

## Sketching Gender Dynamics: A Cartoonist's Take on Women's Professional Journey from Boardrooms to Offices in Europe and South Asia

### Abstract

*The professional experiences of women in the Global North and Global South reveal a dynamic interplay of socio-cultural norms, organizational structures, and global forces. While Europe has advanced gender-equality policies, women still struggle to break through leadership barriers. In contrast, women in South Asia navigate deeply rooted societal expectations, limited opportunities, and institutional constraints, making career progression especially challenging. Relying on personal agency, they confront both cultural norms and workplace inequities. This paper offers a comparative analysis of women's careers in Europe and South Asia, examining how cultural, societal, and organizational dynamics shape leadership pathways, gendered obstacles, and diversity initiatives. Using a qualitative approach, it employs four selected cartoons, two European, one Indian, and one Pakistani, as visual lenses within a critical cultural gender studies framework. Findings show persistent inequities in both regions: European women face a glass ceiling, while South Asian women confront dual cultural and professional barriers. The paper argues for transformative organizational cultures, inclusive mentorship, and meaningful diversity beyond compliance.*

**Keywords:** Gender Dynamics, Women in Leadership, Global North, Global South, Workplace Inequality, Cartoon Analysis

### INTRODUCTION

An engulfing story unfolds through the newspaper cartoon sketches as we explore the career paths of the women in boardrooms and offices and compare the landscapes of the Global North and South. This stereotypical story is not only descriptive but also analytical, embedded in the complex web of gender dynamics that professional worlds are based on, structured around the historical realities of life, occupational case studies, and cultural portrayals that appear in newspapers, books, films, and social media. To depict these complexities, the paper assumes the viewpoint of talented cartoonists whose representation clearly illustrates the struggles, successes, and contradictions women have to endure in trying to find their way around the professional arenas. In recent decades, European society has also made significant progress toward gender equality, as women have overcome barriers and even ascended to positions of authority. Women have remained victims of structural barriers that have stalled their advancement to top leadership positions despite regulatory frameworks and diversity efforts. Even now, since the role congruity theory noted by Eagly and Karau (2002) emphasizes that gender stereotypes influence how women are viewed as leaders, it remains true that gender stereotypes can affect women's potential in leadership. Kanter's

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(1977) idea of the glass ceiling also describes the invisible obstacles that prevent women from reaching the top of organizational structures. This situation in Europe preconditions the interpretation of the opposition to South Asia. South Asia, in its turn, has a different, but equally interesting canvas. In this case, the career lines are shaped by powerful cultural practices, social norms, and unequal access to educational facilities and economic resources. Females have to cope with the demands of many roles to negotiate with deep-rooted patriarchal values.

Kabeer (2005) and Afshar (1998) identify the importance of cultural norms and the necessity of empowerment structures to counterbalance structural inequalities. These views are used in the study to understand how women in South Asia are reinventing workplace stories through resilience and agency. This study situates these regional understandings within the global debate on gender equality. Misra and Murray-Close (2014) illustrate how women's labor force participation in Europe has transformed due to policy reforms and social change, and the European Union's Gender Equality Strategy 2020 is an example of institutional commitment (European Commission, 2020).

The World Bank (2021) provides gender-specific reports that illuminate the economic and legal obstacles faced by South Asian women, placing the need for systemic change in perspective. This decision to put cartoons as a prism is not a coincidence. Visual narratives are a compelling, available, and multidimensional means of analyzing complicated gender matters. Pratt and Woolley (2007) maintain that cartoons are the right tool for conveying social stories and thus can be used to uncover the nuances of the situations experienced by professional women. It will be compatible with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 5), which focus on gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls (United Nations, 2015). Moreover, intersectionality theory frames this study as women not only have a professional life based on gender but also by race, class, and other identity constructs and markers (Crenshaw, 1989). The research incorporates the results of corporate diversity studies (McKinsey & Company, 2020; Catalyst, 2019) and examines the business logic of gender inclusion and its association with organizational performance.

This study also brings the past, present, and future together by examining how the Fourth Industrial Revolution is transforming the world of work, requiring new skills and diverse organizational designs (World Economic Forum, 2018). The synthesis of these insights results in the introduction being a logical development of the contextualization of gender dynamics to the justification of the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions made by this study.

### ***Problem Statement***

This study aims to shed light on the complexities of gender dynamics by examining the distinctions, similarities, and dynamic nature of women's experiences in the world of work, particularly in Europe and South Asia. This study was added to the broader gender equality debate to inform policy and create a more inclusive, equal professional landscape that is more accommodating to women across diverse cultural and geographical settings.

### Research Objectives

- To investigate coverage of women's professional experiences in chosen cartoons of the Global North and the Global South, attention should be paid to gender roles and workplace issues, as well as leadership ambitions.
- To examine cultural, social, and organizational aspects that may determine the career path of women based on the chosen visual stories.
- To find out similarities and differences in the description of women's struggles and agency in professional areas, to give some insights into global gender dynamics.

### Research Questions

1. What is the representation of female professional paths, especially female roles, work issues, and leadership goals in chosen cartoons of the Global North and Global South?
2. What cultural, social, and structural issues that affect the career path of women are brought out in these visual images?
3. How do the struggles of women and their agency differ in the portrayal of women in different cultural contexts, using chosen cartoons?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Gender Dynamics in European Workplaces*

Eagly and Karau's (2002) project is an important contribution, as it highlights the effects of gender stereotypes on perceptions of leadership. By pointing out the challenges women can encounter in pursuing leadership roles, this theory highlights how cultural requirements can shape career choices. A study by Misra and Murray-Close (2014) examined the changing nature of women's roles in the workforce in Europe. In their study, they explore the various factors that influence women's career choices. These dimensions examine the roles that organizational policies and social movements play in advancing gender equality. The European Union Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 provides a detailed guideline for understanding current activities and challenges in establishing gender equality in European workplaces. This course of action demonstrates a desire to address systemic issues (European Commission, 2020). Kabeer (2005) and Afshar (1998) provide essential details on gender roles in South Asian societies. These two contributions are significant. These studies provide insight into the challenges and opportunities that women face in balancing the needs of traditional society with the demands of their professional lives.

The World Bank's publications on gender-related challenges in South Asian countries aid in developing a contextual understanding of the economic and social factors shaping women's experiences in the workforce. Such reports also indicate the need to adopt a subtle strategy to eliminate regional differences (World Bank, 2021). The study uses an intersectionality approach (Crenshaw, 1989) to address the complexity of women's experiences in professional environments. It is through this theoretical lens that a deeper investigation can be carried out, considering the interactions among factors such as racial and ethnic background, socioeconomic status, and gender, among others, to determine the complexities of a person's professional journey. A theoretical basis for the adoption of visual narratives to explain the intersectionality and diverse experiences of women in European workplaces is provided by

Czerwiec et al. (2015), who examined the opportunities of graphic storytelling for articulating complex social issues. The paper acknowledges that the work environment is evolving and that gender diversity is significant in handling technological shocks. This follows the findings of the World Economic Forum (2018). Studies by McKinsey and Company (2020) and Catalyst (2019) reveal a connection between financial performance and gender diversity in leadership positions. This indicates that the financial value of developing inclusive workplace cultures is high.

Discussion about their study concerning the editorial cartoons, which discussed the World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1999, Patricia and Stanley (1998) stated that their results have shown that the cartoonists, more concerned with the human rights situation in China and the management of this conference, have paid little attention to the actual objectives and problems of the conference. When discussing the female participants of the conference as compared to the Chinese male elite of power, they were mostly depicted as conservative and dull. They claimed that the assembly's goals and achievements were deliberately disregarded and that the female participants were downplayed to a state of helplessness and ineffectiveness. Through which, the political cartoonists aided the symbolic destruction of women.

### ***Gender Dynamics in South Asian Workplaces***

The complex interplay among cultural practices, social expectations, and the professional lives of women has been brought to light through scholarly inquiries into gender dynamics in South Asian workplaces. In this regard, Kabeer (2005) and Afshar (1998) are worth noting, as they provide valuable insights into the complexity of gender roles in South Asian countries. The study by Kabeer explores the challenges and solutions that women face in balancing the demands of tradition with their career goals, providing insight into the multifaceted determinants shaping women's careers. The study that Afshar has gone to investigate fluid identities of women in the Islamic Republic of Iran would offer a better insight into how strategic directions are determined in the given socio-cultural context of a particular country.

The contextual interpretation of gender dynamics in South Asia, as well as the World Bank's publications on Women, Business, and the Law (2021), discuss the economic and social factors that affect women's experiences in the labor market. Offering illumination on the legislative and regulatory procedures that affect the professional paths of women in South Asian nations, the papers provide an empirical basis for research on the barriers women experience in these nations. The concept of intersectionality, introduced by Crenshaw (1989), is critical for thinking about how the issues of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status intersect with those of gender. This knowledge is required to understand the complex issues women face in their everyday careers. The introduction of cartoonists affected by feminist comics is a new strategy that can be employed to explore gender relationships inwardly. South Asian workplaces attempt to show the diversity and complexity of women's careers in South Asia, with the assistance of artists such as Alison Bechdel and Marjane Satrapi. This has been achieved through an inspiration from their works. The complex interaction between cultural expectations and professional aspirations is shown through the power of graphic

storytelling (Czerwiec et al., 2015). This provides new insight into the lives of women in the area.

### ***Intersectionality and the Global Context***

Kimberlé Crenshaw's work in the late 1980s was an influential contribution to the theory of intersectionality, a critical concept first discussed within the framework of feminist studies. The phrase is defined by Crenshaw (1989) as the linkage among social categorizations such as race, gender, class, and sexuality, and how a social categorization affects and is compounded by other social categorizations, thereby shaping the experiences and possibilities of individuals. Intersectionality is a powerful analytical tool and can be applied globally to gain insight into the multiple, complex issues of oppression and privilege that many people face. The study of the intersectionality of gender and race is especially pertinent when applied to the global community since it unveils the numerous instances in which people, and especially women, are discriminated against by the hands of an institutionalized system.

Collins (2000) illuminates that black women can face challenges distinct from those faced by white women or black men. This understanding is necessary to formulate policies and measures that account for the unique needs of people across the world's vast population. To make the matter even worse, the intersectionality lens is not limited to gender and race but also other social categories like class and sexuality. Economic inequalities are greatly enhanced in a globalized setting, leading to diverse consequences on people based on their socio-economic status. hooks (2000) argues that interrelations between class and race can contribute to the extent of inequalities already present, with marginalized groups bearing the brunt of globalization consequences. This highlights the importance of considering multiple axes of identity to achieve a comprehensive approach to addressing the problems that globalization presents to different communities. The term intersectionality implies different dimensions, and sexual orientation is one of them. This aspect illuminates the specific issues that individuals of various sexual orientations face in several different situations around the world.

Crenshaw (2015) claims that LGBT rights, in particular, are affected by a range of factors, including cultural, legal, and socio-economic ones, which interrelate to determine the experiences of people within the broader global context. In order to foster inclusivity and advocate for the rights of individuals with diverse sexual orientations on an international level, it is crucial to understand these intersections. Intersectionality is particularly relevant to migration and displacement within the global community. Several types of discrimination, that is, discrimination associated with such aspects as race, gender, or socioeconomic status, often intersect with each other in the lives of immigrants and refugees.

Anthias (2002) discusses the complexity of experiences that migrating women face and points out how these experiences are affected by their gender and immigrant status. The need to research these crossovers is to ensure that the formulation of immigration laws and support systems is competent enough to meet the diverse needs of the people who have been displaced.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Deborah Cameron (1958), a prominent British linguist, has addressed the issue of equal opportunities for women in the context of language and communication. In her work, "Verbal Hygiene for Women: Linguistics Misapplied," she examines communication training aimed at women as an example of linguistics applied to address the problems women experience in certain linguistic domains, with the goal of achieving equal opportunities (1994). She has also critiqued the idea that men and women speak differently because their minds work differently, highlighting the danger of generalizing about the impact of gender on language. Cameron (1994), such programs appear under a variety of headings, including 'assertiveness', 'management', 'leadership', and 'personal effectiveness', as well as simply 'communication'; and while they may target both sexes as trainees, there is a tendency for them to target women ('leadership skills for women', 'women in management', 'women's assertiveness'), on the assumption that women have distinctive, and perhaps more pressing, training needs'. Then it discusses the issue of premature speculation in language and gender studies, especially regarding contrasts between men and women.

Given the significant investment of time, money, and personal involvement, she recommends that applied linguists, who work in language education and learning, have the knack for further developing these communication-preparation programs. Incorporating their mastery could prompt more productive improvements in this field. Moreover, Cameron proposes that issues connected to 'verbal hygiene for women' bring up more extensive issues about what comprises successful communication and how cultural, social, and political variables impact language learning and use. She argues that language interpreters should consider how best to utilize their aptitude in practice. Cameron's work serves as an indication of her criticism of the connection between language and communication training and of the quest to achieve equal opportunities for women. The author in *Feminism and Linguistic Theory* (1992) gives examples from Ancient Greece and from *Nineteen Eighty-Four* by George Orwell to illustrate how powerful language can be in influencing social relations, as well as how it can obscure or distort the truth through persuasive speech.

The text addresses the issue of feminists struggling against the use of language as a weapon of oppression and the silence of the subordinates, and that the language does not necessarily serve the interests of the powerful and oppressive. Instead, it should be taken by the sidelined groups. She gives examples of feminist action in the past, such as the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, when women protested restrictions on their freedom of expression. There is also a discussion of John Stuart Mill opposing the use of the gender-neutral pronoun he and his advocacy of the use of gender-neutral language, which does not discount the work done by modernist female authors like Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Richardson, and others, in developing a literary language that can address the experiences of women. Language is considered by feminists an important tool in the struggle for equality and liberation, rather than a marginal issue.

'Politics of Variation: Sex Differences in Language', a different article (1992) In her analysis of the study of sex differences in language use, Deborah Cameron points out that the field is far from a comprehensive collection of research results and that it is primarily focused on two

issues: addressing the sexism that exists in semantic science and highlighting the political implications of sex differences. A detailed examination of sex differences inherently communicates a political dimension because of its role in shaping cultural norms. Research on sex differences generally aims to validate feminine mediocrity and provides scientific evidence to support the notion that women are intellectually weaker than men. This prejudice has been employed as a tactic to uphold women's subjugation; examples include attributing to women's perceived lower levels of aggression as a barrier to effective leadership or their alleged incapacity to become engineers due to their lack of spatial capacity. Then, she continues (1992, p. 37): 'But this is to allow the opponent to set the terms for debate, conceding an important point of contention and accepting presumptions that feminists might want to question (such as the idea that women should only be treated equally to the extent that they resemble men). She is also perplexed by why researchers focus more on examining gender differences than on discussing similarities. Although 'sex similarity' is a thing, she wonders why it is not explored more. To overcome this type of sexism, Cameron implies paying close attention to scientific discoveries. As an example, studies have disputed the claim that women are naturally weaker than men and have shown that they are effective in certain qualities, such as stamina and hardiness. However, criticizing biased study results may not be the solution, as it is important to discuss why scientists draw so much serious attention to sex differences and interpret their results in a sexist way.

In their attention to sex differences, there are two reasons why women linguists might be interested in language: the first is to uncover an acceptable female language capable of differentiating among mental or cultural differences, and the second is to unveil the power relations in language that perpetuate gender inequality. Their arrangement may appear confusing at times, but these goals may align with feminist linguistics. Cameron's work shows her keen interest in the correlation between the quest for equal opportunities for women and language and communication abilities. Using Deborah Cameron's writings as a source of inspiration, this study employs a comparative analytical approach based on critical cultural gender studies. We will examine how social, psychological, and cultural meanings are created, negotiated, and contested in the cartoonist's surroundings using this framework. Through the lens of a cartoonist's work, this study employs a qualitative methodology to explore and understand the career paths taken by women in Europe and South Asia, from boardrooms to offices. Qualitative methods are best suited to capturing the richness and complexity of human experiences, providing context and depth to the various aspects of gender dynamics in the workplace.

Ten cartoons of Liza Donnelly from America, India, and Pakistan were chosen as examples using random sampling procedures. Four cartoons were created by skilled cartoonists with experience in visually telling stories about gender dynamics or other related topics; two were from Europe, one from India, and one from Pakistan. The primary source of data for this study was cartoonist illustrations that depicted different aspects of women's career paths. These images depict women in a range of occupations and circumstances, often including views from boardrooms, offices, and other professional settings. Deborah Cameron's method was used to analyze the cartoonists' images.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

To identify recurrent themes, patterns, and depictions of women's experiences in professional contexts, the cartoonist's images were subjected to content analysis using Deborah Cameron's approach. In this approach, the researcher used Lexical Choices, Syntactic Structures, Phonological Features, Speech Acts, Conversational Implicature, Meaning Construction, and Semantic Fields.

American cartoonist Liza Donnelly is well-known for her contributions to *The New Yorker*. In addition to being a well-known public speaker, she is the resident cartoonist for CBC News and the author of over fifteen books, including *Funny Ladies: The New Yorker's Greatest Women Cartoonists and Their Cartoons* and *Women on Men*. She has been drawing political and cultural cartoons for over thirty years, and she currently writes columns and cartoons for *Forbes.com* and *Harvard Business Review*, focusing on women's rights and politics. Working with *New York Times* writer Nicholas Kristoff, she produced an original cartoon for his *Times* newsletter. She drew illustrations to support the PBS program about the world's mistreatment of women that was based on Kristoff's book.

Liza's depiction of the acceptability of women in the business sphere includes the following: this cartoon depicts the injustice many women face when applying for jobs. Some women may experience inequity in their workplaces. As an illustration (fig. 1) (2018), women are not paid the same amount as men for performing the same work. In this figure, we see a woman being interviewed by a man, and she asks him what the rationale is for hiring her. She says, "Are you hiring me because I am cheap, I am qualified, or I am cheap and qualified?" (Donnelly, 2022).



**Figure 1: Man, Interview Woman**

From Fig. 1, **Graphic Analysis:** The female candidate is portrayed as a well-groomed, educated middle-class woman, reflecting a status quite similar to that of her interviewer.

**Lexical Choices:** The term "cheap" refers to the candidate's cost-effectiveness, while "qualified" highlights their expertise.

**Syntactic Structures:** Repeating "I am cheap, I am qualified" Emphasizes the contrast. Additionally, "or" creates an apparent disjunction that defines the possibilities.

**Phonological Features:** The speaker's repeated use of "cheap" and the increasing tone of "qualified" may indicate skepticism or inquiry, giving nuance to the issue.

**Speech Acts:** The statement asks about the motive behind the employment decision.

**Conversational Implicature:** The speaker implies that getting hired solely on cost, solely on qualifications, or on both may be concerning.

**Meaning Construction:** By juxtaposing "cheap" and "qualified," the hiring decision may be ambiguous.

**Semantic Fields:** The statement focuses on employment, qualifications, and cost. The terms "cheap" and "qualified" refer to finances and skills, respectively.

The employment of women in the workforce has increased due to educational advancements, yet the pay disparity remains a persistent problem. Research by the European Commission (2022) states that the gender pay gap in the EU was 12.7% in 2021 and has not changed in the past ten years. This indicates that women make 13.1 percent less an hour on average than men do. It goes on to say that, in the European Union (EU) and the euro region in 2022, women's gross hourly wages were, on average, 12.7% and 13.2% lower than men's, respectively. From -0.7% in Luxembourg to 21.3% in Estonia, the gender wage gap ranged from 22.0 percentage points across EU members. Despite having to compete with males for jobs based on age, education, experience, and other factors, women nonetheless fall prey to the Glass Ceiling. Less than 10% of CEOs of leading corporations are women due to pay disparities and promotion risks stemming from their hierarchical position.

Then we see that there are certain traditionally conceived physical traits that women are expected to possess, to excel in the job market, namely height, posture, and depth of voice, which Balcon (2021) criticizes Cameron (1992) condemns when she refutes Deborah Tannen's (1990) viewpoint of guiding women to replicate male discourse while conversing with men, in a professional environment. Liza also felt that women are deprived of opportunities and experiences that are crucial to their personal and professional development, which males can take for granted. She highlighted this issue through (Fig. 2) in which a girl is giving an audition to a panel of male judges who are telling her, "We absolutely love your pitch, but we want all women to be changed to men".



**Figure 2: The New Hollywood: Mad Man**

**Graphic Analysis:** The image shows men reclining on chairs with their legs spread out, having coffee etc. One of them has arms folded, and the other is sitting in a casual posture, speaking to an anxious-looking young girl standing in a corner with some paper- seemingly a script in her hand.

**Lexical Choices:** The sentence replaces "women" with "men," indicating a gender transition. The phrase "absolutely love," though seemingly positive, is used sarcastically or ironically, implying that the panel appreciates the pitch only after erasing women from the narrative. This ironic twist highlights gender bias and reinforces the expectation that male-centered narratives are preferred. Moving from "women" to "men" shifts the pitch's focus away from women and toward males, underlining the exclusionary undertone.

**Syntactic Structures:** The syntactic structure is consistent, with the sole change being the replacement of "women" with "men." Syntactic symmetry and coherence are preserved throughout the sentence.

**Phonological Features:** The speaker's passion, conveyed through "absolutely love," determines tone and intonation, which may remain intact. However, the speaker's tone may reflect an emphasis shift due to gender reference.

**Speech Acts:** The statement conveys approval and interest. As a positive response to the pitch with the gender reference adjustment, it can be considered an endorsement.

**Conversational Implicature:** Switching from "women" to "men" conveys a specific choice or requirement, altering the conversational implicature. The speaker prefers men as the intended audience, changing the pitch's underlying assumptions and expectations.

**Meaning Construction:** The gender reference is changed from "women" to "men." This adjustment implies a preference for men while preserving pitch acceptance.

**Semantic Fields:** The statement includes approval, enthusiasm, and audience specification—the semantic field shifts towards male-audience considerations with the change in gender reference. Positive semantics emphasize approval and satisfaction with pitch.

Maheer (2019), founder of Kerning the Gap, in her study, also urged 21st-century society to abandon old-fashioned stereotypes and eradicate outdated notions that certain traits are gender-specific, as they are driven solely by societal expectations rather than genetics. From Fig. 2, we can conclude that any form of character demoralization, injury, or stereotyping intended against a person, regardless of gender, is morally repulsive and runs counter to the values of democracy and ethical conduct. This would be the case regardless of the person's sex. Not only does engaging in such actions undermine the values of a just and fair society, but it also undermines the basic foundation of a political system that can function properly. The failing goes beyond politics to community attitudes. A patriarchal mindset is still evident, and derogatory comments about women in politics are rife on social media (Venkiteswaran, 2021).

The concept of bringing down a politician, whether a woman politician or any politician for that matter, through character assassination is a way of approaching politics that is both risky and unethical. Venkiteswaran (2021) stated that an Amnesty International report (Troll Patrol India: Exposing Online Abuse Faced by Women Politicians in India. 2020) published last year showed the shocking scale of abuse female politicians in India face on Twitter. Sexist remarks are regularly directed at women who contest elections, whether about their appearance, clothing, or experience. Banerjee was likewise subjected to gendered slurs during the most recent campaign.

Constructive discussion, collaborative effort, and the pursuit of common goals are the three pillars on which genuine societal development is built. The use of character assassination not only stifles the potential for positive change but also erodes citizens' confidence and faith in their elected leaders. To cultivate a healthy political environment that benefits society as a whole, it is essential to place strong emphasis on policies, ideas, and genuine debate (Figure 3).



**Figure 3: Assassination**

***“The easiest way to bring a woman politician down is not to run faster than her, but to assassinate her character.”***

**Lexical Choices:** The statement employs a rich use of language in pointing out how a woman politician can be sabotaged. The word "assassinate" means a calculated and fatal assault on her personality. The term, bring a woman politician down highlights the adverse effects of character assassination.

**Syntactic Structures:** The syntactic structure is uncomplicated, with a subject-verb-object pattern. It is explicit that the intention to weaken a woman politician is proposed. The importance of character assassination is stressed in its convenience.

**Features of phonetics:** To underline the seriousness of the proposed plan, it is possible to deliver the sentence in a monotonous and systematic voice. Emphasis made on words such as assassinate and character can express the seriousness of the intended action and deliberate its purpose.

**Speech Acts:** The statement gives an objective or practice in the form of a sentence. It proposes destroying a lady politician through her character. The speaker is noticing one of the political weak points and tools.

**Conversational Implicature:** This means that women politicians put political methods to the test. An easy and possible method of bringing down a woman politician is through character assassination. This is politically critical through the use of words.

**Construction of meaning:** The metaphor of assassinating is applied to a female politician in the sentence where it is used. The term means that women politicians will be exposed to character attacks, with character assassination being a strong political strategy.

**Semantic Fields:** These areas are concerned with politics, strategy, and gender forces. The comment in political maneuvering is defined by the word " character assassination, and the mention of a female politician provides gender. General semantics presents a negative image of political practices against women in politics.

Figure 3 of the presence of predators in the workplace is a serious problem that not only disrupts the professional atmosphere but also causes a lot of damage to the mental state of persons, published by Pakistan Dawn. This is a serious problem that warrants attention. Workplace predators often create a toxic environment, which is often characterized by abusive behavior, manipulation, and exploitation. The effects of this environment may be lasting on the mental health of the people who are victims of such an environment. The people who exist within the environment where they feel constantly scared of being harassed, bullied, or mistreated in any other way can feel even more stressed, anxious, and even depressed.

The victims might find it hard to focus on their jobs, which could lead to low productivity and overall reduced job satisfaction. The stress of mental calmness that predators at the workplace may trigger may not only be limited to the work environment, but also spill over to the personal lives of people as they strive to adjust to the psychological damage that the

abusive environment may cause them. The effects of predatory behavior at the workplace sometimes have such far-reaching consequences in the lives of some individuals that they are long-term and harmful both in their personal lives and their work lives. That is what happens in the case of specific individuals.

The impact of the trauma may be long-lasting on individuals who have gone through continuous perspectives of abuse, resulting in the individual's self-esteem, self-confidence, and their established relationships with others. The injuries that predators leave at the workplace may harm both the career and the individual's development. The reasons are that the victims can develop trust problems and phobias against the authority. The adverse effect may extend beyond the immediate victims, affecting the company's culture and morale. To counterbalance the adverse impact workplace predator have on the mental health and well-being of their employees, organizations must prioritize creating a healthy and supportive working environment, enacting strict anti-harassment policies, and promoting a culture of respect and empathy (Fig. 4).



**Figure 4: Predators in the workplace**

***Predators in the workplace destroyed their mental peace and, for some, led to permanent adverse effects on their personal and professional lives.***

**Lexical Choices:** The statement uses strong, emotive language to express the impact of workplace predators on individuals. The adjectives "destroyed," "mental peace," "permanent adverse effects and personal and professional lives" convey the severity and long-term effects of the negative experiences recounted.

**Syntactic Structures:** The structure includes a primary and a subordinate sentence. The primary clause, "Predators in the workplace destroyed their mental peace," is followed by

"and for some, led to permanent adverse effects on their personal and professional lives." This structure allows for a complex presentation of cause and effect.

**Phonological Features:** The sentence can be given with a tone that conveys the gravity of the situation. The focus on "destroyed," "permanent adverse effects," and "personal and professional lives" emphasizes workplace predators' terrible impact. The tone may show sympathy for those afflicted.

**Speech Acts:** The statement presents facts on the negative impact of workplace predators. Instead of directing action, it explains a situation and its effects. The speaker notes the harm of workplace predatory behavior.

**Conversational Implicature:** Recognizing the significant influence of workplace predators on individuals. It entails an understanding that such events go beyond discomfort and impact mental health and life trajectory.

**Meaning Construction:** Vivid descriptions of workplace predators' harmful influence create meaning. Strong language and a clear cause-and-effect link create a dramatic story by emphasizing the severity and lasting effects of the recounted occurrences.

**Semantic Fields:** Includes workplace dynamics, psychological well-being, and personal/professional aspects of individuals' lives. The phrase "workplace predators" refers to occupational surroundings, whereas "mental peace" and its effects on "personal and professional lives" encompass psychological and holistic life experiences.

### **Comparative Analysis**

The South Asian region stands out for the wide range of cultural, social, and economic conditions. Typically, women's professional paths are strongly shaped by prevailing gender roles and cultural demands. In countries like India and Pakistan, social conventions might demand more of the roles women play within the family, which could influence their career paths. Despite the rise in the number of women entering the labor force in South Asian countries, there are still issues to be addressed, including limited access to education and employment opportunities. Compared with developed countries, the percentage of women in leadership positions, including those in boardrooms, is usually lower in countries often described as underdeveloped.

Legal and policy systems regarding gender equality across European nations are not homogeneous. Rules that motivate women to join the workforce have been adopted, but the extent to which they are applied may vary. South Asian female employees may have to face numerous problems, such as gender-based discrimination, limited access to education and health services, and social expectations. Lathika Subhas, an Indian politician, believes that women workers in major political parties in India are not lacking; they are sidelined and not given party tickets to run in elections. Subhash claims she had asked women in Kerala for at least 20 percent representation among the candidates. We had at least hoped for a female candidate in each district. However, the women heads who used to work with the party have been completely overlooked, complained Subhash (Venkiteswaran, 2021).

There are many different countries in Europe, each with its unique cultural standards. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) observes that several European Nations have made substantial progress in fostering gender equality and challenging traditional gender norms in the workplace. However, with 67.9 out of 100 points, the EU still has a long way to go toward gender equality. In many European countries, the percentage of women participating in the labor force is relatively high. A significant contributor to this is the existence of policies that encourage work-life balance, parental leave, and flexible working arrangements.

Countries in Europe, notably those in Scandinavia, have made strides in increasing the number of women holding leadership roles, including in corporate boardrooms. The implementation of quotas and other initiatives has addressed gender inequality. The European Union (EU) directives that promote gender equality are frequently adopted by EU member states to combat gender-based discrimination and advance equal opportunities in the workplace. Several different policies and regulations have been put into place. According to the 2023 Report on Gender Equality in the EU, although progress has been made, there are still difficulties that require attention. These challenges include the gender pay gap and the underrepresentation of women in particular industries and leadership roles.

Professional consequences of harassment for women include decreased job satisfaction; withdrawal from the Organization (i.e., distancing oneself from the work physically or mentally without quitting, or having thoughts or intentions of leaving the company), decreased organizational commitment (i.e., feeling angry or disillusioned with the company), increased job stress, and decreased performance or productivity in South Asia as well as European region (NASEM, 2018).

When more women are subjected to psychological harassment in a given setting, they are more likely to consider leaving. In some cases, they leave as a direct result of the nuisance they have experienced. The targets are subjected to a greater number of negative impacts and repercussions in proportion to the perpetrator's level of influence over them. The first findings of the research indicate that when women are subjected to psychological harassment in conjunction with other forms of harassment.

Throughout this research, the pervasive implications of intersectionality have been brought to light. These influences extend beyond society and individual identity to the realms of labor, employment, and leadership. By the intersectionality theory, the current research has shed light on how oppressive institutions, such as racism and sexism, are intertwined with one another and cannot be investigated in isolation from one another (Phoenix, 2006; Veenstra, 2013).

In general, the themes identified in this research are interconnected and overlap, indicating a relational interplay across varying degrees of diversity (Syed & Özbilgin, 2009). Crenshaw (1989) argues that women experience a high degree of complexity in their lives and that there is no universally applicable form of feminism. She also states that there are many different types of feminism. This is because their male colleagues and bosses often exhibit behavior

that fosters exclusion, such as passive listening, indifference, and alienation, to the extent of expecting them to behave and speak like men.

According to the findings of this study, women in Europe are not only subjected to subtle and difficult-to-prove forms of racism and sexism, but they are also subjected to complicated and refined forms of these attitudes. According to Purdie-Vaughns and Eibach (2008), who suggest that women are likely to face workplace discrimination, this also needs to be taken into account. In addition, when considering the concept of intersectionality among women in leadership roles, Porter and Sweetman (2005) argue that these women are likely to face significantly more obstacles and prejudice than men in leadership positions. Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) point out that women are more likely to experience feelings of isolation when they lack mentors or a support network. Furthermore, they are less likely to obtain the assistance they might require when confronted with extreme obstacles in leadership roles, due to their gender and ethnicity. Black Caribbean women believe that they are required to put in more effort than their White counterparts do to achieve top positions (Kumra & Manfredi, 2012).

Recent studies have shown that women from the Pakistani and Bangladeshi regions have been subjected to derogatory comments regarding their performance while they are at work. (Aleena, 2021) While the suffering of Pakistan's women is anguishing, this extreme inequity in the world's fifth most populous nation should concern moralists as well as foreign policy realists for the simple reason that greater inclusion and equality of women make the world more peaceful for all. Although Venkiteswaran's (2021) study focuses on India, it sheds light on broader South Asian trends.

India ranks 140 out of 156 countries in terms of gender equality, and it is the third-worst performer in South Asia, ahead of only Pakistan and Afghanistan. Based on the findings presented here, it appears that South Asian women are more likely to receive lower salary packages and pay raises from organizations and companies, which are likely to affect their advancement in their professional careers. It has also been demonstrated by this research that, even though South Asian women are enrolling in higher education at a faster rate than in the past, the assumption is that they are incompetent and lack assertiveness. Based on this information, it appears that many of these women are not even being given the chance to enter leadership roles within the organization. Despite these challenges, these women did not let them prevent them from entering the workforce; in fact, they utilized a variety of techniques and resources to advance in their careers.

## **CONCLUSION**

Women in South Asia continue to face a range of complex challenges in their pursuit of jobs and leadership roles. These women attempt to overcome these challenges by utilizing their distinctive abilities and asserting their agency. According to the findings of our qualitative research, European and South Asian women equally continue to confront a wide variety of obstacles in the workplace, even though there are rules and regulations in place to prevent discrimination. It seems to imply that merely complying with the law is insufficient to address the complex problems and difficulties associated with intersectionality. There are

additional aspects that take place both within and outside the workplace that affect the careers of European and South Asian women. These factors include a lack of mentors, constructive action, and challenges relating to culture and familial situations. These women, on the other hand, have not been deterred from achieving success in their careers by the hurdles they have faced; instead, they have proven they have overcome them. A few of these women advanced in their careers by drawing on the positive energy associated with their culture, faith, and gender. However, because there are significant gaps not only in employment and leadership but also in unemployment, organizations' diversity policies need to be further refined to ensure disadvantaged women have equal and inclusive opportunities in the workplace. It is essential to take into account the roles of family, religion, and ethnicity as dimensions that families and men may need to reform to facilitate the successful development of women in leadership positions. This is in addition to holding the organization and the government accountable for their actions.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The results of this research have shed light on the multifaceted nature of the problems and obstacles that South Asian women in South Asian heritage face when seeking jobs and leadership roles. Even though organizations have established laws and regulations, South Asian women who are considered members of a gender minority by the male-dominated society continue to experience discrimination in the workplace that is indirect and discreet, most of the time. However, there are occasions when women notice this bias quite glaringly and loudly. In light of this, it appears that organizations should place a higher priority on the goals and indicators related to diversity. The results of this study demonstrate that women who work for companies that actively promote diversity have a significantly higher chance of attaining higher levels of professional advancement. For instance, there are South Asian women who have stood their ground in the face of discrimination at work. A few of these women have taken the companies they worked for to the industrial tribunal, based on the fact that they have a compelling case against them. Indeed, these findings may be of assistance to other South Asian women and researchers interested in understanding the problems and difficulties these women experience as they advance in their careers and how they might address these concerns. Organizations need to encourage diversity in leadership by considering candidates based on their qualifications, skills, and potential rather than gender. Businesses can take an active approach to diversity by establishing strategic networks to mentor, monitor, and advise both men and women in their professional lives. They must encourage leaders to exhibit behaviors that foster inclusion, such as active listening, empathy, and collaboration. These networks should preferably be led by both male and female role models who share the subjects' professional background. The provision of diversity training programs, particularly at the board level, may be of assistance in lowering unfavorable attitudes towards women who are members of discriminatory groups, especially South Asian women. In addition, the government and officials of European companies and organizations need to not only recognize and promote talented women within their organizations but also actively promote dynamic policies and practices that ensure fair employment and equal opportunities for all employees, notably women as managers and mentors.

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