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Gender Mainstreaming Strategies and Human Resource Development Practices at University Level

Ashfaque Ahmad Shah¹, Uzma Shahzadi², Zunaira Fatima Syeda³, Ateeqa Mehmood⁴

¹Centre for Economics of Education, Department of Education, University of Sargodha,

²Assistant Professor, Centre for Economics of Education, Department of Education, University of Sargodha

³Centre for Economics of Education, Department of Education, University of Sargodha,

⁴Centre for Economics of Education, Department of Education, University of Sargodha,

ABSTRACT

Organizations have adopted numerous mechanisms to increase the participation of women in top management. For the purpose, organizations are adopting gender mainstreaming strategies (GEMS) for gender equality as an important aspect of human resource development (HRD) practices. Present quantitative survey was to explore the perception of employees about gender mainstreaming strategies reflected through human resource practices at university level. Population of the study was all regular teachers of the University of Sargodha. In the wake of limited resources of time and finance, convenient sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 teachers (35% of the population). The study adapted a standardized research instrument of international labour organization (ILO) of United Nations (UN) to assess GEMS and HRD practices at university. Descriptive and inferential statistics was applied using SPSS version 23. No gender difference was found in (1) Gender Balance and Equal Pay, (2) job description and terms of reference, (3) Recruitment Procedures, and (4) staff appraisals. Specificity in taking one university was the strength of this study which was the main limitation (beside convenient sampling) to generalise its findings. It implied greater awareness among the stakeholder in order to enhance the quality of the learning organisation i. e. university. It was the first ever study at university level in local context. This study recommended that the university administration should have better awareness and understanding on GEMS for recruitment and their ensuing work assignments.

Keywords: Gender, Practices, Gender Mainstreaming, Human Resources, Human Resource development

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is an address of many fields of study especially in the field of human resource management, after industrial revolution. There is clear evidence of HR

Address of Correspondence

Ashfaque Ahmed Shah
multanxa@gmail.com

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processes being gendered (Truss, 1999; Woodall, 1996; Dickens 1999 and Bapuji, Ertug and Shaw 2020). According to Einarsdottir, Rafnsdottir, Sigurdardottir and Torfason (2020), gender equality carries different meanings in different social, political and economic situations. Research do agree on some common problems across cultures these include unsatisfactory access of women to financial and environmental possessions, violence to women, to provide basic rights but difference to give the rights of male and female, unequal pay, unequal load of work, violence means not only inequality in basic rights but keep barriers in the progress of political and social development of females (Moser and Moser 2005; Malik 2014; Watson, 1993; Meintjes, Wilford and Miller 1998; Wilford 2004; Farahnak, et al 2019).

Although, it is observed that, despite of the discussions about gender equality and actions to promote gender equality are relatively new, there is a setup of institutional mechanism to address gender equality in the past few years (Treviño, Balkin and Gomez-Mejia 2017). It is pertinent to mention that issues related to equal access, opportunity and the creation of support mechanisms for gender equality should be understood as a macro process beyond the boundaries of mere harmony across the globe (Walby 2005; Malik 2014; Hideg and Shen 2019). Literature provides recommendations to overcome gender equality problems in order to address the efficiency of an organization (Pollert 2003) Research in the field of human resource management and development supports the likely way of protecting human rights devoid of gender biases. This is why, Gender mainstreaming strategies has become the main address of human resource practices in national and international organizations. It is found that the purpose of Gender Mainstreaming Strategies (GEMS) is to give equal rights and chances for male and female by way of benefits, members and choices (Díaz-García, 2013).

Since 1995, gender mainstreaming, more widely, has been adopted as a strategy for gender equality than ever before (Miller & Razawi, 1995; McLaughlin et al. 2018). A number of international actors have played a major role in the process of increasing awareness of the importance of this strategy. It is quite evident that both as initiator and organizer of the world conference on women, the role of the United Nations has been prominent. United nations also act as distributor of the platform for actions in the field of

gender and gender studies (Moser and Moser 2005). The idea of gender mainstreaming is put most frequently in the platform for actions and has been taken into account the impact on gender before decisions are taken (Verloo 1999; Janssens and Steyaert 2019)

Literature of gender main streaming reflects that gender mainstreaming mostly considered as the main strategy for addressing the progress and rights of females in equality with males (Woodford-Berger, 2007; Lyons, Curnow & Mather, 2004). This strategy does limit itself not for the development the rights of females but the development of a strategy that works in all ways of life addressing equality both at policy level and during actions taken in an organization. Thus, the treatments and opportunities can be given to both without considering the gender (Whyte 2019).

However, gender mainstreaming is universally accepted as a key strategy for solving the problems of gender inequality (Allen, French and Poteet 2016, Toh and Leonardelli 2013), that sometimes in developing countries, is the only strategy to address the gender equality (Sawyer and Valerio 2018; Sawyer and Thoroughgood 2017). Integration of gender main streaming into all relevant development policies and programs is the main concern of development agencies now a days. Therefore, gender equality is reinforced by the use of analytical tools that include expert meetings, training manuals, checklists, Gender Impact Assessments, relevant data collection and tracing the progress (Blommaert & van den Brink 2020). It was few decades before that gender mainstreaming was largely seen as a political agenda and regarded as a critical solution for the development agencies and their commitment to foster gender equality and improve women's lives. It is noted that if gender mainstreaming was applied with rigor and care, it will result in guaranteed development. The goals of gender equality promised by government officials and development agencies can be best achieved by a mechanism of considering gender main streaming. Indeed, it became "something that just needs to be done" (Verloo 1999, König et al 2020).

Meanwhile, it is noted that gender mainstreaming, as a policy and practice, Yet, has to achieve more than recognition in human resource management (Mendelsohn et al 2016). It is noticed that there have been improvements in female participation in many organizations that were considered forbidden prior to this like parliaments, government

management groups, armed forces, top managerial positions in many multi nationals., but it is noted that this success story has often been temporary and ineffective(Rao and Kelleher 2005). For achieving gender equality, it is therefore assumed that gender mainstreaming is a key tool. It is also evident that the understanding of the role of gender main streaming and its application has often been based upon the assumption that gender is a synonym for women. Since past few decades, the larger developmental organizations like UNESCO, UNO and many NGOs have focused on aim to mainstream women into educational, economic and political institutions. Yet a little change is observed in the ability of these women to influence their positions into greater respect, authority and power. For example, the women induction on the basis of gender quota in the parliaments increased the number of women, but not their ability to affect political decisions and to address the increase of the power of women in parliament. Similarly, women in national and international organizations, though main streamed but suffer gender discrimination or dis-proportionality (Cook, 2007, Triana et al 2019). In Pakistan, in higher educational institutes both gender work together, but their number is observed dis proportion (Yousaf & Schmiede, 2017). During last few decades, special consideration was given to the gender equality focus. For the reason gender mainstreaming strategies are adopted by human resource management department in higher educational institutes in Pakistan. The present paper aimed at exploring the gender main streaming strategies in human resource management practices of a public sector university, as a case.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender mainstreaming emphasize on the organized establishment related to issues of gender concerning all institutions in their policies, rules and regulations (Ochieng 2014). Sawyer and Thoroughgood 2017) examined that gender equality is more strengthening in past especially in the business case. So, question arises here, that establishing the forum based on gender equitable can be handled in the same manner as of organizational change process (Sawyer and Valerio 2018). Ramzan, Khan, Hussain & Sarwar (2015) investigated that universities around globe establish themselves as an intensified part of learning and are adjudged as highly reliable for stimulating the

intrinsic values of students irrespective of gender for their recognition. Consequently, fair treatment, equality and social justice are the basic concerns in almost all universities. These prerequisites enhance the attraction and beauty of the university. It is the process of global scope that both genders are considered important for the high level positions at the university level.

Sandler & Rao (2012); Farahnak, et al (2019) have highlighted this issue that gender mainstreaming is challenging task in every organization generally, but it is very crucial for universities. Situation of gender biased may prevalent in any organization, university and in any culture. Official structure, social standards, dispositional and situational elements including turbulent thoughts about attributes of members in group are important features which are accountable for the situation of gender biased. Some central actors take less interest in this gender issue and this interrogated two basic arguments: First, what is the procedure adopted by the educational institutions regarding gender mainstreaming? And second, how they implement that procedure in practice?

Triana et al (2019), conducted a study to judge the perception of gender mainstreaming and employability in organizational structures around the globe. This was a meta-analysis study to judge the consequences of uneven employability in the organizations. Perceived gender mainstreaming is negatively related to job attitudes, physical and psychological health and work related outcomes. Ochieng (2014) examined that context of colonial and post-colonial provides the evidences that male and female ascertain the different representations and cultural meanings that demonstrate the relations of power of society. However, in spite of the fact that mobilization of the African women, increase representation in the part of governance and advocacy, the current situation is still far away from the equal representation regarding males and females at the different phases in the career of higher education. There is dearth of gender disaggregated information and data in all institutions of Higher Education almost. Ochieng (2014) cited that is based on the Gender Equity in Commonwealth Higher Education and concluded that there are large number of discrepancies between the male and females in the Higher Education Institutions. Strong evidence on the antecedents and consequence of the gender inequality is compulsory but the lack of statistics and gender-

related information creates the hurdles to coordinate with the true picture regarding progress concerning gender equality. Adding to this, a desk study done on the selected Higher Educational Institutions of Africa determines that there is still dearth of gap and knowledge at all levels.

Ramzan, Khan Hussain & Sarwar (2015) conducted the research in University of Sargodha and Bahauddin Zakaria University Multan, which are acting as Higher Education Institutions according to the implementation of strategies by the Higher Education Commission. Ramzan, Khan, Hussain and Sarwar (2015) investigated that different strategies are adopted to cope up with gender equality. Sandler & Rao (2012) investigated that issues of gender increases conflicts in males and females. There are various diverse kinds of gender mainstreaming due to different perceptions and theories of gender equality even. The political and social system are based on the direction of the goals. Gender mainstreaming especially needs females in the legislative bodies, gender proficiency concerning civilizations at social level and advancement of the gender arrangement on the part of administration. Van Eerdewijk and Dubel (2012) provides that gender mainstreaming is actually based on the concentration of the organization, but concerning the field of education, it is not considered compulsory (Karlsson, 2010).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is descriptive in nature. It used quantitative methods to explore the gender mainstreaming strategies (GEMS) in human resource practice of the organization. Organization that taken part in the study was university of Sargodha. Regular teachers working in the university made the population of the study. A sample of 200 selected conveniently (35% of the population), and an instrument was administered to collect the response from the sample. In the absence of resources from external agency, the researchers made personal provisions of finance and time to accomplish this research project.

The study adapted a standardized research instrument of international labour organization (ILO) of United Nations (UN) to assess GEMS and HRD practices at university. The instrument was standardized tool of ILO that initially comprised 18 items.

During validation process, items were added, and final tool was of 21 items. The data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS version 23.

No gender difference was found in (1) Gender Balance and Equal Pay, (2) job description and terms of reference, (3) Recruitment Procedures, and (4) staff appraisals. Specificity in taking one university is the strength of this study which is the main limitation (besides convenient sampling) to generalise its findings.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data analysis is reflected in .Descriptive analysis using frequencies and percentages, Mann Whiteny U Test was applied to explore the differences among groups of males and females and spearman's rho was used to determine the correlation between gender main streaming strategies and human resource development practices i.,e recruitment procedures, equal pay, term of reference and staff appraisals.

Table1. Gender balance and equal pay			
Statements	Yes%	No %	Not Sure%
1. Among all levels of managerial functions, Men and women distribution is equal.	130(65.0)	58(29.0)	12(6.0)
2. Among the core personnel of unit program/project, Men and women are distributed equally.	116(58.0)	76(38.0)	8(4.0)
3. Among the externally hired personnel both genders are distributed equally, e.g. consultants, researchers, project partners?	111(55.5)	72(36.0)	17(8.5)
4. There is equal gender balance among full-time and part-time staff	83(41.5)	102(51.0)	15(7.5)
5. Are there gender specific roles (e.g., managers, supervisors, drivers and/or field workers are men and secretaries, and administrative or accounting assistants are females)?	87(43.5)	98(49.0)	15(7.5)
6. Organization try to achieve greater parity, if gender balance is uneven	80(40.0)	101(50.5)	19(9.5)
7. Regular and externally hired personnel from both genders are equally paid for work of equal value.	94(47.0)	86(43.0)	20(10.0)

Above table reflects that majority of the respondent agreed (65,58, & 55%) with gender discrimination strategies like equal distribution of managerial functions in the organization and to the equal distribution to research, projects and consultancies. Further, table reflects the agreement of the respondents (47%) to the equal salary for the work.

While on the other hand, table reflects that respondents (51 & 49%) disagree to the adoption of gender mainstreaming strategies for both regular and contract employees.

Table further shows disagreement (50.5%) to the availability of achieving greater gender parity and they also show disagreement to the availability of job as perceived with gender role.

Table 2. Job Description and terms of reference			
Statements	Yes	No	Not Sure
8. The candidate(s) need to address a gender perspective in their job or consultancy as reflected by the job description or TOR.	107 (53.5)	70 (35.0)	23 (11.5)
9. The candidates do gender analysis and come up with recommendations for inequalities as shown by the job description or TOR for technical staff and consultants.	98 (49.0)	77 (38.5)	25 (12.5)
10. Is specific gender expertise stated in the job description or TOR for the person or team clearly	114 (57.0)	64 (32.0)	22 (11.0)

Table 2 reflects that respondents agree to the incorporation of gender perspective in their job, there is a need to address gender analysis by the employees and propose recommendations for inequalities, if any. The table, further, shows that there is gender specification mentioned in job description by the organization.

Table 3. Recruitment procedures			
Statements	Yes	No	Not Sure
11. During recruitment and promotion, organisation promote equal opportunities between men and women	100(50.0)	83(41.5)	17(8.5)
12. There is gender sensitive and free of biasness Vacancy announcements, job descriptions and TOR i.e., using as generic pronouns.	83(41.5)	97(48.5)	19(9.5)
13. Underrepresented groups are encouraged to apply (e.g. women, men, the disabled, members of ethnic groups) in the call for applications	100(50.0)	77(38.5)	23(11.5)
14. It is made possible to widely circulate the vacancy announcement to areas so that both gender likely to read them	108(54.0)	75(37.5)	17(8.5)
15. Both the vacancy announcement and the job description carry clear statement of gender expertise	107(53.5)	72(36.0)	21(10.5)
16. Gender awareness, expertise or competency of the candidates' measurement for all relevant posts is included in written tests and interviews	97(48.5)	73(36.5)	30(15.0)
17. An official with gender expertise is represented in the selection panel	83(41.5)	93(46.5)	24(12.0)
18. Avoidance gender bias is prominent feature in setting payment rates.	97(48.5)	87(43.5)	16(8.0)
19. A proper contract is offered for the selected candidate	94(47.0)	88(44.0)	18(9.0)

Table 3 reflects the views of employees about gender mainstreaming strategies in recruitment policies of the organization. It reflects that majority of the respondents agree to the promotion of equal job opportunities, call for application is made for underrepresented groups, wide spread of job recruitment is made for awareness of both genders, gender specification with job specification is mentioned clearly, written test and selection interview include a measurement of the gender awareness, expertise or competency of the candidates for all relevant posts, there is no gender bias in setting payment rates and contract of job is in line with fundamental job standards. Table 3 reflects that respondents disagree with advertisement that is free of linguistic bias and no gender expert is available during selection board.

Table 4. Staff Appraisals			
Statements	Yes	No	Not Sure
20. There is accountability for the staff to support gender equality in their work?	82 (41.0)	89 (44.5)	29 (14.5)
21. Performance appraisals of managers sufficiently cover the performance on gender mainstreaming and gender equality	93 (46.5)	88 (44.0)	19 (9.5)

Table 4 represents that majority of respondents (46.5%) show agreement to the availability of gender mainstreaming in performance appraisals of managers, specialists and program officers. While table reflects that majority of respondents (44.5%) disagree that for supporting gender equality in work, staff is made accountable.

Table 5. Gender Difference in GEMS practices		
Theme	U	P
1. Gender Balance and Equal Pay (GBEP)	4551.64	0.38
2. Job Description and Terms of Reference (JDTR)	4757.66	0.65
3. Recruitment Procedures (RP)	4599.77	0.49
4. Staff Appraisals (SA)	4587.25	0.37

Table 5 reflects that there is no significant difference between the views of male and female regarding Job description and terms of reference. Table 5 also reflects that at $\alpha 0.5$, there is significant difference in the views of males and females for gender balance and equal pay, recruitment procedures and staff appraisals.

Table 6. Correlation between “Gender Balance and Equal Pay” and “Job description and Terms of Reference”

			GBEP	JDTR
Spearman's rho	GAEP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.145*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.041
		N	200	200
	GDTR	Correlation Coefficient	.145*	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.041	.
		N	200	200

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). Where GBEP is gender balance and equal pay and GDTR is gender description and term of reference.

Table 6 reflects that there is there is a weak positive relationship (.145) between the Equal pay, gender description and term of reference. Alpha α value is 0.05 and p value is .041 so, the null hypothesis to be rejected

Table 7. Correlation between “Gender Balance and Equal Pay” and “Recruitment Procedures”

			GBEP	RP
Spearman's rho	GAEP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.282**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	200	199
	RP	Correlation Coefficient	.282**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	199	199

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 7 shows that the value of spearman's correlation .282 revealed weak positive relationship between gender and equal pay and recruitment process. Alpha α value is 0.05 and p value is .000 thus the null hypothesis to be rejected

Table 8. Correlation between “Gender Balance and Equal Pay” and “Staff Appraisal”

			GBEP	SA
Spearman's rho	GAEP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.259**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	200	200
	SA	Correlation Coefficient	.259**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	200	200

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 8 shows that value of spearman's correlation .259 revealed weak positive relationship between gender and equal pay and staff appraisals. Alpha α value is 0.05 and p value is .000 thus the null hypothesis to be rejected.

Table 9. Correlation between "Job description and Terms of Reference" and "Recruitment Procedure"				
			JDTR	RP
Spearman's rho	GDTR	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.152*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.032
		N	200	199
	RP	Correlation Coefficient	.152*	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.032	.
		N	199	199

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table 9 shows that spearman's correlation of .152 shows that there is a very weak positive relationship between the variable. Alpha α value is 0.05 and p value is .032 so the null hypothesis to be rejected.

Table 10: Analysis of relationship between recruitment procedure and staff appraisals				
			RP	SA
Spearman's rho	RP	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.310**
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.000
		N	199	199
	SA	Correlation Coefficient	.310**	1.000
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	.
		N	199	200

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Table shows that spearman's correlation rho value is .310 which showed that there is a positive relationship between recruitment procedures and staff appraisals. Alpha α value is 0.05 and p value is .000 so the null hypothesis failed to be accepted.

Organizations have adopted numerous mechanisms to increase the participation of women in top management. The present study explored the gender main streaming strategies (GEMS) as part of human resource development (HRD) practices at university of Sargodha as a case. In the wake of limited resources of time and finance, convenient sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 teachers (35% of the population).

The study adapted a standardized research instrument of international labour organization (ILO) of United Nations (UN) to assess GEMS and HRD practices at university. Gender Balance and Equal Pay was the most important gender mainstreaming strategy in corporate resource management. Many studies since 1980s to date (for example: Bourdeau, Ollier-Malaterre and Houlfourt 2019) support evidently the findings of our study.

Positive correlation between equal pay and job description was another finding of this study which had been earlier evidenced by many researchers like Khalid and Aroosh (2014), Corak (2013) and Lam, Schaubroeck, and Arye. (2002). Present study found a positive relationship between “staff appraisals” and “recruitment procedures”. Work of Khera (2010) and Ensher, Grant-Vallone and Donaldson (2001) was found as an evidence upon it.

5. CONCLUSION

Study concludes that gender main streaming strategies are the part of human resource practices at university level to some extent. It is noted that gender main streaming is the part of (1) Gender Balance and Equal Pay, (2) Job Description and Term of Reference, (3) Recruitment Procedures and (4) Staff Appraisals. The study also concluded that there is no difference of opinion regarding gender main streaming strategies as a part of human resource practices.

The study recommends for adapting gender mainstreaming strategies as a major part in human resource management as well as in human resource development. The study also recommends conducting more rigorous investigations into the field of human resource practices university level.

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