

The Unseen Barriers: Examining Gender-Based Workplace Discrimination in Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract: Gender-based workplace discrimination remains a pervasive issue with significant implications for employee motivation, organizational effectiveness, and workforce equity. This study examines the nature, prevalence, and impact of gender discrimination within higher education and related sectors using a mixed-methods approach. Quantitative data from 300 employees, measured through the Workplace Gender Discrimination Scale (WGDS) and Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS), were complemented by semi-structured interviews with 20 participants. Results reveal that over 60% experienced discrimination, including unequal pay, biased promotions, exclusion from decision-making, and harassment. A strong negative correlation ($r = -0.61$, $p < 0.01$) was found between discrimination and motivation, with women and non-binary employees reporting greater declines. Turnover intentions were notably higher among affected individuals, with 45% considering exit. Institutions with active DEI policies reported reduced discrimination and improved motivation. The study calls for equitable HR practices, policy reforms, and inclusive leadership to foster motivating, discrimination-free workplaces.

Keywords: Gender Discrimination, Workplace Career Advancement, Glass Ceiling, Higher Educational Institutions of India

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