

## SOCIAL INCLUSION IN HINDUSTAN UNILEVER LIMITED

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### Abstract

Gender inequality is a global problem. From developed nation to developing and poor countries this problem is faced by all women. If the problem of Gender gap is not addressed, the situation of women will not improve. It is rightly said gender gap is not a women's problem it is a human problem. Unless the situation of women is improved their development cannot take place. At the same time it is equally important to know that crime against women their exploitation and their contribution in paid jobs cannot take place unless there are structural changes in the policy making, reservation in parliament for women, increase in their education level, paternity, maternity and child care leaves, sharing of their unpaid household work by men, training to women from time to time and their health is given due importance. Gender equity is also one of the sustainable goals of United Nations. The paper studies how Hindustan Unilever achieved gender equity ahead of rest of the businesses working in the world.

**Key Worlds:** Gender Gap, Gender Equity, Gender Disparity, Sustainable Goal, HUL

### Introduction

There are many obstacles in the growth and development of women. Some are social norms and others are lack of opportunities in career. It is seen and observed that they are not given proper support and they try to justify their role as wife, sister mother and daughter. No doubt such roles are important but to establish themselves as a leader or to work they in spite of having talent have to fight for justice in doing their right action and they waste their energy in doing that. Therefore somewhere the policies for them to work require change to make work life comfortable to them. According to report by **Booz and Company(2012)** India generates 14% of the global talent pool, out of this 5.5 million are women entering in workforce every year and 45% find when they become mother they are not treated fairly at work. HUL set a target to achieve gender equity in the year 2010. It planned its policies to achieve gender equity up to 2020 and it achieved. According to Alan Jope CEO HUL the company aims for diversity and inclusion. It means the company is striving for attracting and retaining best talent. The company has designed various programmes and policies to stop barriers in

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selection, retention and development of women employees. It has started writing about developments regarding gender representation in its annual business.

- Objectives:**
1. To study reason behind gender equity
  2. To study actions taken for gender equity

**Research Methodology-** The study is empirical descriptive and analytical in nature where the development in the field of gender equity is analysed with respect to its various policies of HUL.

### **Meaning of gender equity**

Gender equity is fairness in the treatment for women and men. It means equal availability of job opportunity, education, pay and ownership rights. But unfortunately throughout the world it is experienced that women are not given opportunity or there is unbiased gender gap. It is also found that most of the women leave jobs because of their family problems which is raising child and many a time it is absence of proper work environment. Therefore it becomes important to know how companies are providing facilities where women can contribute more. It is also researched that social inclusion of women will increase GDP, situation of women, and her family will progress with the employment of women at workforce.

It is rightly said by Alan Jope, CEO, Unilever

“I intent to build further on Unilever’s century-old commitment to responsible business, it is not about putting purpose ahead of profits, it is purpose that drives profits.”

HUL is India’s largest fast moving consumer goods company. In order to improve the condition of women it has framed various policies and provided various career related benefits to include them in their business. The policies of HUL are helpful to maintain work life balance. It helped women employees to contribute more and remain employed in the company by taking care of their family and work. It is worth to mention it has one independent women director.

According to Mr B P Biddappa, HUL’s Executive Director, Human Resources

*"Watching our children grow every day is probably one of the best experiences of our lives. Our family is pivotal to our lives and the strongest anchor for all of us. I believe that both parents should play equally strong and supportive roles in raising their children and enabling a favourable environment where both parents and children grow and prosper."*

### **Steps taken by HUL to bring gender equity**

1. **Break in career-**Most of the women leave their jobs because their workplace does not allow them to take leave and they find it difficult to take care of their family and their job and

therefore they leave their jobs. HUL provide five years career break to their manager. This leave can be taken for any of the reasons, be it child care, paternity, for higher study, maternity or to pursue any interest or hobby. Such break in career help the employee to maintain balance between work and life.

2. **Work Place with facilities**-The Company is having head office in Mumbai where employees are provided various kinds of facilities to its employees to keep them healthy. For mothers there is day care facility. Working women are provided drop to home facilities. Gymnasium, bank, cafe, shopping centres are other facilities which are provided to employees so that they can contribute in good working environment. Day care facility is available to children of employees who are between the age group of six months to six years. There is integrated play school and enriching activities for such children.
3. **Maternity and Paternity Support**-HUL provide 26 weeks maternity leave with pay. It also gives 3 weeks paid leave to male employees becoming father which is available within one year of becoming father. Such leave can be availed twice in the career of employees. It is an online portal which helps those employees who are going on maternity and paternity leaves to keep themselves associated with their job responsibility and different events of the company during their leave time so that it will be easier for them to join their job after the leave. Such leaves for both mother and father are also available to those who adopt child legally. These leaves are available to same sex couples also.
4. **Flexibility in work**-The working environment of the company is technology driven that provide help to its employees to work from home. It is extremely beneficial to mother who can maintain balance between work and home.
5. **Focus on health**-In order to give preference to health the company launched “Lamp Lighter Employee Programme” which makes employees aware about their health and adopt healthy life style. The company provide facilities to employees for health checkups to know their physical and mental health. On the basis of their report they are given colour codes that is green, amber and red. Through medical and health team employees are encouraged to adopt healthy life style.
6. **Training after Gap**-When a women employee joins job after a break a structure training programme is given to them so that they can join the job after a long gap. It provides them work life balance.
7. **Addressing unconscious bias**-The company has been changing the way it advertise products to reduce unconscious bias where males are portayed not to feel inferior while sharing

household work. Its advertisement like “**Jago re**” for Tata Tea it makes society aware of the unconscious bias. It also has made detail plan in 2018 to improve the involvement of women in its various appointments and to reduce unconscious bias.

8. **Empowering rural women-** The Company empowers illiterate rural women of the country by giving them training to sell its various products to the villagers increasing sale of its products. It not only provides employment to rural women but give the company access to the market its product in rural India. This is the way many women engage themselves in work and earn money with respect.

### **Conclusion**

Problem of women are unending irrespective of their power, education, health and employment. But what an organisation can do is to provide better work environment, suitable flexible work culture and break in their job so that she can bring her family life in co-ordination of her work life. Work alone is also not going to justify her life as the child needs more of mother than father. In addition to make sound policies and laws for the betterment of child and mother work culture also require major changes. Hindustan Lever is marching ahead in this respect. Other Companies and business houses can learn to incorporate such suitable policies for retention and growth of women employees.

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