

Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations

By Aruna Rao, Joanne Sandler, David Kelleher, Carol Miller

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At a time when some corporate women leaders are advocating for their aspiring sisters to ‘lean in’ for a bigger piece of the existing pie, this book puts the spotlight on the deep structures of organizational culture that hold gender inequality in place. *Gender at Work: Theory and Practice for 21st Century Organizations* makes a compelling case that transforming the unspoken, informal institutional norms that perpetuate gender inequality in organizations is key to achieving gender equitable outcomes for all.

The book is based on the authors’ interviews with 30 leaders who broke new ground on gender equality in organizations, international case studies crafted from consultations and organizational evaluations, and lessons from nearly fifteen years of experience of Gender at Work, a learning collaborative of 30 gender equality experts. From the Dalit women’s groups in India who fought structural discrimination in the largest ‘right to work’ program in the world, to the intrepid activists who challenged the powerful members of the UN Security Council to define mass rape as a tactic of war, the trajectories and analysis in this book will inspire readers to understand and chip away at the deep structures of gender discrimination in organizational policies, practices and outcomes.

Designed for practitioners, policy makers, donors, students and researchers looking at gender, development and organizational change, this book offers readers a widely tested tool of analysis – the Gender at Work Analytical Framework – to assess the often invisible structures of gender bias in organizations and to map desired strategies and change processes.

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Editorial Review

Review

'For decades, Rao, Sandler, Kelleher, and Miller have dedicated their professional lives to developing and employing a holistic approach to improving gender equality globally. [...] By reflecting on and addressing gendered presumptions and internal biases, organizations?like individuals?can raise effectiveness for combating exclusion, harassment, and unequal access to resources. Applying their analytical framework, they consider individual consciousness and capabilities, resources and safety, norms and deep structures, plus rules and policies. Using this conceptual tool for assessing conditions and strategizing, they argue that change agents must take into account organizations' systemic as well as human factors, along with formal and informal rules. This book, a "reflection on practice," is generally accessible and compelling. [...] Highly recommended for academic and professional libraries. Summing Up: Highly recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through faculty.' - P. W. Laird, *University of Colorado Denver, in CHOICE*

'This is a must read for feminists. The authors provide an excellent conceptual framework, clear analysis and detailed case studies, illuminated by amazing and moving stories from those working inside organizations to successfully make change happen.' - *Professor Rosalind Eyben, Emeritus Fellow, Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK*

'Promoting gender equality is not just a complex social engineering project; it also requires difficult internal changes in the institutions ostensibly committed to this project. This volume assembles case histories of feminist institutional change – and stories of feminist warriors' struggles -- that project in vivid, accessible detail the triumphs and traumas of institutional change processes. It cannot fail to inspire.' - *Anne Marie Goetz, Professor, Center for Global Affairs, School of Professional Studies, New York University, USA*

'As a long-term advocate and user of the Gender at Work Analytical Framework, I celebrate the arrival of this volume, and hope it will reach the widest possible audience of scholars, activists, social justice organisations, donors and evaluators concerned with analysing and advancing gender equality and women's rights around the world. I have used and adapted the Framework with multiple groups with great success, but have found it particularly effective as a tool for helping young women activists unpack the different dimensions of gender power, for evaluating gender equality interventions and their impacts, and in sensitising donors to why uni-dimensional "magic bullet" interventions do not address root causes or create lasting, sustainable change in gender regimes or ideologies.

Apart from the Framework, the notion of organisational "deep structures" has been a powerfully transformative concept offered by Gender at Work's scholars and organisational change facilitators. When I first encountered this concept, its impact was electrifying. And every time I present it in a pedagogical context, its effect is equally so - an "AHA" moment like few others. It makes a very complex set of dynamics that anyone in organisational settings has experienced - often painfully - suddenly clear, and allows them to name it and place it with startling certainty. They are excited, liberated, and almost immediately begin to grapple with what to do with it.

By offering us a clear exposition of this compelling Framework and concept, as well as deep insights

into their operation in both large and small organisations, governmental and non-governmental, grassroots and global, this volume can be a potent force for change in both thinking and practice - and hence, hopefully, in the lives of women and other oppressed genders around the world.' - *Srilatha Batliwala, Scholar Associate, Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)*

'Gender equality is a challenge to all men and women who want to create a just world. We are all products of intense gender socialization and men in particular have been socialised in a predominantly sexist world. Men must understand the impact of gender inequality and working together with women leading the struggle to address this within their families, communities, organizations and movements. This book is about how to challenge and change social norms and values that perpetuate exclusion and inequality. It draws on real experiences in important institutions. It is critical reading for men and women engaged in the struggle for social justice and gender equality.' - *Kumi Naidoo, International Executive Director, Greenpeace International*

About the Author

Aruna Rao is Executive Director and co-founder of Gender at Work, Washington, DC.

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