GENDER EQUALITY IN TECHNOLOGY

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Second Place

In 2019, Dr. Debora Sijacki, a computer cosmologist at the University of Cambridge, was awarded the PRACE Ada Lovelace Award for her remarkable contribution to the field of High-Performance Computation. The award, named after Ada Lovelace, who was considered as the first programmer in human history. Ada was truly a visionary and her insightful findings have paved the way for modern programming and she is indeed an inspiring figure for innumerable women who later went on to invent one of the finest creations of mankind. Grace Hopper, who garnered worldwide acclaim as the *'Mother of Computing'* for her incessant toil in devising UNIVAC-1, the first business-oriented machine, her work as one of the lead architects in invented 'COBOL', is second to none. The revolutionary idea of the Graphical User Interface (GUI) was developed by Adele Goldberg, a researcher at Xerox in the 1970s. Optimizing and adding details to the GUI, it was Susan Kare, the chief graphic designer at Apple who was responsible for the signature graphical designs of Apple which are trendy even now.

From pioneering the VFX of Marvel Cinematic Universe (Victoria Alonso), to bringing retro gaming into the limelight (Carol Shaw), the marvelous contribution of women in technology is absolutely mesmerizing. In a country like India, where a large pool of STEM-based positions are occupied by men, the mighty Chandrayaan-2 mission of ISRO was a revelation as Ritu Kharidal, Mission Director and 'The Rocket Woman of India' spearheaded a team of women scientists who have been the testament for the valor, intellect, and persistence. Women in tech have not only brought laurels and accolades to India but have also won hearts of 1.3 billion fellows. The demonstration of technical brilliance is admirable and has a tremendous impact on advancements in research. Gone are the days when the male-dominant orthodox society laid strict doctrines that women needed to follow. Now, women have realized their self-worth and have a sense of independence in both thinking and actions. According to stats, 34% of employees in tech-related in India roles are females. This number seems superlative if compared with the proportion of females in tech professions in Europe (18%) and the USA (25%). This gender disparity particularly arises because of the pre-conceived notion of women being incompetent in tech-related roles which in reality is far from the truth.

On average, male employees are promoted to managerial positions every 6 years whereas females who are equally capable are promoted every 8 years.

This results in women quitting tech jobs and moving to sales, marketing, product management, or consultancy. On the brighter side, organizations like *'Global Fund for Women'*, *'Ladies Learning Code'*, *'Girls who code',* and many others

have taken initiative in bridging this gap. Organizations like Amazon, Adobe, ETH Zurich, Warsaw University are offering Women In Technology Scholarships. McKinsey and Company are bolstering gender equality in technology through philanthropy and corporate social responsibility. Women in tech have surged ahead and have made fantastic progress. The world has now started to realize the prominence of women in technology.

"Be the change you want to see in the world"

says Mahatma Gandhi.

Merely addressing the problem is the job half done. Taking concrete steps in the right direction and triumphantly executing them will make it picture-perfect. Mighty world-class organizations like Google and Amazon have taken cognizance of this ever-growing issue and have formulated many progressive policies that we can take inspiration from. Google's Women Techmakers Scholars Program, which awards $10,000 dollars to women displaying exemplary leadership and academic skills and Amazon's WoW program that encourages diversity in Software Development Roles have created a massive impact by touching the lives of countless unwavering women. AICTE's (All India Council for Technical Education) Pragati Scholarship encourages girls to excel in the field of Technology by providing them scholarships of Rs 50,000 per annum is another step to champion this cause. Revising existing reservation policies, devising schemes that empower women whilst financing their education by awarding them scholarships is the need of the hour. As an organization, providing adequate maternity leaves and designing

the work-place to include child-care facilities are truly revolutionary endeavors. Educational institutes must adopt radical thinking and organize hackathons, ideation and B-Plan competitions solely for women that are aimed at solving practical female-centric issues. Conducting mentoring sessions to guide them would enkindle in them a burning desire to learn and succeed.

Finally, just keep calm and show them the girl power!

WOMEN ARE INTEGRAL TO THE WORKFORCE

Women are not only gaining ground in 'nontraditional' roles but are more educated and poised to extend their footprint across the entire US labor force. Understand the impact of female workers with these key statistics.

60% OF CURRENT COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE WOMEN

34% OF WOMEN EARN A BACHELORS DEGREE BY AGE 29

26% OF MEN EARN A BACHELORS DEGREE BY AGE 29

90% OF REGISTERED NURSES ARE WOMEN

97% OF DENTAL HYGIENISTS ARE FEMALE

57% OF THE LABOR FORCE IS MADE UP OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES

47% OF WOMEN FILL 'NONTRADITIONAL' ROLES

- 25% PRODUCTION WORKERS
- 22% TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION MANAGERS
- 21.4% CHEFS AND HEAD COOKS

19% GROWTH OF WOMEN IN THE LABOR FORCE SINCE 1960

Source: United States Department of Labor

OMNIA