

A Study on Gender Biased Work Environment in Higher Education and its Impact on Women Faculties

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Abstract— In this study we try to understand and show the difference in personal and perceived experiences and various dimensions of gender bias at work place from women's view point and attempt to draw attention on gender issues prevalent at the highest level of academia with focus on the key factors hindering the utilization of the full potential and whole hearted participation of women teachers .It is a fact that gender friendly environment helps in contributing significantly to the growth of national human resources, promotes social justice and cohesion, enhances personal development, job satisfaction and, generally, facilitates sustainable development ,peace and harmony.

Keywords— Gender Bias; Gender Equity; Bar Diagrams; Sample Means; Sample Variance; T-test; Degrees of Freedom.

1. Introduction

Gender equality still is a matter of great concern and society needs to utilize the skills of both women and men in order to achieve the highest possible goals towards a better society. Women are equally gifted and talented and can be a role model given equal representation, opportunity for utilization of their unique perception and strengths ,have their say in policy and decision making. The concept of gender equality is promoted by the Indian Constitution by including it in the Fundamental Duties, Directive Principles and Fundamental Rights. The Indian Constitution guarantees for the equality of the entire citizen including women and their empowerment. It also encourages states to adopt those principles which measures positive discrimination in favours of Women. Thus different frameworks of democratic policies, plans, programs and laws have aimed at empowerment of women in all aspects of life.

Higher education provides the eligibility and expertise required for all most all the key positions which shape the policy in all fields for example politics, beaurocracy,

managers, journalists, doctors, engineers, entrepreneurs etc. Once the teachers are empowered and education system is sensitized, they can empower and gender sensitizes their students who can further contribute towards a gender sensitive society with social justice for all. We see thereby that teachers are the real agents of change and can bring about the desired results. Decision making positions attests the empowerment.

Education facilitates empowerment and higher education is a major investment on society's part, on which great hopes of contributions to creativity and growth have been pinned. This also involves a journey at the individual level which is expected to contribute to democratic development. Government has introduced many gender positive initiatives, reforms and schemes and as a positive impact more women students are visible than men in higher education studies and the number of women in administrative and managerial occupations has increased over decades but various reviews and report clearly indicate that the proportion of women employed and moved as top level administrators is still very-very small. The under representation of women at higher positions in all the fields specifically higher education needs immediate attention "Why and where those highly qualified meritorious and talented women are lost in between their career?" This is a challenge that how the policies and practices can integrate more women at managerial ranks. These gender inequalities at the management level of organization have been interpreted in different ways. Some researchers had concentrated on divergence in career growth between men and women by classifying problems such as illiteracy, superiority, training and participation etc. Many researchers determined that the management by women are challenged by social and structural barriers. It had been studied in a research that sex segregated-appointments, appointments at lower positions (subordinate positions) and shortage of jobs are main factors for under representation of women at higher positions in management organizations. Patriarchal mindset, family responsibilities and male dominating networks are main causes for the existing difference between female and male

promotion at decision making levels. In a study it has been observed that the presence of legislative frameworks are naturally male dominating that marginalizes the women from the top management positions and are disadvantageous for their successful career. Many institutions explained high turnover of women workers in term of low level of versatility for working environment, deficiency of work involvement because of their greater level of work stress and long working hours, lack of family support, priority for their family commitment like, break in career for maternity etc. Other than these several factors contributing to lesser number of women at decision making levels of women is the "chilly climate" at work place due to stereotyped, discriminatory and subordinating attitude resulting in gender bias against women. The significant point is that there is wide variation in the perception of work experience of women than as perceived by men. It is also noted that women themselves differ in perception about the workplace experiences depending on their own personalities and upbringing.

2. Study Population

University of Lucknow with a large number of teachers from different backgrounds depending on the class, caste, region and religion representing a highly heterogeneous group with varying socialization situated in the capital of Uttar Pradesh Lucknow representing higher education system in the state of Uttar Pradesh is chosen as the study population.

3. Objective of Study

- To know Status of women in Lucknow University.
- To understand the difference between personal and perceived work environment from gender perspective.
- To study the impact of gender bias on women teachers and researchers in Lucknow University.
- To compare the work environment in Lucknow University with that of the other universities in northern part of India with gender perspective.

4. Methodology

Our data is collected through complete enumeration of all the women who are research students, working on temporary/casual assignment, assistant professor, associate professor, and professors in Lucknow University who were on duty during survey period through a well developed questionnaire. The questionnaire includes four parts. In part 1 and 2 it offers choice of responses to the relevant 15 questions in four categories (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree) giving scores 1,2,3 and 4

respectively regarding personal and perceived work experience. And in part 3 there are 6 statements regarding impact on the professional life in four categories (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree) giving scores 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively. The last part is of personal profile having age, qualification, designation etc. Then scores of 5-5 questions each are further sub grouped in three categories indicating the feeling of subordination, discrimination and stereotype in a table for the analysis purpose. Each respondent can scores from 4 to 20 in each of these categories. Low score means less gender bias where as high score means more bias felt. The detailed analysis is based on multiple bar diagrams and pie charts. Comparison of the work environment for women teachers of Lucknow University and other universities and colleges from Northern part of India* is done using t- test statistic which follows t-distribution with n- 1 degree of freedom after verifying the underlying assumptions. Following t-statistic is used for the purpose,

$$t = (\bar{x} - \mu) / \left(\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}} \right)$$

Where, $\bar{x} = \frac{1}{n} \sum_{i=1}^n x_i$ is the sample mean of scores and $s^2 = \frac{1}{(n-1)} \sum_{i=1}^n (x_i - \bar{x})^2$ is sampling variance.

5. Discussions and Analysis

5.1 Status of Women in Lucknow University

We collected the information regarding status of women teachers from the office of registrar, Lucknow University. A dominating proportion of 71% are women students. But gender split is increasingly warped at higher levels in the academic hierarchy of women teachers. At entry level newly appointed assistant professors are still only 28%, at middle level Associate professors constitute the biggest percentage of 33.10% whereas at the highest point of an academic career i.e. the professor level there are only 16.39% women. Women at decision making level are almost negligible with 4.3% only which includes positions as heads of the departments acquired on seniority basis. Temporary and casual positions are given to 20.41% of women. On an average we have only 24.4% women faculty against 71% women students with only 4.3% at the level where they can really do something to bring the desirable gender equity.

These figures simply reinforce the fact that in spite of an increased access and participation of women in all sectors of education, at the higher education employment level, even in the 21st century, India is one among the commonwealth countries with the lowest percentage of women at senior managerial level. This may be due to the unwillingness on the part of management to appoint women to these positions, and/or, due to the feelings of

