

# Aligning HR Practices with SDG 5: A Study on Women Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives in Workplace as Per Reference to Coimbatore District

Dr. Gowrishankkar V<sup>1</sup> Ms., Priyadharshini S<sup>2</sup>

Associate Professor, School of Management, Nehru Institute of Technology, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu,  
vgsnair.12@gmail.com, 9042837463

Student of II MBA, School of Management, Nehru Institute of Technology, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu,  
[dhharshini09022004@gmail.com](mailto:dhharshini09022004@gmail.com)

## Abstract:

This study examines the alignment of HR practices with SDG 5, focusing on gender equality and women empowerment in the workplace. It evaluates the effectiveness of diversity and inclusion initiatives in building an inclusive culture.

The study is based on primary data collected from 310 respondents across various sectors. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, correlation, t-test, regression, and reliability analysis were used.

Findings show that while HR practices for gender equality exist, their effectiveness is only moderate. A weak but significant correlation exists between HR policy support and equal recruitment opportunities. T-test results indicate significant differences in awareness of women support programs based on experience levels. Regression analysis reveals minimal impact of diversity initiatives on workplace inclusivity, and reliability analysis indicates poor scale consistency.

## Keywords:

Human Resource Practices, Gender Equality, Sustainable Development Goal 5, Women Empowerment, Diversity and Inclusion, Workplace Equality, HR Policies, Inclusive Culture, Women Support Programs, Organizational Development.

## Introduction:

In recent years, organizations have increasingly focused on promoting gender equality and inclusive workplace cultures. Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) emphasizes achieving gender equality and empowering women in all areas.

Human Resource (HR) practices play a crucial role in developing policies and creating a supportive environment for women employees. Promoting gender diversity and inclusion also enhances organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

However, despite these efforts, challenges such as gender bias, unequal representation in leadership roles, and lack of awareness of support programs still exist in organizations

## The Sector in Coimbatore:

Coimbatore is one of the major industrial and business cities in Tamil Nadu and is often referred to as the 'Manchester of South India.' It is also gaining recognition as an emerging Information Technology (IT), education, healthcare, and financial sector hub in recent years.

The IT sector in Coimbatore has recorded tremendous growth in recent times, with numerous software organizations and business process outsourcing (BPOs) functioning in the city. The IT sector in the city is creating job opportunities for

numerous young professionals and is helping in the city's economic growth, along with other sectors such as manufacturing, healthcare, and education.

Organizations in Coimbatore are increasingly embracing and adopting modern Human Resource (HR) practices, such as diversity and inclusion, to foster a conducive working environment. Organizations are striving to achieve gender equality, increase female participation in the workforce, and provide equal opportunities for recruitment, training, and growth.

Despite all the positive developments and advancements, there are certain challenges and issues that need to be addressed, such as gender discrimination, female empowerment, and a lack of awareness of female support groups.

### **Challenges and Opportunities:**

There are a number of challenges faced by organizations in their role in gender equality and women's empowerment through HR practices. One of the challenges is that there is still some level of gender bias in some organizations, which affects the chances of women in terms of job opportunities and promotions. Women are also not represented in more senior roles, especially leadership roles in organizations. Employees are not fully aware of the women support programs available in organizations, especially new employees. Women also face challenges in balancing their work and family life. Although HR practices are in place, not all organizations implement them in the right way. Culture and society are also challenges to women's growth in organizations, and in some organizations, harassment and discrimination of women are major challenges.

However, there are numerous areas of improvement for organizations. Organizations can build robust and fair HR policies that support equality. Organizations can also focus on building diversity and inclusion initiatives to build a positive and supportive workplace environment. Organizations can also provide training, mentorship, and development programs to empower their female employees. Organizations can also provide flexible working arrangements such as remote working and flexible working hours. Organizations can also conduct awareness programs to help their employees better understand support systems

### **Focus of the Study:**

The focus of this study is to evaluate how Human Resource (HR) practices are linked with promoting gender equality and women empowerment in the workplace, in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5). The main focus of this research is to assess the effectiveness of promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace. In addition, it also focuses on analyzing employees' perceptions of promoting equal opportunities and an inclusive environment in the workplace. Furthermore, it also focuses on analyzing whether experience is an influencing factor in promoting equal opportunities in the workplace.

### **Research Methodology:**

The quantitative research approach was used to assess the alignment of HR practices with gender equality and women empowerment. The main data collection instrument for the study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains questions on various topics such as demographic questions, workplace diversity, HR practices, women support, etc.

The sample size of the study includes 310 respondents from various sectors such as IT, manufacturing, healthcare, education, finance, etc. The convenient sampling technique was used to collect the data from the employees of various organizations.

For data analysis, various statistical methods were used. Percentage analysis was used to analyze the demographic profile of the respondents. Correlation analysis was used to analyze the relationship between the variables. T-test was used to analyze the differences. Regression analysis was used to analyze the impact of independent variables on the dependent variables. Reliability analysis was used to analyze the reliability of the data with the help of Cronbach's Alpha.

The data was analyzed with the help of statistical software and the results were interpreted to analyze the effectiveness of the

HR practices in promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

### **Literature Survey:**

Previous researchers have emphasized the role of Human Resource practices in facilitating gender equality and women empowerment in an organization. According to Alice H. Eagly (2007), although gender differences in leadership positions are evident, organizations can benefit from promoting women to such positions. Frank Dobbin & Alexandra Kalev (2016) found that diversity programs are effective only if implemented correctly with top management support.

Research carried out by World Economic Forum (2021) and McKinsey & Company (2020) indicates that gender equality in organizations enhances productivity and decision-making. According to the International Labour Organization (2019), the participation of women in the workforce also enhances organizational performance. Nishii Lisa's research (2013) indicates that the organizational climate is also important in that employees should be made to feel valued.

Rosa Beth Moss Kanter's research (1977) indicates that organizational structure is also important in the achievement of gender equality at the workplace. Further, UN Women (2020) asserts that for gender equality to be achieved, there is a need for effective HR strategies, gender equality awareness, and constant monitoring. However, despite all the efforts, there are still challenges such as gender bias, lack of awareness, and the low participation of women in leadership positions.

### **Key Findings:**

The majority of respondents belong to the age group of 18-35 years and are in entry-level and middle-level positions.

The majority of respondents think that their organization's diversity and inclusion level is moderate.

All employees think that HR policies in their organizations are supporting gender equality, but implementation is not strong.

Correlation analysis indicates that there is a very weak but statistically significant relationship between HR policy support and equal recruitment opportunity.

T-test analysis indicates that there is a significant difference in women's support program awareness depending on employee experience levels.

Employees with 1-3 years of experience have high awareness of women's support programs than employees with less than 1 year of experience.

Regression analysis indicates that diversity initiatives have a very weak impact on inclusive culture.

Reliability analysis indicates that the scale is not reliable since Cronbach's Alpha is low (0.040).

### **Demographic Profile:**

#### **Age:**

Majority of the respondents fall in the age groups of 18-25 and 26-35 years. This indicates that the majority of the participants are young employees.

#### **Gender:**

The study includes both male and female respondents. Thus, the data is well-represented.

#### **Job Level:**

Majority of the participants are in the early and mid-career stages of employment.

**Work Experience:**

A majority of respondents have less than 3 years of work experience. This shows that the workforce is not highly experienced.

**Sector:**

The majority of respondents belong to the IT/Software sector. Other sectors include manufacturing, healthcare, education, finance, etc.

Women still have not been able to reach the helm in many organizations.

Employees have also reported that they were not aware of women support programs.

**Correlation Analysis Objective:**

To check the relationship between HR policy support and equal recruitment opportunity, and whether the relationship is statistically significant.

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Significance value	(p Relationship)
HR Policy Support & Equal Recruitment	0.007	0.000 (<0.05)	Very Weak Positive

**Result:**

The correlation coefficient value is 0.007, which is very low and indicates a positive relationship between the data sets. The 'p' value is 0.000, which is lower than 0.05 and hence indicates that the relationship is statistically significant.

**T -Test:**

**Objective:**

To check whether there is a significant difference in the women support programs based on the experience level of employees.

Variable	Mean (<1 year)	Mean (1 -3 years)	Mean Difference	T value
Women Support Programs	2.70	3.12	0.417	1.829

**Result:**

Since the p-value is less than 0.05, there is a significant difference between the groups. The employees who have experience ranging from 1 to 3 years are more aware of the women support programs.

**Reliability Analysis:**

**Objective:**

To check the internal consistency of the scale used in the study.

To check if the items in the questionnaire are measuring the same factor. To check the reliability of the data using Cronbach's Alpha.

Measure	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	0.040
Number of items	10

**Result:**

Since the value of Cronbach's Alpha ( $0.040 < 0.7$ ), the reliability of the scale is poor. The scale is not consistent and needs to be improved.

**Interpretation:**

**Percentage Analysis:**

It is clear that the results indicate the distribution of the respondents, with most of them in the younger age groups and early career levels.

**Correlation Analysis:**

There is a very weak but statistically significant relationship between HR policy support and equal recruitment.

**T-Test:**

There is a significant difference between employees based on their experience in terms of awareness of women support programs

**Reliability Analysis:**

It is clear that the results indicate poor reliability, as the data is based on low Cronbach's Alpha values.

**Discussion:**

Based on the results of the study, it is clear that HR practices in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment are present in organizations, but their effectiveness is not significant. The majority of the employees have shown their perception of having a moderate level of diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Although employees are of the view that HR policies support gender equality in the workplace, the effectiveness of HR policies is not significant in this regard. The results of the correlation analysis show that the relationship between HR policy support and equal recruitment is very weak, although statistically significant. The results of the t-test show that experience is also an important factor in women support program awareness, as employees who are more experienced have more awareness in this regard.

## Research Gap:

Though there are a number of studies carried out on gender equality and diversity in the workplace, there are very few studies carried out on the alignment of HR practices with SDG5, especially in the Coimbatore region. In most of the studies carried out, there is a general focus on large-scale organizations and global data, but there is a need for a study carried out from the perspective of employees. In addition, there are very few studies carried out on the influence of experience on the awareness of women support programs. There is also a need for a study carried out to understand the effectiveness of HR practices from the perspective of various statistical tools such as correlation, t-test, regression, and reliability.

## Conclusion:

The conclusion of the study is that HR practices have an impact on gender equality and women empowerment in the workplace. However, there is still room for improvement in this regard, as the impact is not significant at present. From the statistical analysis, it is clear that though there is a significant relationship between variables, it is not strong. It is also evident that experience levels have an impact on women's support programs, which is an indicator that new employees need more training. Moreover, since the reliability score is low, there is room for improvement in the research tool.

## References:

1. Richard M. Locke (2013). *The promise and limits of private power*. Cambridge University Press.
2. Alice H. Eagly (2007). Female leadership advantage and disadvantage. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 31(1), 1–12.
3. David A. Harrison, & Katherine J. Klein (2007). What's the difference? Diversity constructs. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1199–1228.
4. Frank Dobbin, & Alexandra Kalev (2016). Why diversity programs fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 94(7), 52–60.
5. Herminia Ibarra, Robin J. Ely, & Deborah M. Kolb (2013). Women rising. *Harvard Business Review*, 91(9)
6. Joyce Fletcher (2004). The paradox of post heroic leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 15(5), 647-661.
7. Lotte Bailyn (2006). Breaking the mold. *ILR Review*, 59(3), 397-416.
8. Paula England (2010). Gender inequality in labor markets. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 149-168.
9. Catalyst (2020). *Women in leadership*. Catalyst Research Report.
10. International Labour Organization (2019). *Women in business and management*.