



**FACULTAD DE ECONOMÍA Y CIENCIAS EMPRESARIALES**

**AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN  
LABOR MARKET**

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# AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

## **Abstract**

The higher presence of women in Ecuadorian labor market does not necessarily involved quality or fair conditions in the labor field; the gap is still notorious, at different levels such as wages, and occupational. Ecuadorian women still confronted to preconceived ideas or stereotypes about their role at home and work, turning gender equality an unfinished matter at local level due to some profound cultural barriers, complexity of doing business, lack of commitment of the enterprises and weak public policies. By using a simple descriptive and explorative methodology, This paper intend to decribe the current situation of the Ecuadorian Labor market from a gender equality perspective, putting in evidence the most common forms of discrimantions which challenges women in a non existent fair labor market on a daily basis. In order, to push Ecuador´s in its path towards the eradication of gender discrimination at the labor context, so all the individuals can for sure achieve genuine economic and human development, some international approaches at public and private sector will be discuss as well. This includes the corporate social responsibility initiative that has modify business culture of the organizations to set the best practices, free of segregation in business area.

**Key Words:** Gender equality, labor market, discrimination, wage discrimination, occupational segregation

# AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

## **Resumen**

Este ensayo tiene como propósito describir la situación actual del mercado laboral Ecuatoriano desde una perspectiva de género, conocer sobre los avances en tema de equidad y aquello que aún le falta por hacer para poder reducir la brecha de género en el ámbito laboral a través de una metodología exploratoria y descriptiva simple. Además, cubrirá lo esencial en políticas internacionales por parte del sector público y privado que han resultado exitosas y favorables en su contribución a resolver problemas de inequidades de género en sus respectivos mercados laborales, con el propósito que sirva de guía y referencia para el Ecuador en su camino hacia la verdadera generación de igualdad y oportunidades en el Mercado laboral, dentro de las iniciativas se discutirá la responsabilidad social empresarial como una de las iniciativas globales que mayor impacto tiene sobre la contribución de éste a reducir la brecha de género en el sector laboral. Así como también se pondrá en evidencia las formas más comunes de discriminación salarial y ocupacional, a las cuales las ecuatorianas deben enfrentar en su cotidianidad debido a barreras culturales, estereotipos, políticas públicas escasas e inefectivas, y un sector empresarial poco comprometido con el bienestar social.

***Palabras claves:*** Equidad de género, **mercado laboral**, discriminación, discriminación salarial, segregación ocupacional.

*Societies that discriminate on the basis of gender pay a significant price – in greater poverty, slower economic growth, weaker governance, and a lower quality of life," says Andrew Mason*

## **Introduction**

Throughout Ecuadorian history, women has been key in the nations path toward political, social and economical development; however obstacles, such as gender inequality endure through time because the patriarchal structure of society, ineffective laws, and weak policies, have inhibit women's performance jeopardizing her capacity to contribute to their fullest to the country's progress, thus limiting their role.

State's determination to empower women has been marked by specific periods such as the right to vote in 1929, reform of constitution in 2008, affirmative action to grant women inclusion in public sector especially in politics, and assigned budget to gender equality matter, all these have somehow pushed the country today to be in the top 25 countries with more gender equality considering the fourt sub-indexes: the political, health, education and economic participation and opportunity. Despite of this achievement, there is still hard work to do in order to reach and keep gender equality in the labor market.

Ecuadorian women are still submitted to housekeeping, low skill and part time jobs, and informal sectors. The stereotyped occupations mentioned above aren't women's only problem, wage discrimination for doing the exact same job as men is still an issue, and so are childbearing impediments to climb in positions in the organization. Somehow merit, capability and education aren't enough to suit for a job. Often women's plan of marriage and children are punished in their path towards senior positions because in managers minds, they are more likely to

quit or stop careers, luckily for men that is not the case. At a simple glance, those efforts to reduce gender gap aren't enough. So, What else can be done? And more importantly, why should a country care about diminishing the gender gap in the labor market? (Páramo et al, 2011)

The problem with a wider gender gap is that it can accentuate inequalities, manifested in higher unemployment rate, poverty, less quality of life and income, plus it hinders genuine economic development. Nevertheless all that can be reversed if the public and private sector put in practice effective gender reforms, policies and setting initiatives. Both sectors must work together and share responsibility to address gender disparities in labor market, as advantages for both sectors can result from it.

In 2010 the Ministry of Internal Affairs after evaluating the country's condition in gender issues found very little gender perspective within their agenda, programs and policies. For that matter, this paper will go over some different approaches aimed at reducing gender gap in economic participation that goes from best international public policies, programs, to initiatives from the private sector oriented to boost equal opportunities and conditions in the workplaces, so Ecuador can have them as reference.

The methodology used for this paper will be strictly descriptive and exploratory as its only pretension is to give an insight of the Ecuadorian labor market from gender perspective, describe its current situation, evaluate some of the advantages of diminishing the gap, recognize others works at gender matter by using data from secondary sources.

## **Framework**

### *Theoretical Framework*

#### *Determinants of gender inequality*

The cultural, labor supply and demand factors have become some of the determinants behind the existence of gender inequality. Supply factors establish how choices, resources, expectations and norms have shaped women's condition in the labor market. For instance, childcare barriers, rigid policies, and people's tendency to validate their gender role in order to keep their identity are among these supply factors. While the demand factors involve the discriminatory practices from the employers when hiring, they prefer men and value more their work over women for certain careers and job positions. Finally, the cultural factor is related to the general perception of society that conceives women as economically inactive. Back in time, women were assumed to be sole responsible for domestic work and maternity while men activities involved public life, economic and political participation properly paid. Although years have allowed women to perform in the labor market, within the social context they are expected to assume the responsibility of their families and households as well (Gerecke, 2013)(tasigchana & Triviño, 2003).

Oakley's point of view for explaining women relation to only home chores and family that prevailed in the last century, gives a hint to understand the cultural origins for women's conditions today at the labor market. Among the explanation were the moral judgment to women who worked, concerned that women in the labor force could led to abandonment on family and health. Also, women in the labor force opposed natural labor division between sexes, where men were

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

acknowledged to be the only one to work and provide for their houses. (Páramo et al, 2011)

### *Gender Equality and Discrimination*

According to the Latin America Genera organization (LAG), gender equality comprehends the fair treatment to men and women on equal basis. The latter concept is rooted on the recognition of a universal right, intrinsic to all human beings, that do not distinguish men or women, and which magnitude could lead to a real human development. This human right so basic and fundamental as well, is constantly violated by diverse discriminatory actions, that compromise the economic and social progress of a nation (América Latina Genera) (Organización Internacional del Trabajo, S.F.).

Bañón's experience in gender matter lead him to conclude that even though it is recent that international organizations, feminist movements and other organism, have been demanding the governments to include the gender perspective in their public policies, The guarantee and promotion of it in the different government agendas as the path to eradicate the poverty certainly is a current initiative adjusted to actual need and demands (Bañón, 2008).

International Labor Organization's (ILO) interpretation of gender equality in the workplace suggests "equal opportunities, independently of whether it is women or men". In fact, ILO's work program's objective is oriented to grant their right by assuring the same opportunities for both sexes, so they could be able to count with productive jobs that are properly paid, under liberty conditions, security and human dignity; and above all free of discrimination (Oficina Internacional de trabajo, 2006).



## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

For Santos and Monsueto of the Latin American Economic Commission magazine, gender discrimination creates and stresses inequalities, mostly in developing countries, where the labour scenario presents multiple obstacles, which include limited access to good jobs, fixed traditional job positions for women, unfair salaries and few opportunities of promotion. Besides that, other cultural and legal barriers can be added to increase the gender disparities in workplaces. (Santos & Monsueto, 2008).

### *Types of discrimination in the labor market*

The labor, wage and occupational discriminations are the most common type of discrimination that can be perceived in the place of ongoing interaction between employees and employers. Therefore, it is important to go over those terms including a definition of labor market. (International Organization Labour, 2012).

Labor discrimination denotes how women are a vulnerable group, especially since in time of crises; they are more likely to suffer from higher unemployment rate. Behind the reasons attributed to this pattern, is the businessman's wrong perception of women and work. Women are mostly associated to have part time and seasonal jobs, have less disposition to work under certain conditions, depend on flexible schedule (Tasigchana & Triviño, 2003).

Wage discrimination can be direct or indirect, but in general terms refers to when women and men equally capable get paid different salaries for doing exactly the same job. The direct discrimination will only regard gender as a key factor for paying lower wages. Meanwhile the indirect wage discrimination

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

established that the advantage that one sex can have over the other is related to personal characteristics including age, marital status, years of labor experience, size of company, education level, etc (Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales, 2007).

Occupational segregation has two dimensions, the horizontal and vertical one. The horizontal dimension implies women's restrictions to access to all types or kind of jobs with high wages. Usually their alternatives remained limited to sector such as education, human resources, nursing clerks, house cleaning etc. Whereas the vertical refers to women segregation in workplaces, as they are ignored when senior positions and other promotions are open and available (Tasigchana & Triviño, 2003).

### *Inequality around the world*

Unfortunately even these days women are commonly confronted to preconceived ideas or stereotypes about their role at home and work, in some countries more than others, this is misleading women towards the achievement of true success in the business world, free of discrimination. For women around globe, Its a challenge to get the desired job, to be in senior positions, earn fair wages, balance family and work, all due to the doubtful organizational practices, lack of support on behalf of the state and society (Mora, s.f.).

Despite the growth of women participation in the region, their disadvantage compared to men is still evident, as they remained associated with low productivity, informal work, and no proper social protection. Reports of the Economic Comision For Latin America (ECLA) showed that despite the

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

education, time and money invested, women in the region continue to earn 37% less than men, and only 1.8% of the companies are run by women. It is not only a state matter to improve women condition in the business sector and overall economic participation, but its also a matter of the private sector to share responsibility and collaborate with the state, by not only obeying the law but by taking initiatives on their own that will benefit all the laborforce (International Labour Organization, 2012)(ECLA, 2009).

Depending only on the man or husband's income is no longer the rule, women are more educated. The expensive cost of living and few unemployment benefits leaves no other option for women but to challenge the natural division of labor between sexes, and become providers as well (Jääskeläinen, 2011) (International Labour Organization, 2012).

Job's trend by sectors remain to be limited for female workers, as women's popular final destiny is the service sector in both cases of the developing and developed countries, especially to education and health areas, while construction, transportation, and mining are male dominated areas in both high and low income countries (International Labour Organization, 2012) (the economist, 2012).

The sociological explanation for recurrent women's mobilization to the service sector relies on how nature or culture or both, have made women more effective and suitable managers for contemporary companies in client interactive jobs such as consulting, insurance, and therapy, due to their social intelligence, empathy and ability to pay special attention to the feeling of others (Iversen, Rosenbluth, & David, 2004).

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

Women are conditioned by society, market dynamics and its changing regulations, thus when a global economic crisis hits, this vulnerable group is the one affected the most. Generally, economic crises tend to intensify the gender gap; such was the case in 2008; when female unemployment's rate was bigger than men's. But that crisis also brought some positive news and reactions as Ecuador took legal provisions in its constitution, in order to ensure protection for women against gender discrimination (International Labour Organization, 2012).

The provisions can be appreciated in Article 11 section 2 of the constitution, which states "that all people are equal, and have of the same rights, duties and opportunities. Therefore, no one can be discriminated by ethnic, birthplace, age, sex, and gender identity motives" (Asamblea constituyente, 2008).

Article 33 of the eighth section under the title Work and Social Security, also aims at protecting women in the labour market as it established that "work is a social right and duty, a source of personal gratification and an economy driver, that is why the state shall guarantee all workers by equal means the respect to their dignity, fair salaries in return of their work services, and the achievement of a healthy job chosen or accepted by free will" (Asamblea constituyente, 2008).

## **Research Method**

### *Methodology*

This paper responds to an exploratory and simple descriptive design, because it attempts to put in evidence the unfinished work of Ecuador toward gender equality achievement in the labor market, through the proper consultancy of secondary sources. In order to describe Ecuador's gender inequality condition, statistical data will be mainly collected from the National Institute of Statistic and Census (INEC) and from a private consultant company called Deloitte. For, the rest of the paper including the analysis of the results, studies from the World Bank (WB), Intenational Monetary Fund (IMF), Interamerican Bank for Development (IBD), and International Labor Organization (ILO) will be among the main sources consider for reference, for the completion of this paper.

## **An insight of the Ecuadorian labor market**

### *Women in The Ecuadorian labor Market*

The optimism of ascending participation of women in labor market in recent years, as a consequence of the equality and inclusion global trend is translated in that almost 50% of the owners or managers of small businesses are women according to the last census. This matches to global entrepreneurship report in which stated that 54% of entrepreneurs in Ecuador were women in 2012. In addition, women are more linked to judicial sector and assembly nowadays and out of the total of women head of houses, 13% are public employees and 27,3% private sector employees, this numbers are better than in some of previous years as well (World Bank, 2013) (El Telégrafo, 2014).

The higher presence is not the only determinant to close the gap, and it does not necessarily involved quality or fair conditions in the labor field. In fact, despite the Ecuadorian government's effort in 2010 to create plans in the national agenda, to guarantee the promotion of policies regarding gender equality and include the promotions in the national budget and new constitution, numbers are still in favor of the male population (Ministerio del Interior, 2010) (Ministerio de turismo, 2013).

According to the last census made by the INEC, in Ecuador, there are more women than men in terms of populations but just 42.5% of women participate actively in the economy, more than 750.000 fully sustain their houses as sole providers, 69.8% of them have children and therefore have a need of policies that function according to women multifunctionality, which explains why

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

part time jobs are essentially dominated by women. In some cases even when their income is mandatory at home, disparity once more cases affects them negatively as women's income differs from men around 243 dollars (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, 2010).

Other results pointed out how education level for women have improved, 24.9% of them went to university compared to 16.9% of men, and 1.4% has a master's degree. These outcomes are relevant since education has a meaningful effect on reducing gender gap in the labor market. So a question arises immediately, how come the private and the public sector ignore to chose professionals educated women to work for them. Plus, how come women's income is still less than men if they are more educated? What are the grounds for human resources employees' gender selection and salary offer? Are those grounds legitimate or regulated by an entity? (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, 2010).

As mentioned before there exist traditional role and careers already fixed by our patriarchal society, that has somehow influenced gender's choice or duty to fall for one or another. According to the INEC, the areas where most of Ecuadorian women are concentrated are commerce, tourism, education, health and social services and housekeeping. Ecuadorian men on the contrary, they control sectors involving more responsibility, status and higher salaries, including construction, mining, transportation, fishing, public administration, and social security (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Censos, 2010).

Women only equal men in proprietorship when considering only MIPMES that have from 1 to 9 employees and which assets are up to one USD 100.000

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

dollars. As employees start to grow in numbers and companies get bigger and bigger, equality is no longer the pattern, as female representation as managers or owners is just of 30.3% in small to medium size enterprise (SMEs), and even less than half in bigger companies (Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Censo, 2010) (Ministerio de Industrias y Productividad, 2011).

Additional data continues to ratify more of women disadvantages in the business world, based on private study conducted by private consulting company of high prestige worldwide called Deloitte. They surveyed 110 multinationals and private local companies in the service, financing, industrial and commercial sector in order to see how were executive women doing in the labor market, and concluded that of the sample, 60% of the firms personnel are men, while the 40% left are women, only an estimated of 3.3% have senior positions. As general management only 4% and in charge of the vicepresidency only a 1.5%. Women in the service sector is no longer a surprising factor, nor is women exceling at the financial and human resources area, if recalling their natural talent to empathize with others (Deloitte, 2014).

Other relevant information from this research, states that 63% of the individuals that participated in the survey assured that there weren't many flexible internal policies for executive mothers other than the given by law (maternity and lactancy leave). The absence of internal policies might be the posible answer to explain why a 52% considered that women end up limiting their professional careers on their way to find balance between work and family. So what are the Ecuadorian companies actually doing to help women balance their dual world? (Deloitte, 2014).



## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

### *Ecuadorian companies lacking of gender perspective*

Ecuadorians companies as illustrated above are not doing enough to contribute to the fullest to eradicate discriminatory actions in their working environments, which constantly threaten women's route to achieve development, dignity and quality of life. Business culture at the local level is still rigid and unlevelled. María Sara Jijón, a member of the board of directors at Women Advancing Microfinance (WAM Ecuador), confirmed in her interview; she specified that only multinationals, from developed countries of origin, happen to demonstrate good practices regarding gender equality matter. (Consortio Ecuatoriano para la Responsabilidad Social, 2011)

### **Successful gender gap reducing approaches**

#### *Effective international Public Policies*

Although, gender gap has indeed decreased worldwide, it still remains an issue and its variation in levels across countries is mainly due to dissimilar policies and institutional frameworks of nations affecting it. For this reason this chapter will cover some of the most outstanding international approaches adjusted to each reality aimed at reducing gender disparities, with the expectation these serve for future reference at local level (European Commission, 2009).

Norway is the best example to look upon, because of its experience in effective policies to reduce gender gap in the labor market has ranked the country as the most equal in terms of economic participation, wage and opportunities of promotion worldwide. The gender gap index of last year puts Finland in the first

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

position, with the smallest gender gap but it includes the 4 categories considered by the World Economic Forum, and Norway is first in the category of interest to this paper (World Economic Forum, 2013).

Other countries in the region imitate Norway's initiative that has proven to be successful for more than 10 years now; this involves the selection of women to become part of the executive boards in the public companies through a quota system. The percentage of women representing the board of governance is set legally on constitution. And this involved that of the applicants with same qualifications but from different sexes postulating for the same job, the one on the gender with less representation will be selected to occupy the position. It is widely known the Nordic and developed countries tendency to invest billions of dollars in education, as consequence of that tendency, both women and men have or should have the same opportunity to become part of diverse human talent team, under fair conditions, otherwise governments are just wasting their resources. Results of this quota system are remarkable, as the nation has the highest percentage of women in the labor market in the entire world, in both the sectors public and private (European Commission Justice, 2011) (European Commission, 2009) (Casey et al, 2011).

Other proposals denote obligation for companies with more than a specific amount of employees to present in their annual reports, their income statement break down by gender and inform about their future actions, and the executed ones dedicated to increase gender equality in their firms. Another popular European policy addresses segregation through vocational training of employees on equal basis (European Commission Justice, 2011) (European Commission, 2009).

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

Other nations have contributed to shrink segregation as well, by taking active measures to break gender-based stereotypes and increase women's access to male-dominant occupations through educational campaign and funding programs. For instance in Argentina and Chile, women in small and medium sized companies are expected to receive government support in form of subsidies and credit. Perú's Projoven program has an effective result at reducing occupational segregation as it encourages training entities to focus on increasing female worker participation in the labor market, especially in occupations associated mostly to men (ECLAC, 2009) (International Labour Organization, 2012) (Ñopo et al, 2008)

Canada's policies to encourage bigger participation of women in the labor force can be seen in the reduction of taxes for secondary earners, as expected women's participation in the labor market has significantly increased (Tsounta 2006) (International Monetary fund, 2013)

Other Nordic nation that excels at closing gender gap, is Sweden and it's in partly associated with a parental leave policy that comprises: security to keep job, the actual cover of child care and the alternative to reduce working hours. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries that happened to invest larger amounts of its GDP on childcare and education for children up to 5 years are the ones having the highest rates of employment for women with children (International Monetary fund, 2013).

By taking the appropriate measures in order to encourage more women to participate in the labor force of Japan, the nation is also addressing its

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

demographic problem. The Japanese policy consists of boosting career prospects for female population and offering better child care services, through this way the Japanese address gender gap problems and alleviate its problems associated to its aging population (International Monetary fund, 2013) .

### *Private sector strategies to address social problems*

As long as organizations are willing to rethink and reshape their activities and strategies to improve labor conditions and practices, they will be for sure helping in the creation of far a more diverse, inclusive and discrimination free work environments. Good examples of strategies or approaches are expected to be assessed and taken into consideration, because even though Ecuador is different in culture, resources, economy and legal framework, it can still adapt and make suitable and effective to our reality.

The local private sector is called to consider global initiatives and trends to current social needs, particularly because there are not enough firms dominating the local market that can actually assume the losses resulted from discrimination. In the business world, corporate social responsibility has proven to be a powerful tool and helpful as well to solve gender disparities in this globalization era, this is backed up by the Inter-American Development Bank (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, 2009).

Firms recognized their dependency on human talent, and somehow their motivation to increase productivity, competitiveness and project positive image, have become stronger drivers to commit and reinforce gender equality, through better business practices that can help improve and equal women condition within

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

the workplaces (Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo, 2009) (Saldaña & Llátser, 2007).

### **The reduction of the gender gap: Advantages**

The gender equality could turn into a good business for companies and for economies in general, which is why it is essential to include policies and programs to focus on favoring equal opportunities to all the laborforce in disregard of their gender. Among the advantages of addressing properly the reduction of gender gap in labor context, there are:

- Access to a wider human talent pool, more diverse, inclusive, dynamic, competitive, productive, providing different perspectives and multiplying the option of counting with a more capable professional can result from hiring women on an equal basis (International Monetary fund, 2013) (Australian Government: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013)

- Reduction of costs associated to a diminishing employees rotation, achieving loyalty and worker commitment to the firm. (Australian Government: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013)

- The firms potential growth and competitiveness in the market; as well improve their image and reputation (Australian Government: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013).

- The impact on a nation's economy's will be positive in terms, of reduction of the unemployment level and poverty, increasing income per capita and purchasing capability, higher quality of life; in few words this will result in

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

sustainable economic development (Australian Government: Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2013) .

- A practical example of how well can women do with higher income to nations welfare is explained in a study, that stresses women's inclination to spend significant amount of their income on their family, especially in their children education, activating a healthy cycle (International Monetary fund, 2013) (International Labour Organization, 2012).

-An interesting data projection for 5 years term from 2012 until 2017, showed the gains in terms of money in outputs, that can result by reducing gender gap, only in Latin America and the Caribbean this represent 223 billion dollars in additional GDP (International Labour Organization, 2012).

# AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

## **Analysis of Results**

“Economic growth does lead to gender Equality” Does it really? This World Bank statement opposes Ecuador’s outcomes. Ever since 2007, the years in which the nation experimented higher economic growth were 2008 and 2011 with 6.4% and 7.8% respectively, the nation ranked in the global gender gap in the category of economic participation and opportunity 74 and 99 correspondingly, among the 135 countries considered. This one category comprehend’s the participation, wages and advancement gaps and this is where Ecuador is failing at, disparities are obvious and discouraging as men continue to be in advantage over women in all three components. More economic growth did not bring the country more equality, so it its essential to work on the abolition of inequalities while focus in attaining greater economic growth, in order to perceive genuine human and economic development. (Moussié, 2011)

Even when women’s participation in the labor market has become more notorious, mostly in the commercial sector were they happened to be more female owners and entrepreneurs, this positive behavior can be reinforced if Ecuador’s business regulations and environment makes it easier for entrepreneurs to open and run businesses. Decreasing the obstacles and challenges in terms of time, and cost through profound reforms so individuals can engage more easily in entrepreneurial activities, and can stimulate to an even higher female presence in the labor market. World Bank determined in a report that countries with higher position in the ease of doing business index happened to have higher women participation in the labor market. Ecuador still urges for changes as the country’s

## AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

position is in the last 50s of the countries participants (Bedford, 2009) (World Bank Group, 2014)

Moreover, wider Female presence in economy can be expected if women rationale switch to redefine their role in the society by overcoming old taboos that kept them invisible. This is very important as Antimachismo campaign is mainly directed to end with the psychological and physical abuses from men to women, but it should contain educational material on how Machismo at early stage can end up compromising women's role and performance in the labor Market. the weight culture has on women's performance in society is crucial for overcoming at least in a partial way gender disparities in work (Soto, 2012).

Regarding the Ecuadorian private sector it is still lacking of initiative to help reverse gender inequality in the labor market, companies that uses Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) do not take into consideration the gender perspective and initiatives do not go beyond the legal one, such as women's right to paid maternity leave for 3 months and lactancy absence. It would be helpful to examine not only the hiring process selection to see any gender prejudice in it but also compare it to companies numbers to see if equality policies do matches in practice. Other important aspect is that bigger companies are more likely to have more formalities in the hiring process following certain standards, but what will really help is the voluntary action of small and medium companies (SME) to regulate hiring process so gender discrimination could be just eliminated, as the SME give jobs to 68% of the population not necessarily on equal terms (Woodhams et al, 2006) (Consortio Ecuatoriano para la Responsabilidad Social, 2011) (El Comercio, 2013)



## **Conclusions**

Struggle toward gender equality in the Ecuadorian labor market is still real and palpable. Ecuadorian women's disadvantage in the labor force market is not only deeply rooted in strong cultural factors but also in government's action or the lack of it, machismo and its singularity to deprive women of better chances, professional advancements, better salaries, dignity, inhibiting their opportunity to be key performers just as men of Ecuador's development, is something society need to overcome by all means mainly through education and vocational training programs. Thinking out of the box can help redirect not only women to male traditional occupations, but can also motivate men to go after job careers associated mostly to female, and finally end with stereotyped occupations.

Women situation in the labor market are also consequences of the prolonged scarcity of effective policies directed to guarantee equal opportunities of all individuals, an assessment of gender equality done locally by the end of 2009 confirm this unfavorable condition. Quotas system is barely used, as consequence the increase of female participation has remained limited, except in the judicial system. Legal provision to include daycare center in the organizations with more than 50 employees hasn't gone any further, as firms do not have resources nor the infrastructure to provide for their female employees the chance to balance work and family (Ministerio del Interior, 2010). Something to think about!!

The real challenge to Ecuador does not rely only on looking upon modern, effective and suitable approaches, policies, and programs, aimed at reducing gender disparities in the labor context, the real challenge relies on the execution

and maintenance in time in order to leveled the labor scenario for all individuals in order to achieve genuine economic and human development.

# AN INSIGHT TO THE GENDER EQUALITY IN THE ECUADORIAN LABOR MARKET

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