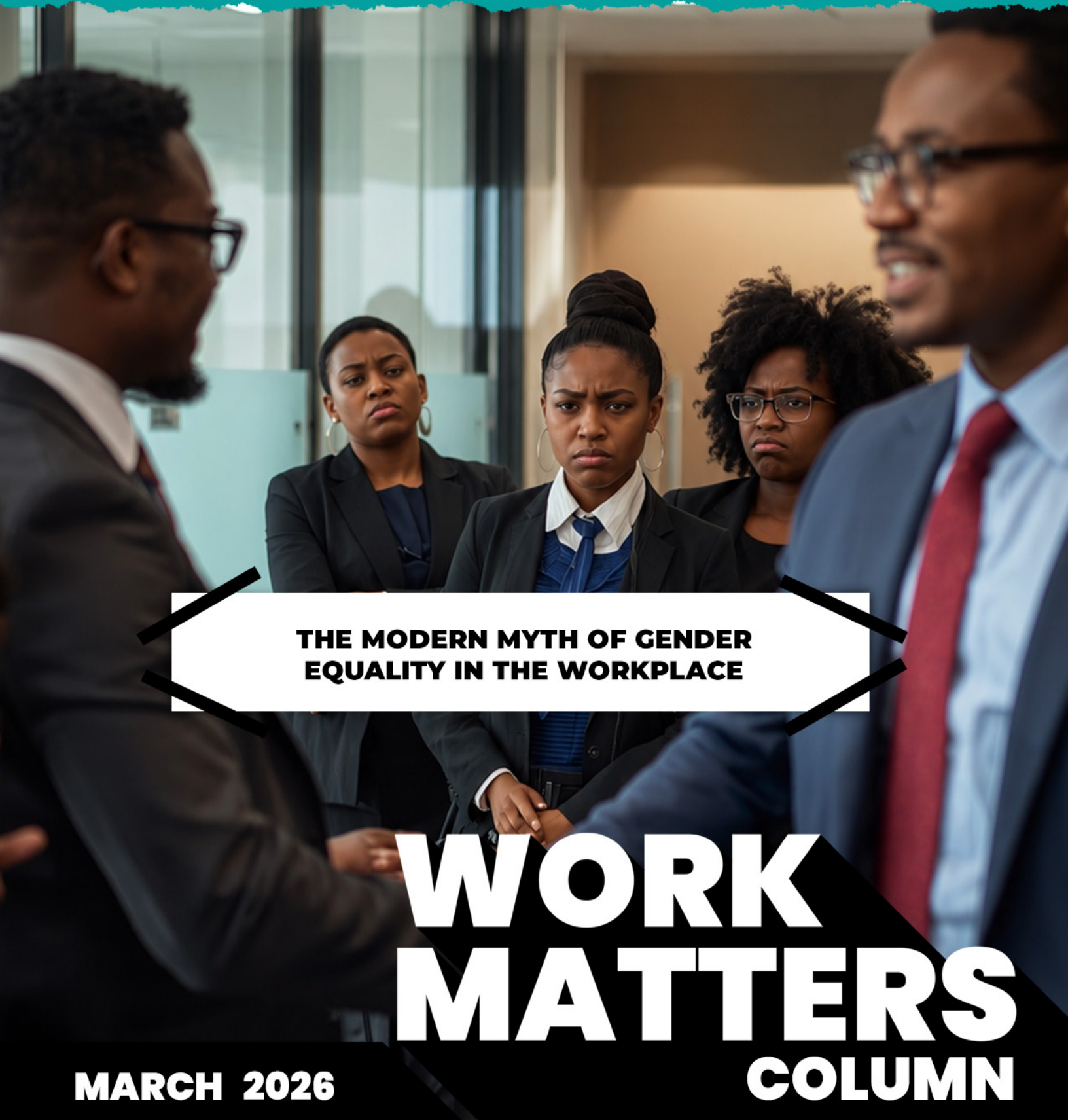




CIPRIANI COLLEGE
OF LABOUR AND CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES



**THE MODERN MYTH OF GENDER
EQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

WORK MATTERS

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The Modern Myth of Gender Equality in the Workplace

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As the new year of 2026 has dawned upon us, women in the workplace are reaping the benefits that labour leaders such as Elma Francois and Clotil Walcott fought for...or so we are made to think. Undoubtedly, women have come a long way in the workplace, as they can now work in any field they desire and earn equal wages in some instances; however, social contrast shows that women are still undervalued, underappreciated and underestimated in comparison to their male peers. Why is this? History shows that patriarchy has existed since the dawn of time keeping men as leaders and women as caregivers. Decade after decade humanity made strides to relocate women from caretakers to respected businesswomen, but even within this shift of “acceptance”, women continued to be diminished and received passive-aggressive responses and interactions. I believe that to facilitate our females wholeheartedly in the workplace, that targeted changes in structural and cultural inequalities must be embraced to overcome these issues of non-acceptance, inequality, whether covert or manifest.

Due to legal frameworks, most businesses “prohibit” gender discrimination and “promote” fairness, for example Trinidad and Tobago implemented the Equal Opportunity Act in the year 2000 to legalise neutrality in the workplace. If the Equal Opportunity Act is breached, the case becomes a civil one, not a criminal one, thus the consequences maybe a fine. It is important to note that in this case, as it is not viewed as a criminal offense, cases of gender inequality in workplaces are not necessarily given priority, as many of the businesses can easily pay the fine. Men tend to feel a sense of superiority over their female counterparts as they are usually overrepresented in management roles and have higher salaries on average for the same roles in the organization.

Notably, women often express the view that they often bear more responsibilities than their male co-workers, while, the males more often than not receives most of the praise and credit. Organizations create an illusion by stating they legally implement gender equality, but continue to leave women out of important conversations masking deep-rooted organizational and cultural practices.

Women are generally considered to be more educated with higher education enrolment and degree attainment in many countries. Nevertheless, the ILO shows that only 3 in 10 management positions, 27% of the world’s board seats and 6% of CEOs are held by women. These statistics highlight the degree to which women are drastically underestimated and underrepresented in senior management globally. There are countless programs which can be implemented by companies to support the representation and advancement of women such as mentorships, leadership training and gender equity programs which would aid in exposure to diversification to all who partake. The sad truth is that many companies do not value these programs as they see no need for them as the senior management is male dominated and the priorities are put elsewhere.

Equality in pay, or it should be said the lack thereof, may be the most contemptuous factor of workplace gender equality in recent history. As stated before, many women from previous generations have fought for the rights of women to work across the world. With the progression of women, one can assume they would be able to make the same rate as their male co-workers for their level of work, but sadly, oftentimes, this is not the case. The Institute for Women’s Policy Research shows that the gender gap in earnings has worsened from a previous rate of 19.1 percent in 2024 to 17.3 percent less in 2025. This can also be broken down into subcategories of different races by women where we see the figures worsen. As a society, this feels like

a backward step to the age of misogynistic men who control the narrative and are intimidated by the success and advancement of women. Even though women are proven to make less than men, I argue here that their professionalism and reliability can always be counted on, for example, they arrive early and leave late to complete urgent tasks and they are team players by “picking up the slack” on tasks which are incomplete.

Anecdotal evidence as well as empirical research suggests that women in the workplace are open to mistreatment and are often underappreciated which contradicts the “values” and “practices” many organizations claim to apply. As a working woman myself, I can truthfully attest to some of the evidence shown, and we are often accused of being “crazy” or just cranky because of ‘that time of the month’ when we try to highlight our views and opinions on many issues. The basic workplace rights for an employee are to be treated with appreciation and just, equal opportunities for promotion and pay, but unfortunately women are left to keep fighting for these rights nowadays even though some progress has been made over the last fifty years.