



International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

Journal homepage: www.ijrpr.com ISSN 2582-7421

UNVEILING THE VEIL: GENDER DISCRIMINATION IN ACADEMIC SETTINGS

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ABSTRACT :

This study considers the gender inequality that exists among every region, social class and prevents the growth of Indian education systems. The reality of gender inequality of higher education in India is very complex and diversified, because it exists in every field like education, employment opportunities, health, cultural issues, social issues etc. An attempt has been made to find out factors which are responsible for this problem in Indian education systems. So, this paper highlights the multi-dimensional context of gender inequalities prevalent in Indian education systems.

Gender is a common term whereas gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. This study deals with gender discrimination in India, its various forms and its causes. Importance of women in development, legislation for women and solutions for gender discrimination are also discussed in this paper. Gender discrimination within academic settings, affecting both faculty members and students, presents a significant challenge to achieving equality and fostering inclusive environments.

This abstract provides a concise exploration of the pervasive nature of gender bias in academia, examining its manifestations, underlying causes, and detrimental impacts. Drawing on existing literature and empirical evidence, this abstract highlights the prevalence of gender disparities in recruitment, promotion, and tenure and classroom dynamics. Moreover, this abstract identifies institutional barriers, implicit biases, and societal stereotypes as key drivers of gender discrimination. This abstract calls for concerted efforts from academic institutions, policymakers, and stakeholders to dismantle barriers, promote diversity, and create an inclusive academic environment.

Keyword: Higher education, gender stereotype, working females, gender orientation, Equality, empowerment, equity, inequality, disparity.

INTRODUCTION :

In the 1950's the issues related to gender discrimination were highlighted but considered as the most important issue around 1980's & 1990's. Importance was given to female issues in that organization where males were dominating according to researchers. Gender discrimination exists in various areas of management which includes differences in wages, salary, promotion, participation, decision making etc. Many of the employees are affected by the discriminatory issues & problems on gender bases. Therefore this study is conducted to study issues which contribute to gender discrimination in the workplace. This study is helpful for those companies where females are working & being discriminated against on the ground of lack of gender sensitivity & orientation & how it also affects their performance.

An organization must accept the importance of females & should follow fair representation in every functioning of the organization when it comes to distribution of salary or wages, promotion, leadership, power etc. The top management should avoid such discrimination as it may affect their survival. If we talk about our country, then India is the country who is a witness of discrimination from its early history until today which is due to so many practices like political, social & religious also. It has not been stopped even after the enforcement equality law. People discriminate against females on the ground of work, allocation of food, healthcare & fertility choices. Only making law & enforcing it is not the solution but there should be some practices adopted by organizations for social awakening & attitude change in the mind-set of male counterparts. This will not only reduce gender discrimination but also helps in women empowerment. Most of the research shows different factors that have affected women's involvement & participation in managerial leadership and in positions where decision making is important.

1.1 WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION

Even in our modern age workplace discrimination is still prevailing. Though there are many laws and legislations to prohibit workplace discrimination, employees still experience this from their fellow employees and employers. Workplace discrimination is against the law. Workplace discrimination is unfair or unequal treatment meted out to a group or a person on certain grounds at the workplace. These grounds or characteristics include sex, gender,

identity, age, disability, religious beliefs, ethnicity, race, etc. Discrimination can be done intentionally or unintentionally. It is harmful regardless of its intended purpose. In the year of 2022, an employee survey has been made and they found that 46% of people face discrimination at their workplace. This survey also gave information about the frequency of the discrimination at the workplace on the basis of the grounds – [disability - 36.10%, religion – 3.6%, color – 5.3%, race – 32.70%, sex – 31.70%, national origin – 9.5%, age – 21%]. Workplace discrimination takes various forms, including hiring bias, unequal pay, harassment, and unequal opportunity. Discrimination not only harms individuals but also disrupts workplace harmony and productivity.

1.1.1 EFFECTS OF WORKPLACE DISCRIMINATION:

- Decreased morale and productivity; employees who experience discrimination often suffer from lower morale and reduced job satisfaction, leading to decreased productivity and engagement.
- Impact on mental health; those subjected to discrimination may experience stress, anxiety, and depression, affecting both their personal wellbeing as well as their professional performance.
- Legal consequences; organizations that fail to address discrimination may face legal repercussions, damaging their reputation and financial stability.
- Retention challenges; discrimination can result in higher turnover rates as employees seek inclusive environments where their talents are recognized and valued.
- Reduced diversity; discrimination hampers efforts to build diverse and inclusive workplaces, limiting creativity and innovation.

1.2 INDIAN EDUCATION

The government and the general public were obligated to take concrete steps once India ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Global Fit for Children commitments. The Indian government launched the Education for All campaign, a nationwide initiative to achieve universal elementary education, after a constitutional bill passed in December 2002 declared free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14 to be a fundamental right. The laws of India, both the progressive ones and the ones with strong educational practices incorporated into institutions and structures, differ greatly from one another.

1.2.1 Indian Status and Feminine Literacy

Because it is still enmeshed in significant social strata that breed prejudice, India has failed to achieve universalization of education. 60 million females in the country are not receiving a primary education due to early marriage, social prejudice, and inadequate educational infrastructure, and the gender gap still exists. With about 300 million women in India, the country has one of the lowest rates of female literacy in Asia, despite the government's stated strong commitment to universal education. Because women are not afforded equal rights to basic human needs by social or legal structures, gender disparity still exists.

1.3 LEGAL SYSTEM & LAWS TO PREVENT WOMEN DISCRIMINATION AT WORKPLACE IN INDIA

In India there are certain acts which state that discrimination is a false act and it should not be followed by the citizens of India.

1. According to the Constitution of India, Article 14[equality before law and equal protection of law], Article 15[prohibition of discrimination], Article 16[equality of opportunity in matters of public employment], Article 17[abolition of untouchability], Article 18[abolition of titles].
2. According to IPC [Indian Penal Code] 1860, section 153[A] deals with criminalizing the use of language that promotes discrimination or violence among people on the basis of race, caste, sex, place of birth, religion, gender identity or any other category.
3. Transgender Persons [protection of rights] Acts, 2019 – this act specifically deals with all kinds of discrimination and hate crimes faced by the people on the basis of their gender identity and gender expression.
4. Mental Healthcare Act of 2017
5. Hindu Succession Act of 1956
6. Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe [prevention of atrocities] Act of 1989
7. Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2016
8. Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome [prevention and control] Act of 2017.
9. The Wages Code Act 2019 defines prohibition of discrimination of wages for employees at the workplace, and also prohibits reduction wages on the basis of gender. This also consolidates the provisions of other 4 acts which have been repealed, namely; minimum wages act, payment of wages act, equal remuneration act, payment of bonus act.

OBJECTIVES :

1. To examine the prevalence and magnitude of gender discrimination experienced by faculties, students and its repercussions on their performance and emotional health.
2. To study about female faculty facing segregation, frustration, or disconnection in the educational sector.
3. To identify the opportunities and shortcomings in females' education.

LITERATURE REVIEW :

The literature highlights a bounty of quantitative reports on numerical and factual contrasts among male and female scholastics just as a few overviews examine the impression of Imbalances in advanced education. What is less normal in the writing are subjective examinations recording ladies' encounters in the scholarly community.

1.The workplace has sometimes been referred to as an inhospitable place for women due to the multiple forms of gender inequalities present (e.g.Abrams, 1991).

2.Some examples of how workplace discrimination negatively affects women's earnings and opportunities are the gender wage gap (e.g., Peterson and Morgan, 1995), the dearth of women in leadership (Eagly and Carli, 2007), and the longer time required for women (vs. men) to advance in their careers (Blau and DeVaro, 2007).

In other words, workplace discrimination contributes to women's lower socio-economic status. Importantly, such discrimination against women largely can be attributed to human resources (HR) policies and HR-related decision-making. Furthermore, when employees interact with organizational decision makers during HR practices, or when they are told the outcomes of HR-related decisions, they may experience personal discrimination in the form of sexist comments.

3 Both the objective disadvantages of lower pay, status, and opportunities at work, and the subjective experiences of being stigmatized, affect women's psychological and physical stress, mental and physical health (Goldenhar et al., 1998; Adler et al., 2000; Schmader et al., 2008; Borrel et al., 2010), job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Hicks-Clarke and Iles, 2000), and ultimately, their performance (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001).

4.Furthermore, as expressed by Gulden (2004a), "One can't comprehend what goes on in a huge number of psyches spoken to by a solitary information point." (p. 4). This exposition looks to light up what goes on in a couple of those brains. Advancement and Tenure women will in general hold the lower positions of the advancement scale in establishments of advanced education.

5.Some ongoing information assembled by the National Center for Education Measurements (Hoffman, 2006, recorded that throughout the associate teacher level. Apparently, the proportion of ladies to men is a lot lower at the most elevated levels of the calling. Moreover, at the most reduced positions of the scholarly community, women held simply over a portion of the positions. These numbers outline the damaged pipeline of the scholarly community, a term instituted to expose the steady loss of ladies and young ladies from all regions of math and science.

METHODOLOGY

The study is conducted by analyzing secondary data by gathering information from relevant materials like reports and features published in the leading newspapers, books and articles on gender issues and related websites . Later on we used the collected information from various sources for analyzing the concept of gender discrimination and biases in employment and at workplaces. At the same time, the information was sufficient to relate to the challenges of gender justice in employment and finding the answer to why discrimination still goes on at the workplace. This led us to conclude with some reformative recommendations that might be applied to the effort to remove gender bias from workplaces.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 DISPARITIES IN INDIA'S EDUCATION (STUDENTS)

5.1.1. *Schooling:*

By 2015, India hopes to have achieved its gender equality in education MDGs. India has to triple its pace of improvement, despite significant progress, in order to meet the Millennium Development Goal of having a 95% GEEI score by 2015. Girls continue to have lower levels of education than boys in rural India. Numerous studies have recently looked into the underlying causes of girls' varying levels of educational attainment in various parts of India. The average number of years spent in school decreased by a quarter of a year for every extra child after the first as the family grew with the female children in the household being less fortunate than the male children in this figure. Research indicates that the educational attainment of the children in homes with women who have lower levels of education is more likely to be adversely affected. This suggests that the mother's level of education also plays a part in the education of the children.

5.1.2. *Secondary Education:*

The statistical data on dropouts in high school transformation and influences in rural India indicates that there is a higher percentage of women than men who discontinue their studies after the age of twelve. This discrepancy is particularly evident when comparing the educational attainment of boys and girls between primary and secondary education. Nearly 70% of the 20% of students who dropped out of school after completing their primary education were female, according to the survey.

The distance from home and societal pressures were the main causes of school dropout among girls. Families worried about the safety and security of girls who travel alone to school every day expressed concern about the distance of travel. In certain situations, arrangements for the daughter's marriage during her second age were part of the societal explanation in rural areas, where families saw their daughter's duty as a houseguest after marriage.

5.1.3. *Education After Secondary:*

The extent to which Indian girls participate in postsecondary education has evolved throughout time. In recent times, there has been a gradual rise in the overall enrollment of females in higher education. The distribution of wealth across industries does, however, continue to vary. Boys typically represent all academic disciplines more effectively, whereas girls typically concentrate on a few areas of study and are underrepresented in other areas of education. Compared to girls, boys drop out at a higher rate. Since girls drop out of school at a higher rate than boys, this practice has been moved to secondary schooling. Boys' need and sense of urgency to find work can be used to estimate the dropout rate from higher education. Because girls may not feel as pressured to find work once they find it, boys may therefore be more likely than girls to drop out of higher education institutions.

5.1.4. *Literacy:*

In India, women's literacy rates are lower than men's, despite their slower growth. In India, women have a lower literacy rate (65.46%) than men (82.14%) according to the 2011 Census. Girls are far less likely than boys to be enrolled in school, and the majority of them drop out. Data from a national sample survey conducted in 1997 show that the only provinces with women's literacy rates close to the global average are Kerala and Mizoram. The majority of specialists believe that education is the key to raising Kerala women's socioeconomic standing. Between 2006 and 2010, the proportion of women who had at least a secondary education was 26.6%, nearly half that of men (50.4%).

5.1.5. *Gender-Specific Student Reservation:*

10% of the centers in Union Territories and roughly 40% of the state's centers are set aside specifically for females under the Non-Formal Education program. Approximately 0.3 million NFE institutions have served 7.42 million children since 2000, with approximately 0.12 million of those being exclusively for girls. Thirty percent of seats at state-owned engineering and medical colleges, as well as smaller colleges like Orissa, are set aside for women. The Indian Prime Minister and the Planning Commission also supported the creation of the Indian Institute of Technology, which would be exclusively for female students. The percentage of women in India who are literate has increased significantly since the 1990s, yet women's education is still in great danger.

5.2. MAJOR CAUSES FOR DISCRIMINATION (WOMEN)

- **5.2.1. The pay gap: a lingering disparity** - one of the most glaring forms of workplace discrimination against women is the gender pay gap. Studies consistently reveal that women earn less than their male counterparts for the same work. This wage disparity extends across industries, professions and educational levels. It reflects a systematic bias that devalues the contribution of women, ultimately affecting their economic independence and financial security. Some of the causes of the gender pay gap are, Occupational segregation – women are often concentrated in lower-paying, female-dominated industries and roles, while men dominate higher-paying, and male dominated fields. This also perpetuates the wage gap. Wage discrimination –contribute to the gender pay gap, both explicit and implicit practice. Economic inequality, retirement insecurity, talent drain and negative psychological effects are some of the consequences of the gender pay gap.
- **5.2.2 Glass ceiling:** it is a metaphorical term used to describe an invisible, but often unbreakable, barrier that prevents certain individuals or groups, particularly women and minorities from advancing to top leadership positions within organizations. The glass ceiling is not a physical obstacle but rather a societal and organizational construct that hinders the upward mobility of certain individuals. Example; Laura is a highly talented and accomplished professional in a large, well-established tech company. She has an impressive educational background and several years of experience and she proved a successive role as a project manager. Despite her qualification and stellar performance, Laura faces multiple obstacles that symbolize the glass ceiling; lack of representation, stalled career progression, implicit bias, inadequate mentorship and sponsorship, pay disparities. Her experience mirrors the glass ceiling effect, which hinders her career progression and prevents her from reaching the highest levels of leadership within her organization, primarily due to her gender.
- **5.2.3 Harassment**
Women are more likely to be victims of sexual harassment at work in male-dominated industries. This is cause for concern and one of the primary reasons why working in male-dominated industries may be more difficult for women. Even though it is not inherently sexual, sex/gender discrimination is prevalent in the workplace. Gender-based harassment mostly targets women, transgenders and people who identify as gender nonconforming or non-binary. This sort of workplace harassment typically entails the frequent and harsh use of derogatory phrases directed at women and other gender minorities.
- **5.2.4. Pregnancy discrimination**
Organizations may be hesitant to employ female workers due to their potential desire to start families and stay away from the workforce for an extended period of time. Women may be overlooked for promotions and senior positions due to the same reason. Working mothers are still paid less than their male counterparts, regardless of their credentials. Female workers are regularly penalized for taking leaves to give birth or obtain prenatal care.
- **5.2.5 Representation in senior management**

In the 2017 survey by Pew Research Center that we cited above, 10% of working women believed they were passed over for the most critical responsibilities because of their gender. Another barrier to obtaining senior positions, they said, was a lack of access to development work opportunities. Out of work responsibilities and a lack of networking opportunities are two other significant hurdles to advancement to senior management positions in the case of working women.

5.3 Encouraging Females: Ideas to Shatter Obstacles in Education for the Future of India:

Encouraging girls to pursue higher education is essential to the country's overall development. We can help guarantee that girls receive the education they deserve by offering the following forms of assistance:

- **5.3.1. Ensuring Equal Educational Opportunities:** The plan supports neighborhood-based programs that promote inclusive perspectives on equal access to education and increase awareness of the importance of education for people of all genders. Additionally, Plan is in favor of creating gender-sensitive learning settings so that girls and boys can both fully utilize their right to an education.
- **5.3.2. Educating Boys on Gender Equality:** Plan actively includes boys in programs aimed at attaining gender equality, realizing the benefits of gender equality for all individuals, regardless of gender. By engaging boys, Plan seeks to transform social norms within entire communities and foster a collective mindset that embraces gender equality.
- **5.3.3. Promoting Gender Role Transformation:** By raising awareness within families and communities, we can cultivate positive attitudes towards girls' education. Additionally, it is vital to foster open dialogues with parents, challenging prevalent gender stereotypes. It is essential that higher authorities, community members, non-governmental organizations, and all Indian citizens take on the responsibility of removing obstacles that impede the education of females in our society. It is imperative that all citizens acknowledge that achieving national progress is impossible without guaranteeing the education of girls.

CONCLUSION & MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

Making your employees feel safe and appreciated is the most effective method to keep them motivated. This, in turn, will allow them to learn new things and grow with the organization. A discrimination-free workplace is critical to achieving this objective. Here are some strategies for creating a workplace culture in which gender discrimination will not and cannot exist-

- **Increase transparency in hiring and performance evaluation**

Making the hiring and performance evaluation processes as open as possible is a wonderful approach to discourage gender discrimination in the workplace. This will ensure that your employees receive promotions or increased pay exclusively for their hard work and dedication. Clearly define the milestones that employees must meet in order to be considered for senior-level roles.

- **Educate the employees**

Make sure everyone in your business understands what gender discrimination is and how to avoid it in the workplace. Using examples and performing activities might help demonstrate the topic. Make it crystal clear that gender bias acts in both directions, not just towards one particular gender. If they receive explicit instruction and description, workers can be better equipped to identify discrimination when they come across or hear it. Providing sensitivity training to employees will help employers avoid gender-based harassment, as well as the lawsuits that result from such issues. Furthermore, it is critical that your employees feel comfortable addressing their issues and coming to you for solutions. Building trust in the workplace will enable employees to communicate, cooperate and accomplish their daily jobs more effectively.

- **Evaluate & standardize pay**

It's important to assess your present pay structure to ensure there are no inconsistencies. People should be compensated the same amount for doing the same task. Women employees should be encouraged to seek raises and promotions at par with their male counterparts. By analyzing your compensation patterns, you can identify any inconsistency or blatant bias. You can then take efforts to make your pay structure more progressive and representative of equal pay for equal labor.

- **Introduce zero-tolerance policies**

You should draw clear lines and identify actions that will not be permitted in any capacity in the workplace. This is perhaps the greatest strategy to prevent conflictive work environments and resulting lawsuits.

- **Offer flexible work options**

The COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the need for remote work more than ever before. But remote work is just not safer alone; it can help reduce gender discrimination by allowing men and women to work from their preferred location and at a time that is compatible with their other responsibilities.

Flexible work schedules enable organizations to maximize their employees' available and productive hours of the day. It enables employees to create a schedule that works around their other obligations (parental care, childcare, or continuing education). For employers who hire contingent or hourly

workers, this could mean giving women more flexibility to work around family obligations. Family-friendly rules and flexibility enable employees to achieve greater autonomy and consistency, enhancing engagement and satisfaction for female employees.

- **Facilitate mentoring programs**

It is not always enough to simply encourage women in the workplace. Many people require additional advice and expertise in order to reach their professional goals. According to research, mentorship programmes result in a more diversified work hierarchy. They put a greater spotlight on minorities and women and assist them in climbing the professional ladder through the use of networks, talents, and organizational knowledge. Mentoring relationships can connect women with senior leaders or colleagues who can enlighten them on the actions and expertise required to advance to the next level of career transition. It is not necessary for these mentors to be of the same gender. Males can benefit from mentoring women because men continue to hold the majority of senior leadership roles in businesses around the world. Modern mentorship fosters a sense of inclusivity, which can help women feel more involved in their workplaces

.Gender disparity undoubtedly has a lengthy history. Without a doubt, the education industry can be extremely important in eradicating this gender disparity. Encouraging individuals to understand the advantages of gender equality is crucial. It is crucial to remember that achieving the constitutional goal of creating an equitable society is significantly impacted by the inclusion of the notion of gender equality in the curriculum and the adoption of laws to end gender inequality. Education ought to be a vehicle for fundamental shifts in women's status. Human rights require that the values of justice, equality, and nondiscrimination be ingrained in education. It can't be a commodity offered for sale to wealthy people.

- It needs to be a legal requirement that the state upholds. We ought to be viewed as a historic moment in women's emancipation that has paved the way for national development and empowered women to confront obstacles in the face of safeguarding the better lives of their children and themselves. It is impossible to divorce these realities from the formulation and application of educational policies. Since the goal of the development of the Millennium will always remain a hoax, constructive, intentional, and progressive legislative changes are needed to address these truths in a clear, consistent, and successful manner. Members of society need to be made acutely aware of the value of educating girls.
- Girls are given extra privileges, such as scholarships and tuition reductions, to promote their involvement in schooling. However, women are excluded from many areas of life, which hinders national development. Women's confidence and self-esteem can grow when they are included in education, cultivating a favorable view of oneself.
- Additionally, education gives women the ability to think critically, which improves their decision-making and gives them the power to decide what is best for their children and their own education.

The footnote:

Although it may be difficult to observe significant progress straightaway, organizations are taking initiatives to address gender discrimination in the workplace. However, if we are to achieve or come anywhere near gender parity, we must work hard and persistently. You can use the suggestions above as preliminary steps to make your workplace free of gender discrimination. We have also discussed the role insurance can play while protecting your company from gender discrimination claims.

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