Discrimination against women and minority in the labor market

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**Introduction**

Women have made significant gained in the labor market in the past century. Globally, women participation rates have realized a positive increase since 1980s by almost 2% to attained an estimated rate of 52% participation in the labor industry. Research has established that minority participation rates have also increased to 60% in 2012 (Duraisamy & Duraisamy, 2010). It means that the labor industry has opened itself and both female and minority are treated fairly when seeking for employment opportunities. Among the Organization of Economic Cooperation Development (OECD) nations narrowed down from 23$% to 12% from 1990s to 2012 have been realized. However, despite improvement, there is still a huge gender gap in the labor force. According to Duraisamy and Duraisamy (2010) several countries especially from G20 have not fully adopted a system to have an inclusive workforce.

There is a wealth of information regarding occupation and segregation in the United States and other developed countries. In European Union, the segregation is measured based on IP Index and a study indicates that the discrimination against gender and race is still high at 23.4% (Hirata & Soares, 2015). This continues in other countries as well especially in Western hemisphere and Middle East. A study observed that gender and minority inclusion in the force in Canada has increased by 7% a clear indication of changes, which have occurred in the labor industry in the last decades (Clark & Drinkwater, 2017). The persistent disadvantage faced by women is due to cultural aspects and this still common in Middle East and some countries from developing countries. In the United States, lots of gains have been made, and the labor market has been streamlined to become inclusive. Research has established that women and minority have made significant gains and there are laws, which require organizations to provide job opportunities without showing any discrimination (Duraisamy & Duraisamy, 2010). Compared to early 1960s and beyond, a lot of changes have been realized and a lot is still expected within the next decades. But the challenges women and other minority still facing is low wages and working condition. However, this paper provides analysis of the discrimination against women and minority in the labor market. It focuses on the labor laws and the gains, which the country has realized since the enactment of the first labor law. It is also review the economic gains and some of the challenges, which women still face in the labor market.

Discrimination against gender and race has a long historical aspect in the United States. In the early 1960s, women were not allowed to work and the African Americans could only get odd jobs with low wages in the country. Women who were in the labor market were being paid less compared to male counterparts and therefore, the issue of discrimination against gender and race has existed for decades. It took the intervention of Civil Rights activists and other leaders to push for the equal employment and equal pay in the labor industry. The campaigns and movements lend to the formation of equal employment opportunity to address gender and racial discrimination. The Equal employment commission was formed in 1967, to enforce the law against racial and gender discrimination. Through the formation of the commission several acts were implemented by the commission such as equal pay act for all employees, pregnancy and disability act to protect pregnant women against discrimination at workplace. The employment act was also established and implemented to ensure that a company employs people without discriminating anybody based on either gender or race. The law specified the number of people a company is required to employ based on racial and gender. According to Clark and Drinkwater (2017), the labor and employment act of 1967 prohibits dominant of one race or one gender. This was the beginning of the reform on the labor market through introduction of all incisive laws to protect employees and job applicants against discrimination. Despite the implementation of the different laws against gender and racial discrimination in the mid 1967, the problem still exists and the rate of racial discrimination is still high in the United States. The racial and gender discrimination at work place related to poor working condition, low wages to minority and women and long hours without enough pay. These conditions continue to hurt the achievement, which have been attained and therefore, a proper and effective method must be established to address the working condition.

Factors which still drive gender disparity in the labor market can be categorized into three different forces which are interconnected. These factors are productivity, discrimination and preferences and therefore, it is important to solve these issues for the women and minority to gain in the labor market. Women and minorities are still being paid low wages by several companies (Clark & Drinkwater, 2017). The Trade and Labor organization have reported that several companies in the United States do not offer equal pay for equal work despite the labor laws, which require organization to practice equal treatment of all employees. This is a clear indication that discrimination against gender and race still exist in several workplaces. It has also been established that majority of women do not get equal pay with white counterparts and African Americans are also being paid low wages. Several corporations have been accused of practicing open discrimination of African Americans and therefore, offer low wages and poor working conditions (Clark & Drinkwater, 2017). Coca Cola, Bank of American, General Electric among others are some of the corporations, which have been accused of not following the labor law. In 1993, the Bank of America was accused of open discrimination of African Americans and in 2015, Coco Cola was also accused of offering poor working condition and low wages for African Americans and therefore, there are still several cases of discrimination based on gender and race at workplace.

Due to discrimination in the labor market, there are huge wage gap among races in the labor market. A study has established that African Americans are paid low compared to Whites, Asians and other races. This affects mostly African Americans working in the informal sectors. The wage gap exist is almost 15% according to a study conducted by Trade and Labor organization (Yeandle, Stiell, & Buckner, 2016). This indicates an extent, which discrimination still exists in the labor industry. Most African Americas working in the industrial sectors whether agricultural, manufacturing, and processing the rate which these companies pay African Americans and other minority is different and majority of them are usually being underpaid. This gap is likely to continue unless the federal government deploys strict measurements which could help in solving the problem. It is therefore, important to establish a system which can help reducing the wage gap and discrimination against race and gender.

A study by Hirata and Soares (2015) has established that market based competition could be the solution to the labor market discrimination against gender and race. Discrimination in the labor market cannot exist because labor market is very competitive and therefore, it requires skill and experience to meet the set core market targets. With competitive market, employers are forced to hire based on production, skills and experience of employees and this could reduce the discrimination rate in the labor market almost by 20% (Yeandle, Stiell, & Buckner, 2016). Competitive market forces employers to base their selection on quality of employees. Productive employees are more likely to get high chances of access to job opportunities. A study indicates that discrimination against race and gender has reduced significantly in the white collar jobs since the production is based on skills and experience. The wage gap is very low and the labor law is strictly observed and this has helped to reduce the gender and racial discrimination in the labor market. Attempts have been made to study the correlation between gender and racial discrimination in the labor force and competitive market has established that there is a direct link. It means that the competitive market affect the discrimination based on gender and race. It means that high competitive market reduces the discrimination rate against race and gender.

Competitive market could also reduce the low wages related to discrimination against race and gender. Hirata and Soares (2015) pointed that a company structure controls how a firm manages its wages and therefore, it provide mechanism of realignment of the structure, which are used to set wages for employees. Competitive market ensures that a company is structured to focus on its productivity to compete with other competitors in the market. With efficient market competition the rate of rate of discrimination would be low and the people companies would be able to employ employees based on their skills and experience and therefore, it is important to ensure that competitive market is build to help reducing discrimination in the market

However, there are several anti discrimination laws, which have been enactment since 1960s to help addressing discrimination against race and gender. The first enactment was done in 1964, the Civil Rights Act, which prohibited any kind of discrimination against race and gender (Cain, 2015). The Title VII and Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 is an important law which was enacted to help addressing the problem of racial discrimination in the country and since then it has helped in achieving a lot of gains in the labor market. Though a lot still needed to be done, anti-discrimination laws have helped in solving several conditions and therefore, these laws are the cornerstone to the strong labor market, which exist in the United States. Other laws are Equal Pay Act established to set payment standard in the labor market (Winter-Ebmer & Weichselbaumer, 2014). This was done to make sure that there is discrimination against race or gender when it comes to payment of employees. People with the same skills and working under similar working condition must be paid the same wages as required by the law. It is therefore, one of the essential laws, which were enacted to streamline the labor industry in the United States. Protection against harassment is also one of the laws established after the enactment of the Civil Rights Act to ensure that nobody can face harassment or any kind of humiliation at workplace. A study has established that the United States Congress has also enacted Age Discrimination Act of 1967, Disability Law in the United States, United States, discrimination case law and the LGBT law to protect the people against any kind of discrimination in the labor market (Bøg & Kranendonk, 2011). Despite the existence of discrimination against gender, and race these laws have a played a significant role in changing the labor market to ensure that employees are well protected.

It is still important to ensure that these past injustices are addressed the stability of the country. In the last few months, there have been cases of racial related violence across major cities. The violence is as a result of feeling left out and discrimination acts. And therefore, it is important to address the discrimination against minority as well as the discrimination of people of color in the job market. Without addressing the major aspect of discrimination against gender and race in the society, the discrimination against race and gender at workplace would exist and therefore, the first action to solve the problem of discrimination in the labor market would to solve the general concept of racial and gender discrimination in the society. This therefore, would require the federal and state government to work together to establish laws, which can keep in check the employment contracts and methods being used for recruitment and employment. Women must be given equal opportunity with men at top government employment and in corporations (Hirata & Soares, 2015). This would be the best ideal, which is likely to make other companies to follow the trend and offer women top job positions. The idea of gender and racial discrimination should be reviewed to ensure that it is addressed right from the community level to the top. Without addressing the problem effectively from bottom to the top, the enactment of labors to ensure there is equitable and equal opportunities for all employments despite an individual gender or race.

In conclusion, gender and racial in the labor market has been in existed for several years. Studies have established that the rate of racial discrimination is still high despite the reforms and laws, which have been enactment in the labor market. The racial and gender discrimination is common among minorities working in the informal sectors compared to people working in other areas. The types of discrimination are related to low wages, long hours without enough pay and poor working condition in the industrial sector. It is also been established that the problem can be solved through the use of policy and laws but the most effective method is the building of cohesion from the community level. It is important to ensure that laws are enactment and properly followed by all stakeholders in the industry (Winter-Ebmer & Weichselbaumer, 2014). This requires the partnership and collaboration of the government with all stakeholders to address the problem. The federal government and state must establish a monitoring and evaluation team to check the implementation of the law. This would make sure that everyone follows the law and discrimination against race and gender related issues are addressed effectively. It is also established that the beginning of the reform in the labor market, started when the Civil Right Act was established. It is because it opens other avenues for the enactment of laws to protect employees and other minorities in the country.

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