relevant to their industry niche.

### **Measure Not Only Inputs but Outcomes**

DEI initiatives are essentially experiments aiming to achieve particular outcomes. Yet, organizations often focus on inputs like attendance and satisfaction rather than tangible outcomes.

Organizations should create tangible outcomes tied to their DEI data and develop clear indicators and metrics to measure success. For instance, efforts to improve belonging should use employee surveys to benchmark and set goals. Tracking the proportion of conflict resolution complaints resolved satisfactorily can help measure progress in that area.

### **Involve Experts in Budget Decisions**

Organizational leaders often underestimate the time and resources required to achieve genuine DEI outcomes. To address this, involve DEI experts from the start to help determine realistic timelines and budgets. Experts’ estimates may cost more and take longer, but providing DEI practitioners with necessary resources is crucial for success.

Involving experts in budget decisions ensures that practitioners are adequately resourced, reduces burnout, and discourages sub-standard services.

## **Conclusion**

The DEI-Industrial Complex will persist as long as there are corporations more interested in appearances than in effecting real change. However, organizations that seek to improve can drive a higher standard for DEI work by engaging thoughtfully with the industry and its practitioners, aiming for interventions that genuinely work to decrease inequity and improve outcomes for marginalized populations.

# **Taking A Stand: How Brands Are Tackling Social Issues**

Today's consumers are belief-driven. Unlike traditional consumers who may have prioritized price or convenience, they want to see brands that improve the world along with making a profit. The 2018 Edelman Earned Brand study reports that this is a worldwide phenomenon. Furthermore, people are increasingly looking to brands rather than to governments to solve problems.

## **The Impact of Values-Based Communication**

The Edelman study found that values-based communication is as effective as product-based communication in driving purchase intent. A communication focused on a brand’s stand has an even greater effect on a consumer’s intent to advocate for the brand than one focused on product features. For example, Starbucks is taking a stand as a force for social good by supporting gay marriages and partnering with universities to make it possible for young adults to afford college.

## **Rise of Belief-Driven Loyalty**

Over the past two decades, the rise of belief-driven loyalty has become evident. Brands are increasingly recognizing the value of engaging belief-driven buyers both inside their loyalty programs and beyond. This article highlights how brands are being rewarded for speaking up about issues that matter to the company and to customers.

## **What Are Social Good Campaigns?**

Social good campaigns pair a brand's promotion with a prominent political or social issue. They do not shy away from courting controversy. These issues could include environmental concerns and social issues, such as immigration and racism. There are essentially two types of social good campaigns:

**1. Direct Promotion:** Some campaigns use the message itself to promote their own products or services.

**2. Awareness-Driven Promotion:** Others focus primarily on driving awareness for the message, promoting the brand in a less direct way.

Companies that take the former approach should proceed with caution. Customers are becoming more sophisticated about the framing and purpose of such campaigns. If the cause is not one that the brand already has a history of promoting and is not tied to their products or services, consumers may react negatively.

## **Effectiveness of Social Good Campaigns**

A successful social good campaign goes beyond raising awareness of the product. It can increase customer loyalty, drive customer engagement, and attract more millennial customers, who are particularly responsive to these campaigns. For example:

**· The New York Times:** Increased its subscription base with a campaign reminding consumers that "the truth is worth it." This campaign, promoted on multiple platforms, resonated with consumers wanting to remain informed and was closely connected with the brand's mission.

**· Jigsaw:** The British clothing brand successfully promoted a message of diversity in response to anti-foreign sentiment in the UK, even though it was not a core part of its mission but resonated with many consumers.

## **Better Futures, Better Sales**

An Axios/Harris poll found that consumers are increasingly looking to brands to promise a brighter future. Many long-established companies face competition from younger, purpose-driven companies committed to a better world. Brands that are viewed as old-school corporate giants, unconcerned with the greater good, may need to reposition themselves. For example:

**· Unilever, Procter & Gamble, and PepsiCo:** Promoting recyclable packaging.

**· Columbia, Patagonia, and other outdoor-focused companies:** Advocating for sustainability and environmentally-friendly initiatives.

While customers want brands to speak up on controversial issues, successful campaigns don’t always need to tackle divisive topics. For instance, at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, a partnership between the Red Cross and HBO promoted both a blood drive and the new season of Game of Thrones. This campaign raised awareness of both the need for blood and the TV show by connecting their similar themes of sacrifice.

## **The Strategic Approach to Taking a Stand**

Brands considering taking a stand should be strategic and authentically support causes aligned with their values and message. A study by Unilever found that one-third of consumers base their purchases on a company's social and environmental performance. More than three-fourths of Americans feel better when they buy products that are sustainably produced.

Brands need to align their social, environmental, or political messages with how consumers and stakeholders view the brand. Crafting a message that provides intrinsic value by inspiring, educating, and enlightening customers about why the issue is important to the brand is crucial.

## **Conclusion**

The days of a company’s only responsibility being to sell a product and make a profit are over. Brands with a social cause are growing significantly and representing a larger share of the market. Today’s customers are turning to brands to solve problems that they no longer believe governments can tackle. Companies that embrace this shift and reward consumer faith will see an improvement in their bottom line.

# **Paternity Leave: The Hidden Barriers Keeping Men at Work**

## **Family Tree**

In summer 2018, Ricardo Duque was about to begin five months of paternity leave from the architecture firm where he worked in London. However, his plans changed when his grandmother in southern Portugal contracted a severe case of pneumonia. Duque’s wife, who is Indian, had just resumed working at Samsung after seven months of maternity leave. “I’d barely spent any time alone with our daughter,” the 42-year-old recalls. “But I had no choice. I took her to Portugal and spent the next few weeks looking after my tiny baby and my grandma, with very little help from anyone else.”

From the moment Duque and his wife discovered they were expecting, he knew that he wanted to take a substantial amount of paternity leave, which his partner endorsed. Despite worrying about getting “looks” from colleagues and being “judged by managers” when he informed them of his plan, and even though his leave did not start exactly as envisioned, the experience turned out to be extremely rewarding. “The time we spent together was invaluable and I wouldn’t change it for the world,” he says. “We now have such a special bond.”

## **The Global Perspective**

Across the UK, US, and many other parts of the world, non-birthing parents like Duque who take parental leave are a depressingly small minority. The number of countries where paternity leave is enshrined in law has more than doubled to about 90 in the last 20 years. Globally, at least four out of every 10 organizations are thought to provide paid leave above the statutory minimum. Yet, the proportion of men who take more than a few days off work when their child is born is tiny.

Most cite fears of being discriminated against professionally, missing out on pay rises and promotions, being marginalized, or even mocked as reasons for not taking time off. Academics consider these concerns to be the effect of deeply ingrained and highly damaging stereotypes around gender – and suggest that changing this will require significant cultural shifts as well as better institutional provision of paid paternity leave.

## **Internalized Stereotypes**

Thekla Morgenroth, a research fellow in Social and Organisational Psychology at the University of Exeter, UK, says that gender stereotypes have persisted, even though gender roles at work have changed substantially in the last few decades, with much higher numbers of women entering and staying in the workforce. “Women are no longer seen as less competent than men, but women continue to be seen as more communal – warm, nurturing, and caring – than men and, in turn, as more suitable for roles that require these attributes such as childcare,” they explain. “Men, on the other hand, continue to be seen as more agentic: decisive, assertive, competitive.”

This, says Morgenroth, can affect decisions regarding parental leave in a multitude of ways. “First, women and men can internalize these stereotypes, meaning that men might think that they are not very communal and thus wouldn't be very good at taking care of a baby. Their female partners may of course also endorse gender stereotypes and discourage their male partners from taking parental leave because they don't think they're capable.”

A key factor is that gender stereotypes are not only descriptive but also prescriptive; they signal what women and men should be like – including the idea that men should prioritize work over family. “Men who do take parental leave can therefore face backlash and be seen as weak, lacking work commitment and so on, which can result in consequences at work such as being demoted or not taken seriously,” they say. “Men are, of course, aware of these potential consequences and this could definitely contribute to them deciding against taking parental leave even if it's offered.”

## **No Role Models**

Communication is a prime factor that Sarah Forbes, lecturer and academic researcher at Birmingham University Business School, UK, identifies as another invisible barrier to men taking the leave that they are entitled to. In 2015, the UK introduced a shared parental leave policy allowing eligible parents to split up to 50 weeks of leave and up to 37 weeks of pay between them. But research in 2018 showed that of the more than 900,000 UK parents who were eligible to take advantage of the policy that year, only 9,200 parents – or about 1% – did.

Ricardo Duque says that this might be partly a result of fathers simply not knowing their rights. “When I took paternity leave, I was shocked at how few other dads knew what they were entitled to,” he says.

Forbes believes it’s important to have visible “fatherhood champions” at companies, across different sections and departments both to inspire fathers to take leave and also improve their knowledge of leave provisions. “Also, if managers are knowledgeable of the organisation’s offering around paternity leave and shared parental leave, this will lead to parents being more aware of what their entitlements are.”

Thekla Morgenroth also considers role models to be of paramount importance. “If other men are taking parental leave at a specific company, it shows that taking parental leave is normal and acceptable for men to do,” they explain. “These effects are likely particularly pronounced when men in leadership positions take parental leave, because they can act as role models and demonstrate that you can be successful even if you take parental leave.”

## **Unspoken Norms**

Workplace experts are warning that the immense uncertainty created by the Covid-19 pandemic – and specifically anxiety around job security – is only likely to have exacerbated workers’ concerns about taking time off. In one survey of over 500 US fathers conducted at the end of May, about two-thirds of respondents admitted that there was an unspoken rule that men at their jobs should not take full paternity leave – and that taking as little as possible was “a badge of honour”.

Ninety percent of those surveyed reported their employer offered less than 12 weeks of paternity leave, but almost two-thirds said that they planned to take less than half of that. Fifty-eight percent admitted that they were afraid that taking even six weeks of paternity leave would set their careers back.

In the US, although individual companies offer paternity leave, fathers are not legally entitled to any paid parental leave. In fact, the US is one of only a handful of countries without any mandated paid leave for birthing mothers, too. President Joe Biden has included expanded provision in his American Families Plan, but it’s not at all clear whether the legislation will pass.

In recent months, caring responsibilities have caused millions of women to leave jobs; the US women’s labour force participation rate, for example, slumped to its lowest level since 1988. Gender norms seem to have become even more entrenched by the pandemic – something which, combined with ongoing economic instability, could potentially make it even harder for fathers who want time off.

## **Unappreciated Upsides**

Many academics say what’s particularly frustrating about the low take-up of paternity leave, whether in the US or elsewhere, is the potential that it has to reduce the gender pay gap. “Gender inequality will continue in the workplace for as long as early-years parenting is primarily seen as women’s work,” says Emma Banister, professor at the University of Manchester’s Work and Equalities Institute. “The current policy framework doesn’t do enough to challenge this.”

Research has highlighted other important advantages of fathers taking leave, too. A paper published in 2019 showed that even nine years later, children whose fathers took at least two weeks of paternity leave after they were born reported feeling closer to their fathers than children with fathers who did not take leave. In a separate paper, academics found that for heterosexual married couples, the father taking any paternity leave after the birth of a child can also cause the divorce risk to drop for up to six years after the birth.

## **Examples of Progress**

Some countries have made strides when it comes to men taking more parental leave. Sweden offers parents 480 days of paid parental leave per child that they are entitled to share. Each parent can transfer part of their leave to the other, but 90 days have to be reserved specifically for each parent. From 2008 until 2017, as an incentive for fathers to take more time off, families were entitled to a monetary bonus determined by the number of days divided equally between parents.

The policy seems to be working: One study in 2019 showed that approximately 90% of eligible Swedish fathers claim paternity leave and that on average, they take 96% of the total amount of leave time allotted to them. Sweden is also a leader among advanced economies in terms of female labour market participation.

## **Supporting a More Equal Society**

In the absence of comprehensive legislation, Emma Banister believes that employers should reduce barriers to taking paternity leave by “normalising employees taking leave during the first year of their child’s birth or adoption, regardless of the employees’ gender or sexual orientation.”

There are more specific considerations too, she says, like the timing of the leave. Company-subsidised parental leave, if offered, is often restricted to the first few months – when it may suit parents better for the mother to be at home, especially if she is breastfeeding. If employers gave all parents decent pay for a period of time, regardless of when they take it (and in addition to a period of fully-paid paternity leave around the time of the birth), this would give parents much more flexibility.

But ideally, Banister says, leave for fathers and financial support for that leave should be the state’s responsibility, because putting the onus on employers – as is the case in the US – can lead to a “two-tier system” where only certain sectors offer paternity leave.

Ultimately, it seems, removing the barriers to paternity leave requires a broad range of changes – from shifts in cultural attitudes to improvements in legislation and working practices. Only then will taking time off to care for a newborn become a reality for many men.

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# **Less Than 10% Women in STEM in Pakistan: Gender Stereotypes or Choice?**

Women all over the world have made tremendous progress in expanding their level of participation in higher education and the workforce. However, there is a significant gender disparity that persists at all levels of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields around the world. The same situation unfortunately persists in Pakistan, where women and girls are underrepresented in these disciplines. So why are there fewer women in STEM fields despite a growing number seeking education and becoming part of the workforce?

## **Gender Stereotypes and Obstacles**

Research has proven that gender stereotypes create obstacles for the attraction and progression of women in STEM fields. According to the World Economic Forum, achieving global sustainability goals requires both science and gender equality. However, there is already a dearth of technological skills, which will only worsen if women are not encouraged and given equal opportunities in STEM professions. Gender inequality in these subjects is not just a violation of basic human rights but also a lost opportunity for both women and society. Historically, the exclusion of female participation has harmed innovation, as seen with the design flaws in early automotive airbags, which were tailored to adult male bodies and led to casualties among women and children.

## **Importance of Gender Inclusiveness**

Encouraging gender inclusiveness is crucial for fostering scientific and technological excellence. Providing women equal opportunities to pursue and thrive in STEM disciplines is also essential for reducing the gender pay gap and ensuring economic security. In Pakistan, women make up less than 10% of STEM professionals, with the highest concentrations in natural and medical sciences. Despite the central role of closing gender gaps and empowering women in the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030, significant gaps remain in science and technology fields.

## **Factors Behind Gender Disparity**

To understand the factors behind this disparity, we must examine qualitative reasons beyond mere numbers. Research shows that stereotypes about women and girls regarding STEM education and jobs hinder their performance. For example, boys are often perceived as better at science and math, which impacts girls' aspirations and performance in these subjects. Studies have shown that a girl’s test performance in math can be negatively affected by stereotypes. However, when girls are told that both genders are equally capable in math and science, there is no difference in performance between them and boys.

## **Gender Biases and Cultural Attitudes**

In Pakistan, gender biases and patriarchal values reinforced by families and teachers affect women's perceptions of their abilities and aspirations. Research from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa reveals that female students performed better in all subjects except math and science. It suggests that girls would perform equally well if provided with a supportive environment. Poor quality teaching in science subjects at girls' schools and a shortage of qualified female teachers contribute to this disparity. Boys benefit from better resources and qualified teachers, leading to stronger foundations and more opportunities in STEM careers.

## **Societal and Cultural Barriers**

Cultural attitudes that prioritize investing in boys' education over girls’ further exacerbate the problem. In patriarchal cultures, women are expected to sacrifice careers for domestic roles. In Pakistan, where only 13% of girls remain in school by ninth grade, families often prioritize boys' education. Women who pursue careers in STEM often face additional hurdles. An interview with Nida Khan, a woman from an upper-middle-class family in Lahore, highlights how gender biases affected her career choices and educational opportunities. Despite her interest and aptitude for science, she was steered towards "feminine" fields like home economics and faced challenges in pursuing a STEM career.

## **Educational Textbooks and Gender Stereotypes**

Gender biases are also reinforced through school textbooks. A report titled "The Subtle Subversion—The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan" reveals that state-sponsored textbooks in Punjab perpetuate gender stereotypes. Women are portrayed as subordinate and confined to domestic roles, while men are depicted as public figures. This reinforcement of gender biases in educational materials contributes to the perpetuation of stereotypes and limits girls' aspirations in STEM fields. Addressing these biases in textbooks is crucial for fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

## **Moving Forward**

Efforts to address gender biases in education are underway, such as reviewing and revising problematic content in textbooks. However, more needs to be done to challenge stereotypes and ensure that girls have equal opportunities to pursue education and careers in STEM fields. By addressing these issues, Pakistan can work towards closing the gender gap in STEM and unlocking the potential of women in these crucial disciplines.

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# **Lack of Credibility is the Worst Enemy for Effective Communication**

Let’s make it clear: Communication is not marketing. The worst enemy for effective communication is a lack of credibility, which often arises from an aspiration to portray everything as perfect. It is crucial to avoid falling into the trap of "Comical Ali" — a term derived from the former Iraqi Information Minister known for his unrealistic and overly optimistic claims during the Iraqi war.

## **The Importance of Credibility in Communication**

Credibility in communication is fundamental to maintaining trust and engagement within an organization. When internal communications are overly optimistic or misleading, they risk undermining trust among employees. Employees are well-informed and perceptive; they can easily discern when internal messages do not align with external realities.

## **8 Ways to Prevent "Comical Ali" from Entering Your Organization**

**Be Open and Honest**

1. Communicate all stories, including the negative ones. Transparency helps build trust and shows that the organization is realistic about its challenges and achievements.

**Address All Employee Questions**

1. Ensure that all questions from employees are addressed, including the critical and difficult ones. This approach demonstrates respect for their concerns and fosters a culture of openness.

**Include Employees as Spokespersons**

1. Where possible, involve employees in communication roles rather than relying solely on managers. This can provide a more relatable and authentic perspective.

**Allow Managers to Speak in Their Own Words**

1. Let managers present corporate messages in their own words during meetings. This can align with the corporate strategy without appearing as a rehearsed script.

**Communicate at Eye Level**

1. Engage with employees at their level, avoiding jargon and complex language. This approach fosters better understanding and connection.

**Acknowledge Mistakes Transparently**

1. Just as successes are celebrated, make mistakes visible and address them openly. This approach builds credibility and shows a commitment to improvement.

**Understand Perceptions**

1. Be aware of how the company is perceived by both employees and customers. Ensure that internal communications reflect this perception to maintain consistency.

**Address Negative Press**

1. If the company receives negative press, acknowledge it in internal communications. Provide a balanced explanation without exaggeration, as employees will sense any attempt to downplay issues.

## **Building Credibility Through Communication**

Effective communication relies on credibility. By being transparent and honest, addressing concerns, and engaging with employees authentically, you foster trust and create strong ambassadors within the company. Credible communication not only prevents the pitfalls associated with misinformation but also supports a positive and productive organizational culture.

# **Five Ways Gender-Diverse Companies Stand Out**

As the #MeToo and #TimesUp movements have drawn new attention to the importance of getting more women in leadership, we’ve also heard others saying, “We get it, some women have suffered horrible experiences in their professional lives. But overall, women are doing fine! Look at all the women who are CEOs and executives now!”

## **Progress and Perceptions**

There’s no denying that women have made progress. Today, most people can name a handful of female CEOs, and it’s no longer a sitcom-style joke for a man to work for a female boss. But these elements of progress may be fooling us into thinking that women are doing better than they really are. Take the results of a 2017 McKinsey and Lean In study, which showed that when only one in ten women in senior leadership is a woman, nearly half of men and a third of women think that’s enough to be “gender diverse.”

The idea that having a couple of women in leadership equals gender diversity is a problem that goes far beyond social justice. Research has shown over and over again that having more women in leadership has significant business benefits. For example, a study conducted by my company shows that gender-diverse companies are seeing significant business benefits. We found that organizations with women holding at least 30% of leadership roles are 1.4 times more likely to have sustained, profitable growth.

More importantly, our research shows that the reason companies with more women in leadership are doing better isn’t related to whether women or men have better leadership skills. Rather, the companies that have more women in leadership tend to have distinct cultures that lead to higher profits.

## **Ways Companies with More Women in Leadership Stand Out**

### **1. They Make Data-Driven Hiring and Promotion Decisions**

Companies that have more women in leadership typically have hiring and promotion practices that make the process more objective and data-driven, rather than dependent on personal impressions about a person. This approach may include incorporating objective assessments about skills and behaviors into decision-making and employing an interview process that asks consistent questions of all candidates focused on their behavior and competencies. Both of these methods help companies select leaders based on what they can do rather than making decisions based only on their backgrounds and manager recommendations, which may be biased.

### **2. They Seek Out Overlooked Talent**

Companies with more women in leadership encourage their leaders to look for hidden talent. That may mean looking for leadership capabilities in people who tend to be quieter, approach problems differently, or have a nontraditional pathway for a role, which often describes many women. Companies that have more gender diversity coach their executives to seek out overlooked leaders and provide incentives for teams that include multiple perspectives to generate new ideas and solve problems.

### **3. They Build Knowledge Through Mentoring**

It’s well-documented that women need more mentors to succeed, but organizations that are succeeding with leveraging mentorship to help women aren’t doing it one woman at a time. They are doing it across the organization. Organizations that have a formal mentoring culture on average have 20% lower turnover, 46% higher-quality leaders, and are 1.7 times more capable of capturing organizational knowledge before it’s lost with the retiring generation. This formal culture and mentorship expectation also help to decrease concerns in the wake of the #MeToo movement regarding men mentoring women, as the relationship boundaries are clearer and more standard across the organization for both genders.

### **4. They Offer 'Out-of-Comfort-Zone' Opportunities**

Women often hold themselves back due to a phenomenon known as impostor syndrome. It's the fear of being exposed as a “faker” and feeling as though success isn’t deserved or they aren’t as capable as others. While men can also suffer from impostor syndrome, women are known for being more affected by it. Companies that do gender diversity right allow their high-performing women to continue building their skills and cross-functional knowledge. These organizations promote a “learn-as-you-go” environment that embraces stumbling occasionally. They know this is what it takes to get women to take on these out-of-comfort-zone opportunities.

### **5. They Seek Diverse Perspectives to Better Represent Their Customers**

Diversity-leading organizations know they need leaders who both understand and reflect the needs of their customers. Take women’s beauty manufacturer L'Oréal. They added two more women to their board of directors in 2016, bringing the percentage of females on their board to 47%. Their 2017 annual report cited a sharp increase in net income — up 15.3% over the previous year. Is this a coincidence?

The clear reality is that getting more women into leadership takes a major culture shift, not just placing a few women in high-profile roles. Achieving this culture change is a marathon, not a sprint, so it will take some time to see the fruit of your labor. The end results, however, will go far beyond simply increasing the number of women in leadership. Rather, you’ll be creating a collaborative, open-minded workplace where men and women can excel to move your business toward greater profitability.

# **5 Reasons DEI Initiatives Fail**

With the exception of a few organizations that are nailing it, DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) efforts across the board have spotty, and sometimes completely ineffective results. This isn't just bad for POC (People of Color), women, and other marginalized groups—it's bad for business and it's bad for the future of DEI. If DEI is seen as pointless or ineffective, the traction it's gained over the past few years will be lost. Here are 5 reasons DEI commonly fails, and what to do about it:

## **1. Shortsighted Planning**

**· Description:** A training or a "diversity hire" here and there is not a long-term plan. DEI strategy means that DEI is integrated into your business model and existing goals in a way that will take time but will make a legitimate and long-lasting impact.

**· Solution:** Play the long game. Inclusive culture and top-to-bottom diversity don't happen overnight and might not be glamorous and "Instagram worthy," but the investment is worth it.

## **2. Ignoring the "I" (Inclusion)**

**· Description:** Achieving diversity is a good first step. Equity is great, too. But do all your employees feel included? Is your organization a cohesive team?

**· Solution:** Hiring a diverse team is only the first step. Ensure everyone has the tools and knowledge to be successful, and the ability to grow and receive promotions and raises. Inclusion involves evaluating your culture, creating space for everyone to speak up, and clear communication of expectations.

## **3. Not Enough/The Wrong Resources**

**· Description:** DEI trainers and training programs are plentiful, but many are generic. DEI requires more than just a presentation or video.

**· Solution:** Ensure dedicated time and resources for DEI. If you don't have someone on staff with a wide-open schedule, consider creating a DEI coordinator position or outsourcing to a DEI professional.

## **4. Lack of Commitment**

**· Description:** How are you holding yourself accountable to your DEI commitments? DEI should be as important and well-thought-out as any other business goal.

**· Solution:** DEI needs to be embraced and modeled by leadership. Commit to creativity and think outside the box if current hiring processes aren't yielding a diverse candidate pool.

## **5. Lack of Communication**

**· Description:** Employees like "Bob," who may feel left out or threatened by DEI initiatives, can challenge the success of these programs.

**· Solution:** Engage with employees to explain the benefits and consequences of DEI. Ensure that everyone understands the purpose behind DEI initiatives and mandatory training.

## **Conclusion**

DEI has become imperative for success. Companies that can't implement a good DEI policy will face cultural challenges and potential negative impacts. Job seekers and consumers are more aware and empowered than ever, making it crucial to set up a DEI strategy for long-term success.

# **How the Lack of Self Awareness Supports Performative DE&I**

## **Overview of Black-themed Engagement Communities**

Predominately-White Institutions (PWI's) have been establishing "Black-themed engagement communities" via residential dormitories on college campuses across the U.S. The idea is designed to celebrate Black culture and create a safe space for students to engage and connect. Nevertheless, this practice has been criticized as "segregation" and promoting a race-based worldview.

## **Questions and Concerns**

**· Safe Space for Other Groups**: How will the university guarantee a safe space for Latinx, Asian American, LGBTQ+, or other student groups?

**· Campus Safety**: What is the institution doing to actively prevent campus sexual assaults?

**· Integration with Other Initiatives**: How will the university tie this housing into other initiatives, such as ensuring professors are culturally competent?

**· Facility Maintenance**: How will residential life staff certify that facility maintenance is sustained on the same level as other dorms?

**· Differentiation from HBCUs**: How will the university differentiate itself from a Historically Black College or University (HBCU)?

**· Student Preferences**: What do students say they want?

**· Potential Issues**: Is it possible that the dorm will get defaced multiple times or develop a negative label in the future? How will the diversity leader ensure that administrators remain engaged?

## **Problems with Performative DE&I Efforts**

Performative Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts can cause various problems but fail to solve them or eliminate barriers to inclusion. According to Carmen Morris, "The problem with performative allyship is that it maintains the status quo and renders illegitimate any attempts to change processes that support structural racism and other barriers."

## **Gender Imbalance in College Admissions**

**· Current Situation**: The Wall Street Journal reports, "A generation of American men give up on college." After decades of focusing on women's initiatives, universities now need to engage men.

**· Key Question**: Did we eliminate discrimination and exclusion, or did we just shift who experiences it?

## **Enhancing DE&I Sustainability**

DE&I leaders must focus on sustainability with mindfulness rather than being overwhelmed by the desire to act. Here are some symptoms indicating a lack of personal awareness in DE&I champions:

### **Symptoms of Lack of Self Awareness**

**· Being "Always On"**: Giving unsolicited advice and seeking the spotlight instead of working behind the scenes.

**· Feeling Invincible**: Believing you are unstoppable or should not face difficulties.

**· Lacking Strategy**: Failing to design a forward-thinking plan that aligns DE&I goals with organizational objectives.

**· Believing "You've Arrived"**: Assuming your successful interventions are perfect and need no refinement.

**· Becoming Overly Ambitious**: Seeking promotions and fanfare, leading to frequent job changes for personal gain rather than organizational improvement.

**· Following the Crowd**: Adopting new ideas without assessing their sustainability.

**· Flying Solo**: Attempting to change a large organization alone, without collaboration.

**· Forgetting Cultural Competence Stages**: Assuming everyone should be as knowledgeable as you and being impatient with others' growth.

**· Insisting on Getting Your Way**: Labeling dissenters as racist, sexist, etc., rather than considering different opinions.

**· Fearing Imposter Syndrome**: Doubting your competence despite credentials and experience.

**· Ignoring Red Flags**: Jumping at opportunities without due diligence.

**· Neglecting Innovation**: Failing to use research-based strategies to develop new interventions.

## **Conclusion**

The goal is not to criticize but to push DE&I leaders towards greatness and positive impact. It is crucial to be accountable for both positive and negative outcomes in DE&I efforts. Reflect on what you truly want to accomplish and ensure that your vision is intentional, strategic, and inspiring. Regularly evaluate whether you are being mindful or merely mind-full.

# **5 Reasons DEI Initiatives Fail**

With the exception of a few organizations that are nailing it, DEI efforts across the board have spotty, and sometimes completely ineffective results. This isn't just bad for POC, women, and other marginalized groups - it's bad for business and it's bad for the future of DEI. If DEI is seen as pointless or ineffective, the traction it's gained over the past few years will be lost. Here are 5 reasons DEI commonly fails, and what to do about it:

1. Your plan is shortsighted. A training or a "diversity hire" here and there is not a long term plan. DEI strategy means that DEI is folded into your business model and existing goals in a way that will take time, but will also make a legitimate and long lasting impact. Play the long game. Inclusive culture and top to bottom diversity doesn't happen overnight and might not be glamorous and "Instagram worthy", but the investment is worth it.

2. Ignoring the "I". Achieving diversity is a good first step. Equity is great, too. But do all your employees feel included? Is your organization a cohesive team? You've given everyone a seat at the table, but does everyone have a meal? In other words, hiring a diverse team is only the first step. Everyone should have the tools and knowledge to be successful, and the ability to grow and receive promotions and raises. This may mean different things for different employees. Everyone has different barriers to success, and inclusion means figuring out what they are and how to overcome them. Inclusion involves evaluating your culture, creating space for everyone to speak up and express their needs, and clear communication of expectations.

3. Not enough/the wrong resources. DEI trainers and training programs are a dime a dozen these days. The market is filled with generic videos and training material, and it's easy to play a power point at your next team meeting and call it a day. But DEI requires more than that. Time is also a vital DEI resource, and if you don't have someone on staff with a wide open schedule to dedicate to developing DEI, you don't have that resource. You can't just assign DEI to your HR manager who already has a full plate and expect results. For larger organizations, creating a DEI coordinator position may be the best bet. Otherwise outsourcing and gaining an entirely new perspective from a DEI professional will help your entre company work smarter, not harder.

4. Lack of commitment. How are you holding yourself accountable to your DEI commitments? DEI should be no less important and well thought out than any other business goals. It needs to be embraced and modeled by leadership. Additionally, committing to DEI means a commitment to creativity and thinking outside the box. If current hiring processes aren't yielding a diverse candidate pool, the solution is to pivot and get more creative about hiring, not to give up.

5. Lack of communication. At FIG, we talk a lot about "Bob". Bob is a white, male employee or manager that just can’t get behind all of these DEI initiatives. Why? Because Bob feels left out, and he also thinks employees of color are getting too much attention or unearned raises and promotions. In short, he feels threatened by the new “inclusive” culture in the organization and as a result, he challenges everyone regardless of validity and refuses to be a team player. But what if someone actually talked to Bob and got his input? Does Bob even understand the “why” behind these initiatives and mandatory diversity training, or did everyone assume since they don’t directly involve Bob, he wouldn’t care? Talk to your employees and give them a reason to buy into DEI. Explain the benefits of DEI and explain the consequences of ignoring DEI. DEI has become imperative for success. Companies that can't implement a good DEI policy will pay for it, and their culture will suffer. Job seekers are more empowered and aware than ever, and consumers are similarly dialed in to the brands they support and the establishments they frequent. Taking the time to ensure your DEI strategy is set up for long term success is imperative and well worth it.

# **How the Lack of Self Awareness Supports Performative DE&I**

Predominately-White Institutions (PWI's) have been establishing "Black-themed engagement communities" via residential dormitories on college campuses across the U.S. The idea is designed to celebrate Black culture, as well as create a safe space where students can engage and connect. Nevertheless, the controversial practice has been touted as "segregation" and promoting a race-based world-view.

I want to probe the concept from a different lens. For example, how will the university guarantee a safe space for Latinx, Asian American, LGBTQ+, or other student groups? What is the institution doing to actively prevent campus sexual assaults? How will the university tie this housing into other initiatives such as ensuring professors are culturally competent? How will residential life staff certify that facility maintenance is sustained on the same level as the other dorms? How will the university differentiate itself from a Historically Black College or University (HBCU)? What do students say they want? Is it possible that the dorm gets defaced multiple times like the George Floyd memorial, or will it develop "a label" in the future like: the party dorm, the (insert a racial slur) dorm, etc.? How will the diversity leader guarantee that administrators won't disengage because "the Blacks have a dorm now"?

Performative Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) efforts can cause all sorts of problems-- but it solves none, nor does it operate to eliminate barriers to inclusion. In fact, performative efforts do not go far enough to realistically ensure Equity, Inclusion or safety for all. According to Carmen Morris, a former Forbes contributor, "The problem with performative allyship, is that it maintains the status quo and renders illegitimate, any attempts to change processes that support structural racism, and other barriers." Folks like me ask: what could possibly go wrong? Look no further than the current imbalance between males and females on college campuses in regard to admissions, graduation rates, etc. The Wall Street Journal reports, "A generation of American men give up on college." Essentially, after decades of devoting programs and initiatives for women, universities must now focus on engaging men. My question is: did we eliminate discrimination and exclusion, or did we shift who experiences it?

This is where DE&I leaders can't have our minds full of initiatives that are not sustainable. Instead, we must enhance sustainability with mindfulness. Let's not get so overwhelmed with the desire to do something-- anything- that we neglect to be purposeful. I propose developing self-awareness. In fact, there are symptoms to indicate that a DE&I champion lacks personal awareness because our minds are full of other stuff such as:

Being "always on": giving advice and instructions even when no one asked for your opinion; being used to shining in the forefront instead of taking a seat in the background

Feeling invincible: believing that you are unstoppable or you should not experience difficulties

Lacking strategy: neglecting to design a forward thinking plan that connects your DE&I goals with the organization's objectives

Believing that "you've arrived": preventing the organization from changing or improving your interventions because you've discovered something that works. There's no need to refine or build on your efforts because it is perfect as it is

Becoming overly ambitious: assuming that you should be promoted and experience all of the fanfare that is associated with doing your job well. Sometimes over ambition results in frequent job hopping so that you can make more money and have more power. In this instance, change isn't about the organization or the system, it's about you.

Following the crowd: trying the next new thing without determining whether the idea is sustainable

Flying solo: attempting to change a 5,000 or 10,000 or 75,000-person organization on your own is impossible! Collaboration is required, but you can get creative in how, and with whom, you collaborate

Forgetting the stages of cultural competence: assuming that everyone should be as mature and/or knowledgeable as you; being impatient with people who are growing

Insisting that you get your way all of the time: labeling people who don't agree with you as racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, etc., because they question you or have different opinions

Fearing that you are an imposter: doubting yourself and feeling incompetent despite your education, credentials, experience, and accomplishments

Ignoring the red flags: jumping at an opportunity without asking enough questions or considering whether the organization is serious about doing business better

Neglecting innovation: using research-based strategies to build upon and pilot new interventions It is not my intention to bring you down; it is my hope that you will be pushed into your destiny-- one that is filled with greatness and positive impact. I'm not saying that the "Black-themed" dorms are right or wrong. Nevertheless, for the sake of this relatively new DE&I field, we should be accountable for our positive and negative outcomes. So what are you really trying to accomplish? Regardless of your title, fulfilling the role of an Equity and Inclusion leader requires a vision. Your vision should motivate you to be intentional and strategic about moving the needle forward. Your vision should also inspire others to take meaningful actions. Self-awareness entails being honest about who you are and where you're going, as well as what you're doing. It's important that we distinguish between purpose and passion to ensure that we are taking a balanced approach to DE&I leadership. If we fast-forward 5 or 10 years, what will you be remembered for? Certainly, with everything that we are responsible for doing, we must be mindful about the impact that we have on others--now and in the future. Therefore, we should regularly ask ourselves: is my mind full or am I being mindful?

# **4 DEI Practices Your Company Should Adopt In 2022**

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) has become a top priority for organizational leaders across the globe. The murder of George Floyd sparked a racial revolution that pushed social justice to the forefront. Despite the fact that billions of dollars are spent on diversity education, many companies have failed to cultivate an environment that attracts and retains employees from underrepresented backgrounds. The popular and overused cliché says that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results. For workplaces around the world, there must be a reimagining of how to actually create interventions that are sustainable, promote justice and equity, and retain diverse and underrepresented staff members. With the Great Resignation causing havoc, it is more crucial than ever to prioritize DEI interventions that are effective. Here are four best practices that organizations should implement in 2022 and beyond. Is our hiring and selection interview process accessible?

GETTY 1. Greater accessibility. The term to describe the field or space that is ‘DEI’ is ever-evolving. There have been calls to include in the DEI acronym a ‘B’ for belonging and an ‘A’ for accessibility. An accessible workplace is one that prioritizes needs and unique support systems of employees who are differently abled. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, it is illegal to discriminate against any employee or job candidate based on their disability status.

There are similar disability protections for individuals who live in various countries around the world. Human resource professionals should be educated on disability protections and laws in the governing country. Organizations should also work closely with individuals who are knowledgeable about accessibility to better understand policies and practices that need to be adopted or amended to better accommodate those who are differently abled. How can organizational processes and the employee experience be better without employees having to ask? Some questions that leaders should think about include: Is our hiring and selection interview process accessible? Do we use closed captioning for our video conferences and interviews? Are we actively posting open roles in places where individuals with disabilities would see? Are we over interrogating employee time-off requests? There are so many areas where ableism can impact decision-making, so be sure you are assessing policies and practices, and providing continuing education.

Greater accountability. In 2022 and beyond, companies must recognize that no matter how many interventions you introduce into the workplace (mentorship programs, employee resource groups, DEI trainings, etc.) nothing will change if employees aren’t being held accountable for the environments that they are cultivating. There are several accountability measures that companies could utilize including allowing employees to rate leadership on a DEI scorecard, implementing anonymous reporting systems to expose bad behavior, and having a clear and objective system for how exclusionary and problematic behavior is dealt with. What are the repercussions for leaders whose behavior is reported but does not change? It is not enough to have a system in place to reprimand those who engage in wrongdoing; is the system being upheld or is it for show? In 2022, employees are no longer willing to stand for inequities especially when it is easier to find a company that cares more about employee wellbeing.

Relying on external help. Most companies, especially larger corporations, have in-house DEI professionals that they lean on for guidance and strategy. Despite this, the average tenure for an in-house DEI executive is less than two years. According to a 2020 Wall Street Journal article, demand for chief diversity officers (CDOs) is high, but so is turnover. Much of the heavy lifting that is required for the role (educating white leaders, changing toxic work culture, shifting policies) is put on one person.

Many CDOs are set up to fail because they become their company’s scapegoat when DEI efforts and initiatives are ineffective. Creating an environment that is safe from harm, inclusive, and built on justice and equity should be every employee’s responsibility. CDOs are expected to perform miracles without a team, and with little to no financial support. One person cannot change a toxic work culture. For large corporations that have global CDOs with DEI teams, there is still a struggle to sustain an environment built on equity. Internal DEI practitioners often have to deal with corporate red tape which prevents them from making real and sustainable long-term change. Rather than burning out the in-house DEI help that is available, companies should lean on the knowledge, skills, and expertise of external consultants. Creating change from inside an organization is challenging; some might say impossible. Leaning on the aid of external DEI consultants, educators, facilitators, and strategists can spark the catalyst that is needed to shift the culture.

# **TEN KEY BARRIERS FOR GENDER BALANCE**

The barriers to achieving more gender balance are related to biases, to the work culture and organization, to women’s internal barriers and lack of leadership support.

## **BIASES**

men across industries and occupations in hiring, promotion, compensation, competency, and job performance in a range of occupations and industries. There was a pro-male bias across all jobs, especially those considered ‘male dominated.’ But there was no pro-female bias for stereotypically ‘female’ occupations. The pro-male bias can be hard to pinpoint at times. I’ve seen an organization where succession planning seemed quite gender balanced at first glance. But when you looked closer, most women were not considered “ready now” for a new position, whereas most men were.

## **The motherhood penalty**

Many studies show that the pushback—or “motherhood penalty”—women experience when they have kids is the strongest gender bias. Motherhood triggers assumptions that a woman is less competent, less committed, and less available to her career.[2] A survey in the UK showed that nearly half of working women are nervous about telling their boss they are pregnant.[3] And eleven percent of women in the UK are pushed out of their jobs after maternity leave.[4] In France, another survey showed that 37 percent of women between 30 and 39 years were asked during a job interview whether they were planning to have children.[5] The “motherhood penalty” has been proven again and again but more recently researchers have also noted a “fatherhood bump”. Experiments from Cornell University showed that women with children were 50 per cent less likely to get a response from an employer and were offered salaries of around $11,000 less than women without children. Men with children were slightly more likely than any other applicant to get a call back for interview and were offered salaries of around $2000 more.[6]

## **The “think leader think male” bias**

Men and women tend to associate leadership with more masculine traits such as strength, assertiveness, confidence. And men and women don’t judge the same traits in a woman as positively. Whereas for women, the opposite is true—the more powerful a woman becomes, the less likeable. Sheryl Sandberg has described this phenomenon very well in her acclaimed book, titled Lean In. For these reasons, women tend to be appointed less to leadership positions.

## **The benevolence bias**

The benevolence bias consists in associating women with vulnerability and the need for protection. This has at least two negative implications for women’s career progression: First, they tend to be given fewer stretch assignments and positions. Typically, women with small children tend not to be considered for international assignments, as managers assume this would be too challenging for them. Second, women get less constructive feedback as managers fear the emotional reactions of women. It’s true that, in general, women tend to be more emotional than men. A study showed that women shed tears as much as eight times more often than men. And when women cried, the duration of crying was three times longer.[7] But this is not a sign of weakness. It’s mostly a result of socialization, as women are given more permission to cry than men.

## **WORK CULTURE AND ORGANISATION**

### **Difficulties in managing work-life**

Society’s expectations are not the same on men and women regarding their roles raising children, carrying out household chores or looking after ageing parents. Things are progressing, but around the world, women still spend two to ten times more time on unpaid care work than men.[8] A McKinsey study also showed that about half of the women tend to be both primary breadwinners and caregivers, while most men are primary breadwinners, but not primary caregivers.[9] The double burden women face is clearly a reality. Therefore, the “anytime anywhere” culture and the workplace. Such behaviors are particularly strong in male-dominated industries. They make women feel like outsiders and discourage them to both apply to jobs or remain in such environments. I’ve run several focus groups in male-dominated companies. Women often share stories about how they feel disrespected and how ashamed they are to talk about it.

A typical thing they say: You get used to it until you get fed up with it and leave. Often male colleagues don’t even realize how inappropriate some behaviours may be. In France, a study showed that eighty percent of women have experienced sexist behaviours at work.[10] According to a UK survey, the most common sexist behaviours women must put up with are: being expected to make the tea (43 percent of surveyed), enduring sexual innuendos (38 percent) or having appearance or clothing commented on (33 percent).[11] Some team cultures that are not exactly sexist can put o women when they are too masculine, too competitive, with rough language, and ongoing banter. I’ve seen this happening in a sales team in Norway, for example.

## **WOMEN’S INTERNAL BARRIERS**

### **Lack of confidence**

Several studies show that women tend to be less confident in themselves than men, even if they have similar ambitions to progress in their careers. [12] For instance, women tend to apply for jobs only when they full 100 percent of requirements, whereas men apply for jobs even if they only full 60 percent of requirements.[13] In a group of women and men with similar performances, the women will tend to under evaluate themselves, whereas the men will tend to over evaluate themselves. Women tend to blame themselves when they fail and credit external circumstances when they succeed, whereas men tend to do the opposite. Due to this confidence gap, women also tend to negotiate their salaries four times less than men, and when they do, they ask for thirty percent less.[14] Self-censorship is one of the many negative implications of this lack of confidence that’s only

While this approach works well at school, it doesn’t work in corporations. To progress in your career, it’s not enough to do a good job. Others need to know what you’re capable of. Women, compared with men, have less of the attitude and the network required to succeed in this type of environment. Women tend to be less comfortable than men communicating about their accomplishments. They fear being viewed as bragging and self-promoting. They also tend to spend less time networking than men, as they don’t view networking as necessary and they also have less time, given their double burden. For all these reasons, highly political corporate environments that demand strong politics skills, and where invisible networks are very influential, tend to be less favorable to women.

## **LACK OF LEADERSHIP SUPPORT**

### **The perception gap**

Men and women don’t share the same vision of gender equality. Overall, men tend to underestimate the difficulties faced by women and the benefits of having more gender diversity. A study showed that 93 percent of women believe that “women have more difficulties reaching to top management positions,” compared to only 58 percent of men.[15] Other study found that only 24 percent of male board members believe having diverse boards increase company performance, compared to 89 percent of female board members.[16] A survey in the high tech industry found that while, for men, the key gender diversity barrier was the classic pipeline excuse, There are no women to recruit, for women, unconscious bias was the key barrier.[17]

The less men are aware of their male privilege and the difficulties women face, the less supportive they are of gender diversity measures. If a man fails, will he ever be told that it’s because you’re a man? Most probably not, and this is male privilege. Because many women are reminded of their gender when they fail, amongst other things. Men happen to be the majority of senior leaders, those with the power to Even when leaders are aware of the barriers faced by women and convinced of the bene ts to promote gender balance, often they don’t know what to do. A McKinsey study showed that 49 percent of managers don’t know what to do to improve gender diversity.[19] That’s one of the most common questions I’m asked by male leaders who want to promote gender balance: “What can I do to move the needle?” “What am I doing wrong?”

# **11 Ways To Promote A Culture Of Gender Equality In The Workplace**

It may be difficult for some people to believe that gender equality is still an issue in today’s workplace, but unfortunately, it’s a fact. Whether gender inequality occurs through unconscious bias or is more blatant, it’s an area that every business owner should focus on. Some business owners want to promote an organizational culture where true gender equality flourishes and continues to thrive but don’t know exactly how to do that. Here, 11 members of Forbes Coaches Council discuss what business owners can do to make sure it happens.

## 1. Be Consciously Inclusive And Invite Feedback:

Be authentic and “walk the talk,” as any misalignment between aspiration and action will be obvious. Recognize your own unconscious biases as a starting point and be ready to call out any inappropriate workplace behaviors and practices you witness. Invite feedback and solutions from across the board. Be consciously inclusive. Benchmark progress on tangible measures such as promotions and pay.

## 2. Create Conditions Where Everyone Can Succeed

For equality to exist, leaders must level the playing field by creating conditions where everyone can succeed. Creating equity is the first step to promoting equality. Begin with a clear view of the current culture and get feedback on the most impactful place to start. Next, BETA take meaningful action to create equity in that area. Then move on to the next, building culture a step at a time.

## 3. Become An Advocate And Champion For Gender Equality

The most important thing is to become an advocate and champion for gender equality. To do this, you need to learn about the issues and clarify a personal stance on the matter. Subsequently, you can identify opportunities to model desired behaviors that strengthen the desired organizational culture, undertake organization-wide communication, and ensure organizational policies and processes are in line.

## **4. Ensure That HR Policies Are Nondiscriminatory**

The first step is to ensure that your HR policies are nondiscriminatory, from the hiring process, compensation and career progression to softer aspects such as selection for key roles. Beyond that, the interactions within the organization—meetings, whether in formal or informal settings—should adopt a zero tolerance policy for gender bias. Harassment and other violations need to be firmly handled to signal intent.

## 5. Embed Gender Equality In The DNA Of The Business

In order for gender equality to flourish, it needs to become embedded in the DNA of the business, from how people are embraced and lauded for their individuality to the processes and systems that allow and encourage it. Question and analyze opportunities to make all facets of a business formidable when it comes to this. By constantly seeking to elevate, it becomes a reality

## 6. Have A Clearly Communicated DEI Policy And Metrics

Have a clearly communicated and understood diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policy with transparent metrics for gender, race and age so that the entire organization can see that this is a workplace that truly embraces gender equality and other DEI initiatives. More importantly, all open roles should have transparency in the number of people who applied for the position to further support gender equality in hiring. - Kevin Kan, Break Out Consulting Asia

## 7. Model DEI For Your Team And Engage With All Teams

Gender equality is not an end in itself for companies, but rather a guarantee for better value creation. Therefore, the impetus should come from an interest in creating optimal value and the optimal experience for all stakeholders—from the customer to the employee to the investor. You need to model DEI for your team and engage all teams to create optimal customer value and an optimal stakeholder experience.

## 8. Commit To Inclusive Practices And Share Data

BETA A thriving culture is everyone’s responsibility. Business owners can foster gender equality by starting with why it matters. They can then review each stage of the employee life cycle, from recruiting and hiring to performance reviews and promotions. By committing to inclusive leadership practices and transparently sharing data, gender parity can become a shared business objective.

## 9. Have Clear Company Goals That Promote Equality

Achieving gender equality depends on creating an organizational culture where people feel safe to bring their whole selves to work. Leverage others’ successes and failures to craft a strategy that’s right for your company. Start with why it matters and have clear company goals that promote equality. Consider having an employee diversity council to steward closing the gender gap in your organization.

## 10. Introduce Annual Or Monthly Training Initiatives

Because the issues in this area are so heated, why not gently introduce a year-long or once-a-month training initiative on the subject? You don’t have to shut down the company, but you can encourage learning, sensitivity and standards that you gradually bring into the culture. That way, it doesn’t feel like a hammer hitting a nail. Gently teach and bring up the sensitivity level in language and deed.

## 11. Demonstrate A Commitment To Gender Equality

Raise the topic consistently in communications. In addition, demonstrate humility. Respectfully talk about what you do not know and what you are learning. Encourage others in the organization to do so as well. Finally, create space for champions to emerge within the organization.

# **Barriers faced by women in labour market participation: Evidence from Pakistan**

especially relevant to the employment-seeking process. In addition to collecting data on the job-seeker side, CERP conducted a survey of over 1,200 firms (enrolled on our platform) in Lahore that provided information on recruitment methods and candidate preferences. Like in any country, job-seekers in Pakistan search for jobs through different methods including searching through networks, sending applications, answering ads, and visiting worksites. The most popular job search method in this sample was searching through networks, with 27% of the sample using this method. Additionally, 16% of the sample applied to prospective employers, and 11% checked worksites (this included people who search for work on a daily basis, such as carpenters, masons, and household helps, as well as people who visit businesses that may be hiring, such as office workers.)

How job search processes differ by gender Women and men in Pakistan who are interested in working search for jobs at different rates and using different methods. For instance, men are more likely than women to search for jobs; indeed, 41% of men looked for jobs using any search method, compared to only 29% of women. Further, men were also more likely to look for jobs within each job search method. Figure 1: Among people looking for work, men are more likely than women to have searched actively for jobs Even within men and women at the same education level (for example, people with advanced education), we find persistent differences with 54% men actively searching for jobs compared to just 41% of the women. For women and men with more than three years of work experience, 44% of men actively search for jobs, while this figure is only 35% for women.

From the time and effort that respondents put in to enroll in the Job Talash service, we infer that women who applied for the service are just as interested and motivated to find a job as men. This is because the enrolment process requires respondents to participate in a long and detailed survey that an individual not interested in finding a job would be unlikely to undertake. Yet, as the data above demonstrates, men are consistently more active in their search efforts than women in the sample, regardless of education and experience. This could indicate that women may be facing certain barriers to their job search efforts relative to men. For instance, in their job search process, women may have less time to search for jobs due to household responsibilities, difficulty finding safe transportation to interviews, and a lack of access to networks that provide referrals and information about jobs. Through a household survey, we collected data on job searching through networks that allowed us to investigate the potential job search barrier of a lack of access to networks. Networks play a vital role in recruitment .

We find that job search through networks is the predominant job search method (see Figure 1). Through a representative survey of 1,200 firms across Lahore, we also found that referrals from networks were the most common hiring method. Indeed, 86% of firms hiring for people who have completed 12th grade (final year of schooling), and 56% of firms open to hiring people who are less educated used referrals to recruit candidates. While firms largely recruit through referrals for both male and female roles, women are less likely to search through their networks to find jobs. 21% of the women in our sample search through networks, while this number for men is 30%. This difference could imply a significant barrier to job searching for women: since they use networks less than men, they may not be learning about job vacancies available to them.

One potential reason for the pattern seen above could be that women search less through networks because they simply do not know many other working women. In the Job Talash sample, 62% of women reported having no working female friends, and 47% did not have any working female relatives. Moreover, among women who expressed an interest in searching for jobs via Job Talash, we find women who have working female friends are more likely to search through networks, compared to women who did not have any. Further, women who reported having a few or more working female friends are 10 percentage points more likely to search through networks than women who did not have any. There is no significant difference in the percentage of women who search through networks between women who have a few, many, or almost all working female friends. This could suggest that a woman with any number of working female friends will ask those friends about job openings. However, women with more working female friends are more likely to be successful in their network searches since they have more connections.

However, there is no significant difference between women with working female relatives and women without them. One potential reason for this could be that women are more likely to search for jobs through their friends than their relatives. because their friends are likely of similar age and education and thus, have more relevant information about job vacancies. Next steps for research These findings indicating that women in urban Pakistan are interested in working but face barriers in their job search demonstrate a potential area for policy to address. Policies that reduce the barriers women face in job search would serve to economically empower the many women that are interested in working but have not found work. This could increase economic activity and enhance GDP potential for the country by expanding the workforce.

Our research suggests that one barrier women face in the job search is that they lack access to networks that can provide information about job vacancies. Potential policy solutions to address this barrier could include the organization of women collectives for networking and the creation of opportunities for firms to share job postings outside of their networks. Analysis is under way on how women and men respond to job postings they are sent by text message through Job Talash.

Since Job Talash provides job vacancy information without the need for networks or transportation, we can analyze if a job posting platform can help eliminate barriers women face in job search. In addition to the job search barrier of women having limited access to networks, CERP and researchers at Duke University are also investigating the potential barrier of women not being able to find or afford safe transportation. We are conducting an RCT to investigate how door-to-door pick-up and drop-off service to places of employment affects job search behaviors for women and men.

# **Women Need Mindfulness Even More than Men Do**

How many women do you know who proudly claim to be better than men at multitasking? Even the media seems to want to “prove” that women are better multitaskers. For example, when a study by researchers at the University of Pennsylvania found that there are more neural connections between the left and right side of women’s brains than men’s, a news story pointed to this as evidence that women’s brains are made for multitasking, even though the researchers never mentioned multitasking in their scientific article. The results of studies have been mixed, so research has yet to answer the question of whether women are better at carrying out multiple tasks than men. However, we do know that women multitask more often. A better question is whether women should be proud of their multitasking.

Research does have an answer to this question. And the answer is no. Research shows that multitasking negatively affects performance. We are less efficient, less effective, and more likely to make mistakes when we multitask. When we multitask, our mind switches back and forth between different tasks, which hurts our productivity, creativity, and accuracy by increasing cognitive load and impairing memory. One study did support the claim that women are better than men at multitasking, finding that women’s responses when performing two tasks at once were 69% slower than when performing the tasks separately; men’s responses were 77% slower. So while women may be relatively better at multitasking, it certainly isn’t something they should embrace. In fact, people who multitask more often are actually worse at it. Their brains take longer to switch between tasks than the brains of people who tend to do one thing at a time. Heavy multitaskers have more trouble filtering out irrelevant information; they are distracted by everything. So the more you multitask in general, the more difficult you will find it to sustain focused attention when necessary. Focused attention is important not only for performance but also for our psychological well-being. Multitasking causes us to feel distracted and overwhelmed. It is associated with increased levels of the stress hormone cortisol in our bodies. Stress results from tasks not being completed or done well. This can become a vicious cycle because increased levels of cortisol further impede our cognitive functioning, leading to even greater stress. Multitasking is actually used by some researchers to elicit a stress response in laboratory experiments. According to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the psychologist who created the concept of flow, men typically do one and a half things at a time, but women, especially mothers, do closer to five.

A study at Michigan State University found that women multitask 10 hours more per week than men and that engaging in multitasking activities increases stress, negative emotions, and perceived work-life conflict. This may be one reason women experience more stress than men even when their workloads are similar. Another reason is that women typically worry more than men. According to the Anxiety Disorders Association of America, women are twice as likely as men to suffer from anxiety. Research attributes this to both structural and chemical differences in their brains. A lack of focused attention often can lead to greater anxiety because our thoughts go to worrying about the future. A Harvard study found that people spend 47% of their time thinking about something other than what they are currently doing. The study also found that we are less happy when our minds are wandering.

The good news is that by being more mindful — by intentionally paying attention to the present moment — women can perform better and stress less. Fortunately, mindfulness is a skill that can be learned and practiced. One of the best ways to enhance your ability to focus is mindfulness meditation. The practice of focusing your attention on something like your breath, refocusing each time your mind wanders, is an excellent way to strengthen your attention muscle. Meditation teaches you to become aware of when you are distracted, so you can bring your attention back to the task at hand. You learn to notice your thoughts and emotions without getting carried away by them. One study specifically looked at the impact of meditation on multitasking. HR workers were asked to complete multiple tasks in a short amount of time.

Those who had participated in an eight-week mindfulness meditation training were able to focus on a task longer, switched between tasks fewer times, and reported less negative emotion upon completion. Intentionally practicing mindfulness throughout the day can enhance your focus. Planning is important: Allot specific amounts of time for different tasks, such as checking your email, making phone calls, or preparing a report. Resist the urge do anything other than the scheduled task by reminding yourself that multitasking can reduce productivity by up to 40%. Don’t let technology control your attention with constant distractions. Turn off notifications so that you are in charge. You decide when to check your messages. You can practice being mindful when you’re walking, driving, or having a conversation. When your mind starts to wander, gently refocus your attention. When you’re in a meeting, pay attention to what’s being said. When you’re with your children, be with your children. When you’re cooking dinner, focus on cooking. Whatever you do, do it fully. The focus that mindfulness brings can make a positive difference in both men’s and women’s lives. But judging by the amount of multitasking women do and the amount of anxiety they feel, women stand to benefit more.

# **National Gender Policy Framework**

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Women constitute 48.4 percent of Pakistan’s population.1 As a UN member state, Pakistan is signatory to the 2030 Agenda - the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and targets and indicators under each goal. Pakistan stands among one of the f irst countries to formally endorse the 2030 Agenda, through a unanimous parliamentary resolution. The 2030 Agenda, known as SDGs, recognizes the importance of empowering women; the relevant Goal 5 is to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The targets for this goal aspire to end all forms of discrimination, eliminate violence against women and girls in all its manifestations, ensure health and reproductive rights, ensure political, social and economic participation of women. Targets 5.4, 5a and 5b are of particular importance for enabling women’s economic empowerment as they relate to acknowledging the value of unpaid care work and domestic work, encourage women’s access to land and physical assets and information and communication technology. Pakistan is also committed to CEDAW2, the Beijing Platform for Action3, ILO conventions4 and Child Rights Conventions, all directed to ensure women’s rightful place in the society.

In the past years, there has been notable progress, attributable to more deliberate investments in improving the lives and well-being of girls and women. Despite these endorsements and commitments, globally Pakistan has been in the bottom four countries on gender development indices for over quite a few years now. Understandably gender development has been highlighted as a priority agenda by both the Honorable President and the Prime Minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Gender Policy Framework packages the intelligence gathered through experts, international reviews and subject specialists of Pakistan, putting together a set of strategic priorities for consideration of the Government of Pakistan.

The National Gender Policy Framework is structured as highlighted below: Chapter 1: Introduction sets out the context to which the Policy Framework is developed. Chapter 2: State of Gender Development in Pakistan describes the relative performance of and conditions in Pakistan with respect to Gender Development. Detailed review of the current state of affairs, major issues and constraints and the methodology adopted for the nation-wide consultation have also been included in this chapter. Chapter 3: Justification for the Policy draws the conclusions from Chapter 2 and substantiates the necessity to develop the National Gender Policy Framework. Chapter 4: Vision, Objectives and Principles provides guidance to the ‘future-state’ of the Gender Development in Pakistan Chapter 5: Policy Actions elaborates interventions and defines enabling conditions required, together with relevant government departments and timelines. Chapter 6: Monitoring and Evaluation provides insights to ensure the sustainability of the NGPF and proposes stakeholders’ coordination mechanism as well as KPIs to assess the progress and success of the NGPF implementation.

### **BACKGROUND**

Gender Equality (GE) is not just one goal, but it is the key to delivering Sustainable Development Goals, the prime enabler and accelerator for Agenda 2030. SDG 5 is a global responsibility, but also an opportunity for gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda, which provides a critical framework for collective action to achieve gender equality. In addition to having a separate goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes gender equality as a cross cutting concern. The year 2021 marked the 42nd anniversary of CEDAW, and 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, which flagged 12 areas for urgent action to ensure gender equality. The 2030 Agenda endorsed these challenges as SDG 5’s nine targets. Despite efforts made by governments globally, women and girls continue to be subjected to discrimination and violence and are denied full realization of their rights and potentials. Inadequate resources for implementation of action plans around gender equality is a significant challenge confronted by countries. The key challenge hampering the implementation and monitoring of gender equality is the lack of adequate gender-sensitive data. Absence of data globally may be attributed to lack of prioritizing the goal as such. The 2021 UNESCAP report recorded Asia’s progress towards gender equality as very slow, also due to limited regional evidence on gender equality (either data gaps or environment). Closing the gender gaps in wages and labor force participation remains the biggest challenge for the region, Pakistan included. The pandemic has further underscored the situation. The COVID19 has indeed erected new barriers in building inclusive and prosperous economies and societies. The Government of Pakistan recognizes the relevance of gender equality to the national mandate of achieving growth and prosperity, and the responsibility to ensure that the national policies and programs serve women and men equitably. Women’s participation is the key to a sustainable and thriving national economy. The COVID19 has given an opportunity in terms of magnifying the gender inequalities and building back better now by filling in the glaring gaps. Women’s inclusion is critical both for immediate and long-term recovery solutions to COVID19. This section details the methodology adopted for the development of this framework, and the current state of affairs in Pakistan vis-à-vis gender development.

### **METHODOLOGY**

When the focused work on development of the roadmap began in March 2021, different initiatives were underway following the 2019 VNR presentation of Pakistan on SDG 5, to mainstream gender and identify priority areas focusing on gender development. This methodology captures a chronology of all the works done by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives in this regard. Establishing baseline information and commitment in VNR In May 2019, while compiling information for Pakistan’s official submission to the Voluntary National Review (VNR), a High-Level Consultative Forum was organized on SDG 5. Later in August, the first National Review on SDG 5 was organized to follow up on the commitments submitted in the 2019 VNR. During compilation of VNR, critical data gaps were identified and highlighted as a priority. Another one of the key priorities identified during these dialogues was the need to set up a robust and regular coordination mechanism amongst all relevant stakeholders for setting up targets, reporting progress, sharing successes and lessons learnt against the SDG 5- Gender Equality. Through these forums, the Government of Pakistan highlighted its constitutional responsibilities for protecting the rights of the women and realizing their full potential in all spheres of life, especially social, economic, political and personal, and communicating the same to provincial governments. In 2019-2020, the federal and provincial governments introduced a number of interventions to improve gender governance, financially empower women, expand social protection net to encompass needs of women in the most vulnerable groups of population, and curb GBV. Works undertaken later in 2020 were pivotal as the Government of Pakistan has committed to submit VNR in the year 2022 which will require reporting on substantial and concrete steps taken by the government to change the status quo and move the needle to close the gender gap.

### **Mainstreaming Gender in COVID19**

response In March 2020, as COVID19 hit Pakistan, a comprehensive assessment was undertaken to map out the anticipated socioeconomic fall out of the pandemic on vulnerable groups, with focus on women and children. Understanding that the pandemic has the potential to erode any gender equality gains achieved by the government in last few years, as natural disasters, conflicts and disease outbreaks affect women and men differently. These circumstances and the ensuing living conditions make existing inequalities for women and girls even more wide and deep. This is further underscored by oblivion towards gender impacts of outbreaks while designing corrective policies5. With this key understanding the socioeconomic impact analysis was undertaken. This assessment was critical in informing relief and recovery packages through the platform of ‘Ehsas’, a flagship social safety program of the Government of Pakistan. The report predicted that with the COVID19 as the informal job sector would be hit the most, women will be disproportionately affected with loss of incomes. Furthermore, with schools locked down and limited public transport opportunities, women will be shouldering most of the house care work, and the reduced economic opportunities will be pre-disposing them to violence. They would also be suffering due to disrupted essential health (including reproductive health) services. As a result, when the Prime Minister’s Emergency Relief Package allocated PKR 200 billion for 5. labor class and PKR 100 billion for small and medium enterprises and Agri-sector, it maintained quotas for women-owned businesses. Relief package of PKR 10 billion was distributed to support 2.5 million families of daily wagers. Over 54 percent of the ‘Ehsaas’ emergency cash program benefitted women. ‘Ehsaa’s Kifalat’ continued to support women, enrolling seven million women. Over 45 percent of the ‘Ehsaas’ interest free loan program’s beneficiaries are women. Similarly, 60 percent of ‘Ehsas Amdan’ Program assets were dedicated for women. In the Government of Pakistan’s PKR 70 billion program for COVID19 response planning, multiple mother and child hospitals have been approved under the scheme to ensure continuity of essential health services for women.

In 2020-21, the Government of Pakistan also f inalized the costed Universal Health Coverage benefits package with focus on women. National review meetings on population and development were held to ensure continuity in essential reproductive health and family planning services. Efforts were made to ensure leadership diversity in pandemic response and post-pandemic recovery planning, with inclusion of women in technical working groups and program design. All insights captured during these exercises were archived by the MoPDSI.

### **Undertaking comprehensive analysis of Gender Indices**

Between March and October 2020, a comprehensive analysis of multiple gender indices was undertaken, to map the relevant gender development indicators and gap areas for the same. While remaining cognizant of the fact that absence of gender-disaggregated data is a gap that needs to be addressed, the MoPDSI attempted to visualize the extent to which the COVID-19 will compound the existing gender inequalities6 building upon available global evidence, and gender intersecting wider structural inequalities such as age, geography, class, employment, disability and other stressors7.

While Pakistan is committed to the 2030 Agenda, the UN does not officially release national SDG progress reports, but there are third parties like Sustainable Development Report which releases SDG indices on different indicators. It is important to note that a data gap exists in Pakistan with regards to reporting the SDG 5 and gender related indicators of all other SDGs. Pakistan can take a significant step towards mainstreaming gender in policy and programmatic actions through streamlined and uniformed reporting on all the indicators across provinces. The World Economic Forum (WEF) also tabulates, and releases gender gap reports with country profiles, which includes 10 broad indicators other than the 13 indicators listed Gender Development Indicators Mapped under SDG 5.

If Gender Development Index and Gender Inequality Index are also taken into account, they comprise 30 primary indicators, making it difficult for the governments globally to identify short-term and mid-term priorities or allocate resources accordingly. Furthermore, 20 other composite indicators contribute to these indices, owing to varying availability of data and information across countries. The OECD and other bodies have also started measuring the gender gaps, inequities and inequalities through various indices, making it easier for countries to track their progress and plan accordingly, but difficult to prioritize. A summary of the indicators mapped in this exercise are listed below.

### **Presidential Directive and Rapid Workplace Survey**

While chairing a session on gender-based disparities on the 24th of December 2020, the Honorable President, Dr Arif Alvi, reiterated the Government of Pakistan’s commitment towards achieving SDG 5 – Gender Equality. This was later reiterated by the Honorable Prime Minister as well. At the same meeting, the honorable President called for a rapid survey of offices to facilitate and make workplaces conducive for women. Following the meeting, a survey tool was designed and vetted by subject matter experts; it was digitized and rolled out in the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives with the approval of the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission (DCPC) in January 2021. A total of 62 women working at the MoPDSI participated in the survey, and results of the same were analyzed and shared with the office of the DCPC for scaling up and executing the survey across other federal ministries too. The digitized tool was updated and rolled out in other Ministries in November 2021.

Synergizing with consultations for Youth Priority Action agenda and mainstreaming genderIn February 2021, during the performance review meeting for the year 2020-21, setting a Youth Priority Action Agenda and a Gender Roadmap were identified as key actions by the honorable Minister, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives. A comprehensive consultative approach was adopted, multiple avenues were exploited to engage maximum of experts, academicians and ministries through surveys, expert polls, policy dialogues and roundtables. While focus of the broader consultation was youth, standalone policy dialogues were also organized around gender priorities. Over 44,000 youth participated in the poll developed for this purpose between March 10th and March 31st with 45.56% females, 16,000 in survey, 1200+ in university engagement sessions while 200+ participated in the nine thematic consultative dialogues.

In addition to the participants’ sex, age, qualifications, districts and current status of employment, the responses were coded to identify major thematic groups for both challenges and proposed solutions. The responses were received in English, Urdu and Roman English and a team of youth volunteers together with the data team at COVID19 Secretariat worked to analyze this large and invaluable dataset. A multi-stakeholder platform of ministers, UN partners, the Planning Commission and the Government of Pakistan was established to facilitate meaningful engagement. Deliberations from these consultations and collective thinking were consolidated and tabled at a high-level policy forum held on 31st of March 2021.

The participatory engagement therefore was at the heart of this report’s design and development, in order to ensure that its recommendations are contextually relevant and produce a tangible impact. This engagement centred around the principles of inclusion, catering to diverse voices and ensuring that all relevant stakeholders – from policymakers to youth – are heard and accounted for. Efforts were made to ensure representation from marginalized and vulnerable groups, and minorities, to incorporate diverse perspectives and to address concerns arising from different facets of the society. Using these tools, the process of developing recommendations was undertaken which included inputs from various high-level policy forums that brought together government representatives, development partners and young people. In order to capitalize on all the partners’ support that was available, the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives adopted the snowball approach without spreading itself too thin.

A total of 11 thematic technical working groups were established initially, with lead and members identified from amidst the development partners, attached to relevant sections at the Planning Commission. The groups were later condensed to seven. The Planning Commission together with these groups organized multiple online consultations with over 600 key stakeholders, including federal and provincial governments’ officials, UN agencies and development partners and subject experts, looking at each thematic group from gender-perspective, in addition to two dialogues focused on gender-specific interventions. The development of the resulting interventions was largely an iterative process. Each working group’s lead spearheaded sustained deliberation, consultations and dialogues with the group members to develop targeted recommendations. Findings from the same were shared with the Honorable Minister MoPDSI; and based on the ministerial directive, this report was finalized. These consultations enabled capturing and addressing the experiences of different groups of women, men and gender diverse people. Following this, as per the detailed directive of the Minister Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, an extensive national-level consultative exercise was undertaken from March to May 2021 during which national and international subject experts, specialists, academicians and policymakers were engaged by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives to identify priority action agendas. From over ten high level policy dialogues and engagement of 75,000+ youth voices, gender development and mainstreaming emerged as a key priority cutting across employment, skills development, education, health and other youth development themes.

## **NATIONAL DIRECTIVE TO ESTABLISH AN ACCELERATOR**

In 2019, the Prime Minister Mr. Imran Khan recognized population as the denominator of poverty alleviation and called for National Strategy for the Development of Statistics for strengthening quality and availability of statistics so that the government can not only have access to accurate, reliable, and timely statistics but also a solid and credible base of evidence, which is critical to support the design and evaluation of 94. policies94. This reflects a clear recognition on part of the government on the need for and importance of reliable data and its utilization for development planning as it is considered crucial for the attainment of development goals. The proposed Gender Accelerator builds upon the national directive and provincial asks for housing updated data and statistics, generating research and coordinating for evidence-guided policy options for gender development.

### **Gender Accelerator/ Action Lab**

Establishment of a Gender Accelerator is proposed to catalyze Pakistan’s progress in closing the national gender gap. The accelerator will facilitate the Planning Commission in stimulating, planning, coordinating and monitoring high impact reform interventions through federal and provincial governments, ministries, departments and relevant private sector partners, and expediting evidence-guided program design and implementation95 and strengthening systems and ensuring the timely availability of gender data and statistics96 by: 1. Mapping district (gap) profiles against gender development indicators using micro approach to unpack district level granularities 2. Facilitating in classifying gender development indicators according to national priority and urgency for sectoral investments 3. Firming up the package of evidence-informed high impact reform interventions in consultation with federal ministries and provincial departments, sectoral specialists, national and international experts and in line with international best practices and national contextual experiences 4. Coordinating for the Expressions of Interest to undertake the pilot interventions in priority districts 5. Organizing technical assistance for program design, monitoring and evaluation of gender development pilot intervention projects, including identifying priority infrastructure 6. Monitoring for learning with digital interfaces for policymakers at all levels and generating evidence for idea banks on gender-responsive development policies, programs and systems of governance 7. Organize quarterly national stewardship review forums for provinces to share progress against pilot interventions through live dashboards 8. Conducting policy analyses, evaluations and policy forums to stimulate reforms on gender progression Engaging Universities in generating data and stimulating policy discussions around national gender priorities, yielding demographic dividend etc

# **Gender inequality in mobility and mode choice in Pakistan**

Abstract Using the nationally representative dataset of the 2007 Pakistan Time-Use Survey, this paper examines gender differences in daily trip rate, mode choice, travel duration, and purpose of travel, which are previously unreported because of limited data availability. Wide gender mobility gaps are observed in the country, where women are less likely to travel, are half as mobile as men and may rely heavily on walking. The particular social and cultural context of the country, that renders women as private, secluded and family honor, seems influential in shaping their mobility and choice of activities.

Demographic factors such as age, household income, and marital status significantly decrease female mobility levels. Hence, these findings call for a gender-based culturally responsive transportation policy in the country. Keyword: Travel behavior, gender, Pakistan, social context**.**

## Introduction

Gender based differences in travel behavior have been extensively investigated in developed countries, particularly in the West (Transportation Research Board, 2004). The existing literature shows that women exhibit significantly different, albeit suppressed, mobility patterns than men (Rosenbloom, 2004, Babinard and Scott, 2009). However, these gendered patterns in developing countries remain underexplored. It is expected that the developing countries have more pronounced gender mobility gaps as their women exhibit lower level of access to mobility resources and face additional socio cultural mobility constraints that significantly affect their travel decisions, mode choice, and purpose of travel (Gossen and Purvis, 2004).

Mobility is essential for accessing basic services, such as education, healthcare, and social networks. This ability is particularly important for developing countries where mobility remains limited and the majority of their population depends on walking or using public transport in their daily lives (Babinard and Scott, 2009). The ability to pay for personal and household transportation expenditures is also a concern for most of them, particularly for low-income groups. Moreover, the significant influence of socio-cultural contexts on individual mobility has been increasingly recognized over the past decades (Rajé, 2007; Bamberg et al., 2007; Carrasco and Farber, 2014).

Women are particularly affected by these factors because of their limited access to economic resources and their dependence on family members for daily mobility (Law, 1999). The current paper quantifies daily mobility levels of Pakistani men and women and examines the effects of important demographic variables across gender. This analysis provides useful insights into the gender-based mobility inequality in Pakistan—a developing country facing significant mobility issues—by analyzing how various demographic variables influence the mobility behaviors of men and women.

To the best of our knowledge, this paper is also the first to analyze the 2007 Pakistan Time-Use Survey (PTUS) dataset. Here, we attempt to answer the following questions: 1 1. Do men and women exhibit similar mobility patterns in terms of trip rate, mode choice, travel duration, and trip purpose? 2. How do socio-demographic factors, such as age, marital status, income, and area of residence, affect the mobility behavior of men and women? With our findings, our work aims to complement existing knowledge and provide new evidence on gender mobility differences as well as the differential influence of various socio-cultural factors on female mobility.

The rest of this paper is divided into six sections. Section 2 describes the gendered nature of mobility. Section 3 reviews how mobility is measured in travel surveys. Section 4 explains the effect of socio-cultural context on gendered mobility in Pakistan. Section 5 describes the dataset and measurement procedure. Section 6 presents the results and discussion. Finally, Section 7 presents the potential effects of gender differences on mobility and mode choice with specific reference to the local context of the study area. 2. Gender and mobility Mobility is a broad term that represents the physical and virtual movement of people, objects, and energy in space and time (Urry, 2000). The current paper focuses on the everyday movement of people, which Zelinsky (1971) refers to as “circulation.” Mobility is essential to our social and economic lives as well as to our personal wellbeing (Reichman, 1976).

Hence, mobility not merely refers to the mobile individual, but also to the connection among people, places, and services where each individual is embedded into the larger systems of household, family, community, and society (Bland, 1983; Levinson and Kumar, 1995; Handy, 1996; Harvey and Taylor, 2000). Therefore, the social, cultural, and geographical contexts of an individual must be taken into account for better understanding his/her mobility (Hanson, 2010).

Gender, on the other hand, is a complex genealogy term; that is linked to the differences between men and women and tied to the unequal power relationship that underlies such differences (Heward and Bunwaree, 1999). The concept has been explored from two distinctive standpoints: one that sees gender as a biologically determined and fixed process and another that sees it as a socially constructed and evolving phenomenon (Tannen, 1994). The meanings and practices of gender vary from one place to another, which leads to a post–structuralist understanding of the dynamic differences among men and women in contemporary society (Bussey and Bandura, 1999).

Gender related processes shape and reinforce our daily patterns of movement. Women are generally less mobile and have a smaller spatial range than men (Li et al., 2004). Studies show that females make fewer trips, work closer to their homes, and are more dependent on public transport than men (Hanson and Hanson, 1980; Rosenbloom, 2004). Women are also more likely to engage in non-work travel with complex trip structures (Dobbs, 2005). Other studies have also reported a slow but gradual convergence in gender mobility differences in developed countries (Crane, 2007). Overall, the findings show a broadly consistent pattern of behavior across geographically and economically similar environments. Some context-specific peculiarities are significant in other contexts and women may depend on non-motorized modes and travel for longer durations than men (Porter, 2002).

The place-specific characteristics of gendered mobility patterns reflect and result from the particular societal, economic, and built environment of those areas. Given the knowledge gap, many scholars, such as Hanson (2010), have called for a greater context-specific understanding of mobility across different cultures and contexts. 2 3. Mobility in travel surveys Travel surveys, the only source of information on day-to-day mobility, collect data on individual travel behavior through trip-based Household Travel Surveys (HTS) and activity-based Time-Use Surveys (TUS). HTS measure the purpose, time, and mode of each trip, while TUS measure all activities and their characteristics, such as location and start/end time.

Travel is among the measured activities for which associated indicators, such as mode of travel, are also noted down (Pendyala, 2002). This results in significant variations in travel behavior estimates for the same area and over a similar period (Hubert et al., 2008). HTS remain the popular source of travel behavior information even though they present a rather incomplete picture of the particular travel context and suffer from limitations, such as soft refusal (Gerike et al., 2015).

In contrast, TUS are less popular in travel behavior studies even if they can provide a more complete contextual dimension of daily mobility (Noble, 2001). Given that travel surveys are usually undertaken in developed countries, the other parts of the world lack such precise information on their daily travel behavior. Many of these countries have carried out TUS that can be used for mobility analysis. However, due to the lack of access to their datasets, TUS remain a scarcely used resource in travel behavior analysis in these areas. 4. Context of mobility in Pakistan Social life in South Asia is characterized by the traditional patriarchal family system, in which men are breadwinners and authorities in the household, while females are homemakers and have lower degrees of power and autonomy (Sathar and Kazi, 1997). Women are considered family honor and sociocultural values restrict them from establishing any kind of relation—sexual or nonsexual—with unrelated men (Mumtaz, 2003).

Age, marital status, and social role also affect the level of honor based social restrictions in multiple ways (Sathar and Kazi, 2000). Generally, the women in their adulthood age, married and those from certain tribes, castes and localities experience greater social restrictions than the others (Jejeebhoy and Sathar, 2001). Female mobility within the abovementioned sociocultural context is closely linked with the social code of honor. Travel is considered a potentially risky activity for women as it may lead to unwanted interactions with men and loss of honor (Papanek, 1971). Therefore, the mobility of women is closely monitored by their families. Sathar and Kazi (1997) state that female mobility is a controlled through permission, veiling, and escort. Travel permission is usually granted for subsistence activities, such as fetching water, and is often denied for non-essential activities, such as leisure and socializing.

Veiling of bodies becomes important for social acceptance, particularly for travelling through streets and public places dominated by ghair (unrelated) men. Similarly, having an escort is important for walking trips, particularly when the destination is outside of the local neighborhood. The level of adherence to these social practices varies considerably across geographies and is closely linked to individual, household, and broader societal preferences (Khan, 1999).

As a result, these social practices influence female mobility decisions, travel purposes and trip characteristics such as timing, mode choice and route selection. They also play a strong role in creating significant differences in the daily mobility behavior between men 3 and women, of which a little is presently known. Gender difference in travel behavior is rarely measured in Pakistan and in other South Asian contexts because of unavailable data. This paper fills such gap by quantifying and comparing daily travel behaviors in Pakistani men and women.

It also examines the effect of important individual- and household-related demographic characteristics on these mobility patterns in the country. Figure 1: Area surveyed in the 2007 Pakistan Time Use Survey. 5. Data and methods 5.1 2007 Pakistan Time-Use Survey (PTUS) This paper used the 2007 PTUS dataset, which is the only account of national time-use in the country. PTUS was carried out to estimate the contribution of women in economic activities for preparing gender-equitable budgetary allocations (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2008). It collected data from a national sample of 19,600 households, selected systematically through a spatial, multi-stage, stratified sampling methodology. Time-use diaries were collected from two persons, who were more than 9 years of age, from each sample household. The diary respondents were selected using the “Kish Grid” probability sampling methodology (Kish, 1949).

PTUS is a statistical representative of the Pakistani population at provincial and urban/rural geographical levels. This survey excludes the Federally Azad Tribal Areas, few districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, military restricted areas, homeless people, those living in prisons/hotels, and individuals below 10 years of age. In sum, this survey covers 97 % of the country’s population excluding children below 10 years of age, and 78% of the overall national population.

The survey was conducted during January 2008 to February 2009, with sample roughly equally distributed between months and days of the week. The downloaded data files contain data on 19,306 households and 37,830 time-use diaries. Low non-response rates of 1.5% and 3.5 % were recorded in the household and time-use diary interviews, respectively. 5.2 Measurement of travel activity The diary section of PTUS recorded individual time-use information on the day before the survey in 123 detailed activity codes that were based on the UN-recommended International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Surveys (ICATUS) (Harvey and Niemi, 1993). Twenty-four hours of the diary day were divided into 48 “episodes,” with each episode lasting for 30 minutes. The survey enlisted a maximum of three activities in each episode and recorded their simultaneity, and context locations. Using the diary data, we calculated the time for each activity. For those episodes with only one activity, the entire 30 minutes were allotted to that mentioned activity. For those episodes with more than one activity, 30 minutes were allotted to each activity if they occurred simultaneously, or if they were carried out one after the other, 30 minutes was divided equally between them.

This time allocation method helped preserving travel time-use in simultaneous activities. PTUS noted the travel activity in 20 travel activity codes. The mode of transportation was noted with two context location variables (Figure 2). The first variable, Location Code 1, noted a respondent location in eight categories, including travel activity. The second context variable, Location Code 2, noted the mode of travel in case of travel activity or otherwise mentioned the location as inside or outside. Location code 1 1 Own dwelling 2 Someone else’s dwelling 3 Field, farm, or other agricultural workplaces 4 Other workplaces outside private dwelling 5 Educational establishments 6 Public areas (i.e.. not in a private dwelling, workplace, or educational establishment)

7 Travelling or waiting to travel 8 Others (specify) Location code 2 1 Inside 2 Outside 3 Travelling on foot 4 Travelling by private transport (i.e., car, van, or motorcycle) 5 Travelling by taxi (including Rickshaw or Quinqi) 6 Travelling by train 7 Travelling by bus 8 Travelling by bicycle 9 Travelling by other means (specify) Figure 2: Context location variables of the time-use diary. The travel behavior data were summarized by activity categories and by Location Code 2. The summary file was generated by following the analysis techniques in Pentland et al. (1999), Michelson (2005), and Singer and Willett (2003), particularly the reshape and collapse functions in Stata 12.

This generated a detailed set of information on activity travel behavior and daily time-use in the country. In this paper, we present the findings on individual trip rate and mode choice estimates across both genders and other important demographic variables. 5 6 6. Results and discussion 6.1 Gender difference in mobility Our analysis counts a total of 120,000 trips and 2.6 million minutes of travel with an average of 3.1 trips and 70 minutes of travel per person. Males account for approximately 80% of these trips and 79% of the travel duration, while females only account for 20% of these trips and 21% of the travel duration. Therefore, it can be said that, in general, Pakistani women are nearly four times less mobile than men1.

Approximately 30% of the respondents did not report any trip on the diary day. Such immobility rate is considerably higher than the previously reported levels in developed countries (Hubert et al., 2008). Work by Baker et al. (2005) and Elias and Shiftan (2014) also reported higher immobility rates in various Asian contexts. However, the gender differences in immobility have been rarely reported. Further analysis shows that Pakistani women are more likely to stay at home than travel on a random day since 55% of the surveyed women did not report travel as compared to less than 4% men reporting so. Similarly, urban residents are significantly more likely to report immobility than rural residents. Table 1 shows that, on average, a mobile respondent makes 4.5 daily trips and travels for 100 minutes per day. However, the gender mobility differences are significant and wide. Women make nearly half as many daily trips (2.7) as men (5.4). Their daily travel duration (63 minutes) is also 46% lower than that of men (117 minutes). One-way ANOVA results confirm significant gender differences in daily trip rate (F =5206) and travel duration (F=4517)

# **PakistanCables-DEIPolicy**

Objective: 1.1 The purpose of the policy is to improve the way diversity and inclusion considerations are integrated within Pakistan Cables Limited (“the Company”). Diversity at Pakistan Cables Limited is about di erence. Di erence in (and not limited to) gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, nationality, gender identity, race, religion, age or industry background. The Company’s approach to diversity and inclusion is grounded in:

Our Culture that encourages respect for each other, embracing diversity and creating the right environment for employees to thrive Our commitment to the UN Compact and the basic human rights of our employees

2. Applicability •Our Code of Conduct which outline the underlying principles on how we conduct business with our stakeholders’ and applies to all our employees. The Company ensures that everyone is treated fairly and with dignity without any discretion; encouraging them to voice themselves without any feel of harm or prejudice. A workplace where everyone has equal access to opportunities and decision-making that e ects their personal and work lives.

2.1 The Company’s diversity and inclusion initiatives are applicable—but not limited—to our practices and policies on: recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits; professional development and training; promotions; transfers; social and recreational programs; layo s; terminations; 01 page Diversity & Inclusion Policy and the ongoing development of a work environment built on the premise of diversity and inclusion that encourages and enforces: 2.2 Respectful communication and cooperation between all employees. 2.3 Teamwork and employee participation, permitting the representation of all groups and employee perspectives. 2.4 Work/life balance to accommodate employees’ varying needs. 2.5 Employer and employee contributions to the communities, as also dened in the Company’s Corporate Social Responsibility & Donation (CSR&D) policy, we serve to promote a greater understanding and respect for diversity. 3. 4. General Diversity & Inclusion Undertakings: 3.1 Pakistan Cables management shall undertake at all times to extend equal opportunities to individuals and shall attempt to safeguard them against discrimination, promoting a work culture that values diverse teams. 3.2 To promote a diverse organization and an inclusive workplace environment for all internal and external stakeholders such as employees, customers, suppliers. 3.3 Commit to maintaining a culture of inclusion and diversity whilst nurturing the workplace where employee career development is upheld without differentiating between genders, basis of language, religion, political or social status. 3.4 With an aim is to build a culture of inclusion where all employees feel supported, valued and enabled to be their best, Pakistan Cables Limited will focus on targeted initiatives and investments that help the Company to progress its ambition. Diversity & Inclusion Undertakings with respect to Gender 4.1 In addition to the basic measures taken to drive diversity and inclusion, the Company will also proactively undertake the following with respect to Gender diversity and inclusion

Address any existing and potential barriers to equal gender opportunities, diversity and inclusion within the recruitment process. Increasing the number of women applying to and being oered a role in the Company is a priority. Set targets for recruitment, to ensure Pakistan Cables Limited has diversity in its shortlists and measure the gender composition throughout the recruitment process

As part of the Company’s recruitment strategy, there is strong focus to attract more females across all its functions.

Training & DevelopmentThe Company will provide regular trainings (online/in-person) to Line managers with hiring responsibilities that provide guidance on mitigating unconscious bias from the recruitment process. With the aim to help reduce any gender bias, stereotyping, etc. 4.4 Facilities:

• To build inclusion at Pakistan Cables Limited, conduct training sessions will be conducted to focus on understanding inclusion and how certain biases sometimes hinder inclusive behaviors at work. Include and highlight relevant gender and diversity-sensitive approaches and learning opportunities available to all employees , encouraging capacity building at all levels.

Undertake focused and speci c programs to promote and proliferate open-minded attitudes towards gender diversity, encouraging to develop interpersonal skills such as critical thinking, positive/constructive communication and empathic listening. The Company will ensure that suitable facilities are available and in place for females including but not limited to, transportation, washrooms and prayer areas. 4.5 Reporting & Monitoring: The Company will carry out surveys to be able to get feedback and measure the satisfaction / engagement level of female sta . Ensure that there are clearly dened and sensitive reporting mechanisms in place in the event that there are any concerns or complaints from female sta .

Diversity & Inclusion Policy Ensure that there are clearly dened and sensitive reporting mechanisms in place in the event that any gender is facing harassment, as per the Company’s Harassment Policy. Incorporate measures to prevent and respond to gender-based harassment and/or violence in all areas of operations. Take necessary steps to ensure that our organization actively promote equitable opportunities through equal work, anonymized hiring, extended mentoring systems, balanced remuneration and facilities such as maternal and paternal leaves.

The Company will target to ensure that females are compensated at par with their male peers in comparable cadres and positions and will carry out gap analysis of the same. The Company will target to ensure that career progression and opportunities are equally available to all genders. Progress against targets set to measure effectiveness of the Company’s diversity and inclusion programs will be measured and published in internal management reports, in reports made to the Board and in the Company’s Annual Report. Diversity & Inclusion Undertakings with respect to Differently abled 5.1. In its bid to create a culture of acceptance and inclusivity, Pakistan Cables Limited will promote equal opportunities for the differently abled person(s) as part of its ongoing and future programs. For purposes of this policy, a ‘differently abled’ person is denied as an individual(s) suffering from a long term physical or cognitive impairment that a ects a major life function, consistent with the definition of the Disability Rights Act 2020. In this way, a barrier free environment will ensure full and equal participation in society by all, regardless of age, gender or ability. 5.2 Commitment: • Pakistan Cables shall ensure that a di erently abled employee is respected and oared equal opportunity to participate freely in his/her line of work within the Company without any discrimination. Diversity & Inclusion Policy 04 page • No person shall discriminate against the differently abled persons or violate their rights or restrict benefits in any manner. The Company will provide support and can make adjustments for differently abled through the recruitment process and throughout their careers with Pakistan Cables Limited. The Company will continually take steps to provide a better experience and facilitate, where applicable, any special requirements for dealing with its suppliers and customers with physical disabilities. The Company shall take immediate, appropriate and result oriented measures to raise awareness amongst all its employees with regards to recognition and respect for the differently abled persons and their rights.

5.3 Facilities: The Company shall ensure the provision of reasonable facilities including necessary assistive aid and equipment which a person with disabilities would reasonably require to perform his duties.

5.4 Targets & Training:

• The Company will ensure that suitable facilities are available and in place for differently abled that may include but not limited to, transportation, washrooms, broad doors, ramps, important announcements written in large font, over a period of time. The Company will ensure the mandatory quota of 5% of the total employee base or as prescribed by the local law but will not limit itself to this target. Pakistan Cables employees and suppliers will be trained in issues of relevance to the differently abled persons so that, as appropriate, the Company’s efforts and activities reject those issues over a period of time. The Company shall ensure that the differently abled people are treated equally like persons without such disabilities and that they are not discriminated in exercise of their rights. This policy is applicable with effect from May 01, 2021.