

# Diversity - Begins at Home

Sitting in my home cum office apartment amid the locked down, I just finished reading a book called '**Lean In**' by Sheryl Sandberg. Besides being a very interesting read, I think it is an enlightening guide towards enabling and teaching about diversity at home and workplace. While I will eagerly take inputs from Sheryl's work, here are some of my thoughts that are more applicable in the Indian context.

Firstly, as a parent, be it a mother or father we should be promoting the concept of diversity. It is important to teach our kids about equality and equity from a very young age. We need to emphasise its importance to children and teach them to respect all kinds of work. Instead of saying that the chores at home are the responsibility of women it is important that the same be made applicable to the men of the house as well. A practical way to implement this is to take turns of household chores on alternate days. Children should be taught from a very young age to share workloads and tasks at home without any bias or stereotype. This helps create in them a mindset of equality and equity and thereby respect whatever task that is assigned them.

Another thing that modern day parents can do is to teach education and literacy. The daughter needs to be told and made to believe that she is the special one. Regardless of social class, education of a boy and girl should be given equal opportunities to learn and excel. One should not differentiate between a girl and a boy as both deserve equal treatment at home and in other surroundings.

Parents must demonstrate this and lead by example. It is insightful to understand and communicate how a working is successful. Housewife is an entrepreneur in a different form and how they handle all these successes.

Sherly provides a lot of practical tips on what needs to be done in this regard. Firstly, she says that one should learn to demand, secondly you need to get ecosystems in place, thirdly try to create opportunities and lastly be a feminist by yourself and many more. While I will speak more in detail about these aspects in my subsequent post, my focus in this article is on parent's role.

The need of the hour is that we need more diversity for a strong and brighter future. As parents we need to alter how we behave and raise our kids as that will be the cornerstone to bring about the required diversity in the future. We owe it to the next generation and as parents we must demonstrate and make change in our homes, offices and society at large. Just to share with you an example of what happened in my society during the on-going lock-down. Like many other societies' vegetable vendors would come to our building at a given time. Given the short supply, all building residents would land up to purchase vegetables at the same time which would result in chaos. Therefore, the need for a coordinator was felt to set a process and bring in a required coordination. The society's core group decided that it is a lady's job and entrusted the task to a lady.

Observing this, I thought to myself that was this was a herculean task? Was this not the responsibility of the men as well? Are we taking it for granted that this is the responsibility of

women? I dissented and voiced my opinion on the above on account of the failure on the part of the men who did not come forward to lead the equity and equality factor.

So not only as parents but we men too need to be conscious of how we interact and stereotype as this is what the next generation will learn from us. So, let us '**Lean In**' and '**Teach In**' as we put to practice Diversity.

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