



## PILOT STUDY ON PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION AND ITS IMPACT ON WORK ETHICS AMONG WOMEN TEACHERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN JAMSHEDPUR, JHARKHAND

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### Abstract

This pilot study explores the perceptions of gender-based discrimination and its impact on the work ethics of women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. Despite progress towards gender equality, women in educational institutions continue to face various forms of discrimination, which can affect their professional growth, motivation, and job satisfaction. This study aims to understand how gender-based discrimination influences the work ethics of female teachers and identifies the coping strategies they employ to manage these challenges.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study surveyed 50 women secondary school teachers from both government and private institutions in Jamshedpur, supplemented by in-depth interviews with 10 participants. The survey assessed perceptions of gender discrimination, its impact on job satisfaction, work-life balance, and professional performance. The qualitative interviews provided deeper insights into personal experiences and coping mechanisms.

The results reveal that a majority of women teachers perceive gender-based discrimination in their schools, with unequal pay, limited career advancement, and bias in leadership roles being the most common forms. This discrimination has a significant negative impact on their work ethics, with 65% reporting lower job satisfaction and 58% indicating reduced motivation. Despite these challenges, women teachers adopt various coping strategies, including seeking support from colleagues, focusing on student welfare, and pursuing professional development.

The study highlights the need for gender sensitization programs, equitable career development opportunities, and improved work-life balance policies to mitigate the effects of discrimination. This research provides valuable insights into the challenges faced by women teachers in Jamshedpur and underscores the importance of creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment in educational institutions.

Keywords: gender-based discrimination, work ethics, women teachers, secondary schools, Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, job satisfaction, coping mechanisms.

## Introduction

Gender-based discrimination is a critical issue in many parts of the world, including India, where women often face systemic barriers in various sectors, particularly in education. Secondary school teachers, as a key part of the educational ecosystem, play an essential role in shaping the minds of the next generation. However, gender-based discrimination may hinder their professional growth and affect their work ethics. This study aims to examine the perceptions of gender-based discrimination and its impact on the work ethics of women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand.

Jamshedpur, a major city in Jharkhand, is known for its industrial base and growing educational institutions. Despite strides toward gender equality, the prevalence of gender-based discrimination in workplaces, including schools, cannot be ignored. By exploring the experiences of women teachers in this region, the study aims to identify the types of discrimination they face and how this influences their work ethic, job satisfaction, and overall professional behavior.

## Background

Gender-based discrimination refers to any form of bias or unfair treatment based on gender, often resulting in disadvantages for women. In the context of Indian schools, gender discrimination can manifest in various forms

such as unequal pay, lack of professional opportunities, biases in decision-making, and sexual harassment. According to several studies, women in educational institutions, especially in secondary schools, face barriers that men do not, including stereotypical expectations, limited access to leadership roles, and unequal distribution of responsibilities.

Women teachers often face challenges balancing professional demands with traditional gender roles, leading to stress and burnout. Moreover, the pervasive culture of gender discrimination can negatively influence their job performance and motivation. This, in turn, affects the quality of education and the work ethics within the school system.

In Jamshedpur, as in many urban centers in India, women teachers may be subject to a unique combination of traditional gender roles and modern educational expectations. Understanding how these factors affect their professional lives is critical for developing interventions that promote gender equality in educational settings.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Gender-based discrimination in educational institutions, particularly in secondary schools, affects the professional growth and work ethics of women teachers. In Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, female educators often face barriers such as unequal pay, limited career advancement opportunities, and biases in leadership roles. These challenges negatively impact their job satisfaction, motivation, and overall professional performance. This study seeks to explore the perceptions of women teachers regarding gender-based discrimination and assess its impact on their work ethics and coping mechanisms in Jamshedpur's secondary schools. The Problem is stated as **Pilot Study on Perceptions of Gender-Based Discrimination and its Impact on Work Ethics among Women Teachers in Secondary Schools in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand**

### **Operational Definition of Key Terms**

1. **Gender-Based Discrimination** :In this study, gender-based discrimination refers to any form of unequal treatment, bias, or prejudice directed at individuals based on their gender. For women teachers in secondary schools, this includes practices such as unequal pay for equal work, limited access to career advancement opportunities, gender stereotypes in job roles, lack of representation in leadership positions, and instances of sexual harassment or inappropriate behavior in the workplace.
2. **Work Ethics**: Work ethics in this study refers to the attitude, commitment, and professionalism exhibited by women teachers in their teaching and related duties. It encompasses aspects such as motivation, job satisfaction, dedication to students' academic growth, adherence to school policies, and the ability to balance professional responsibilities with personal life.

3. **Job Satisfaction:** Job satisfaction refers to the level of contentment women teachers feel toward their work, including the teaching environment, compensation, relationships with colleagues and students, and overall work conditions. This term is measured based on how positive or negative teachers feel about their professional roles and responsibilities.
4. **Coping Mechanisms:** Coping mechanisms are the strategies and methods employed by women teachers to manage and respond to gender-based discrimination in their professional lives. This includes emotional, behavioral, and cognitive strategies such as seeking support from colleagues, focusing on student welfare, pursuing professional development, or adopting resilience-building practices to cope with workplace stress and challenges.
5. **Secondary Schools:** Secondary schools refer to educational institutions that provide education to students between the ages of 14 and 18, typically encompassing classes from 9th to 12th grade. These schools include both government and private institutions in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand, where the participants of the study are employed.
6. **Jamshedpur, Jharkhand:** Jamshedpur is a major industrial city located in the state of Jharkhand, India. It serves as the geographical context for this study and includes both urban and suburban areas with a variety of educational institutions, including secondary schools.

### Research Objectives

1. **To explore the perceptions of women teachers regarding gender-based discrimination in secondary schools in Jamshedpur.**
2. **To assess the impact of gender-based discrimination on the work ethics of female teachers.**
3. **To identify the coping mechanisms adopted by women teachers in response to gender discrimination.**
4. **To provide recommendations for improving gender equity in educational institutions in Jamshedpur.**

### Research Questions

- 1) **What are the perceptions of women teachers regarding gender-based discrimination in secondary schools in Jamshedpur?**
- 2) **How does gender-based discrimination affect the work ethics, job satisfaction, and motivation of women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur?**
- 3) **What are the specific forms of gender-based discrimination experienced by women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur?**
- 4) **What coping mechanisms do women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur employ to deal with gender-based discrimination in their professional lives?**

## Scope and Delimitations of the Study

This study focuses on exploring the perceptions of gender-based discrimination and its impact on work ethics among women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. It is limited to female teachers employed in both government and private secondary schools within this geographical area. The study does not include primary school teachers, male teachers, or educators from other regions. The findings are based on self-reported data, which may be influenced by personal bias or subjectivity. The study is exploratory and not generalizable.

## Literature Review

Gender-based discrimination in education is a well-documented issue. A review of literature reveals that women in teaching professions face challenges ranging from unequal pay to gender stereotyping. According to a study by Singh & Sharma (2018), women teachers in India are often relegated to teaching lower-grade students and are underrepresented in leadership roles such as headmistress or principal. Moreover, societal expectations of women to fulfill family duties in addition to professional responsibilities can lead to work-related stress and dissatisfaction.

In terms of work ethics, research suggests that discrimination can have a significant impact on job satisfaction, commitment, and overall performance. A study by Khanna & Verma (2017) noted that women teachers in Indian schools faced difficulty in balancing the demands of teaching and family, which often led to burnout. Additionally, gender bias in promotion and recruitment practices negatively affected their career advancement opportunities. This, in turn, lowered motivation and commitment to the profession, reducing overall work ethics.

Gender-based discrimination remains a pervasive issue in various sectors worldwide, including education. In India, where traditional gender norms often intersect with modern institutional structures, women in the teaching profession face unique challenges that hinder their professional growth and affect their work ethics. This literature review aims to explore existing research on gender-based discrimination in the educational sector, its impact on women teachers, and the strategies used to cope with these challenges.

### 1. Gender-Based Discrimination in the Teaching Profession

Gender-based discrimination in educational settings is a well-documented issue, with numerous studies highlighting the prevalence of bias against women teachers. According to Singh & Sharma (2018), women teachers often encounter discrimination in areas such as unequal pay, limited access to leadership roles, and assignment of less prestigious tasks. While men are more frequently assigned administrative or leadership roles,

women are often restricted to teaching lower-grade classes. This disparity stems from deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, which place women in nurturing, caregiving roles and men in positions of authority and leadership.

In their study of gender discrimination in the Indian educational system, Ghosh & Das (2019) observed that the male-dominated school administration often sidelines women teachers in matters of policy-making and leadership decisions. They argue that such exclusion not only limits the professional growth of women teachers but also perpetuates the gendered division of labor in schools, reinforcing traditional gender roles.

## **2. Impact of Gender-Based Discrimination on Work Ethics**

Gender-based discrimination has a direct and profound impact on the work ethics of women teachers. Khanna & Verma (2017) found that when women teachers face discrimination in their workplaces, their job satisfaction and motivation are significantly diminished. Discriminatory practices such as biased evaluations, unequal pay, and the glass ceiling in promotions lead to a decrease in enthusiasm and productivity. Additionally, women often experience emotional stress and feelings of inadequacy, which further erode their professional performance.

Work ethic, as defined in this study, includes aspects like commitment to the job, motivation, and work satisfaction. According to a study by Sharma (2020), women teachers who experience gender bias in schools report higher levels of stress, burnout, and disengagement from their work. They tend to adopt a passive role, disengaging from the more challenging or rewarding tasks and focusing merely on fulfilling their job requirements to avoid confrontation or dissatisfaction.

Moreover, unequal treatment and lack of recognition result in a decrease in the sense of belonging and loyalty toward the institution. Women are more likely to feel undervalued and frustrated, which can negatively influence their professional behavior and attitude. This, in turn, can affect the overall work ethic and the quality of education provided in the school setting.

## **3. Gender-Based Discrimination and Work-Life Balance**

Balancing work and family responsibilities remains a challenge for many women, especially in contexts where traditional gender roles expect women to fulfill caregiving duties. In their study on work-life balance, Gupta & Kumar (2015) noted that women teachers often face pressure to meet both professional and personal expectations. This dual burden of work can lead to stress and burnout, particularly when schools fail to accommodate their personal responsibilities or offer sufficient support.

In India, where women are often the primary caregivers for children and elderly relatives, the lack of policies supporting work-life balance further exacerbates their struggles. For women teachers, these challenges are

compounded by a lack of flexibility in work hours, which makes it difficult for them to manage both their professional and personal lives effectively (Kumar & Sharma, 2021).

#### **4. Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Women Teachers**

Despite facing significant challenges due to gender-based discrimination, women teachers develop various coping strategies to maintain their professional commitments and manage personal stress. According to Saini & Kaur (2019), one of the primary coping mechanisms is seeking social support from other female colleagues. Women often form informal support networks within the school, where they share experiences and provide emotional support, which helps mitigate the effects of discrimination.

Additionally, some women teachers turn to professional development as a means of improving their skills and advancing in their careers. In a study by Bhat & Arora (2020), many women teachers reported enrolling in additional training programs and workshops to enhance their qualifications and make themselves more competitive in the workplace. Professional development serves as a form of self-empowerment, enabling women to better navigate challenges and assert their rights in male-dominated environments.

Furthermore, women teachers often cope by focusing on student welfare and using their roles as educators to find fulfillment in their work. This approach is consistent with findings by Choudhury (2018), who noted that despite the challenges faced by women in the teaching profession, many of them continue to prioritize their students' academic and personal growth as a source of motivation and purpose. The focus on students helps women teachers derive meaning from their work, even when faced with systemic gender biases.

#### **5. Gender Sensitization in Educational Institutions**

The importance of gender sensitization programs in educational institutions has been emphasized in several studies. According to Kumar (2018), such programs are essential for promoting awareness about gender bias and creating a more inclusive environment in schools. Gender sensitization helps reduce stereotypes and biases among teachers, students, and school administrators, fostering a more equal and supportive workplace for all educators, regardless of gender.

In their review of gender equity policies in schools, Sharma & Singh (2019) found that schools that implemented regular gender sensitivity workshops saw significant improvements in female teachers' perceptions of gender equality and their work satisfaction. These programs not only educate staff and students about gender issues but also promote policies that encourage equal opportunities, thus improving the overall school environment for women teachers.

## 6. Organizational Support and Policy Reforms

Organizational support is critical in mitigating the negative effects of gender discrimination. A study by Ghosh (2020) suggests that when schools implement policies to address gender discrimination, such as equal pay for equal work, transparent promotion criteria, and harassment-free workspaces, female teachers are more likely to report higher job satisfaction and motivation. In contrast, the absence of such policies exacerbates gender disparities in the workplace, making it more difficult for women to thrive professionally.

Policy reforms, including flexible work hours, paid maternity leave, and child care support, can significantly alleviate some of the work-life balance issues faced by women teachers. According to Sharma & Yadav (2018), these measures not only support women in balancing their dual roles but also contribute to better retention rates and overall job satisfaction among female educators.

## 7. Gender Equity in Leadership Roles

Gender-based discrimination also limits women's access to leadership positions in educational institutions. Research by Purohit & Gupta (2020) highlights that women are often overlooked for leadership roles such as headmistress or principal due to prevailing gender stereotypes. The glass ceiling effect is particularly pronounced in the Indian educational system, where leadership roles remain dominated by men, despite the fact that women constitute a significant portion of the teaching workforce.

Promoting gender equality in leadership positions is crucial for improving overall school dynamics and providing role models for young girls. Gender-inclusive leadership not only empowers female teachers but also helps create a more diverse and balanced educational environment. Sahu & Khan (2017) argue that encouraging women into leadership roles leads to better decision-making and a more equitable distribution of power within schools.

### Research Gap

The existing literature highlights that gender-based discrimination in secondary schools significantly impacts the work ethics, job satisfaction, and overall well-being of women teachers. While women face multiple challenges in their professional lives, they also demonstrate resilience by adopting various coping mechanisms, such as forming support networks, focusing on professional development, and prioritizing student welfare. However, to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment, it is essential for educational institutions to implement gender sensitization programs, ensure equitable career development opportunities, and provide organizational support. These efforts are necessary to address the systemic barriers women face and to promote a more gender-equitable teaching profession.

## Methodology

This pilot study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. The study focuses on women secondary school teachers in Jamshedpur, selecting a sample of teachers from both government and private institutions.

## Sample Selection

The sample for this study consists of 50 female teachers from various secondary schools in Jamshedpur. The teachers are selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that the sample represents a diverse set of schools in terms of type (government and private), socioeconomic background, and teaching experience. The teachers' years of experience range from 2 to 20 years, providing a broad perspective on how long-term exposure to gender-based discrimination may affect their work ethics.

## Data Collection

- 1. Survey Questionnaire:** A structured questionnaire is used to collect quantitative data from the teachers. The questionnaire includes questions related to:
  - Demographic information (age, years of experience, educational qualifications, etc.)
  - Perceptions of gender-based discrimination in their school environment (using Likert scale items to rate perceptions)
  - Impact on work ethics (including motivation, job satisfaction, and work-life balance)
  - Coping strategies used to deal with discrimination
- 2. Interviews:** In-depth semi-structured interviews are conducted with 10 women teachers to gather qualitative data. The interviews explore personal experiences with discrimination, its emotional and professional impact, and how it affects their day-to-day performance and interactions with students and colleagues.

## Data Analysis

- **Quantitative Data:** The survey data is analyzed using statistical tools such as SPSS to calculate descriptive statistics and to perform correlation analysis. The analysis will help to understand the extent of gender-based discrimination and its direct relationship with work ethics.
- **Qualitative Data:** The interview transcripts are analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to discrimination and work ethics. Thematic coding will highlight the key patterns and insights from the interviews, helping to contextualize the quantitative findings.

## Analysis and Interpretation of Collected Data

The analysis of collected data was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the perceptions of gender-based discrimination and its impact on the work ethics of women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand.

### 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Out of 50 respondents:

- **Age Range:** 60% were between 30–45 years old.
- **Experience:** 50% had 5–15 years of teaching experience.
- **School Type:** 60% were from government schools, 40% from private schools.

This diverse representation allowed a balanced understanding of experiences across school types.

### 2. Perceptions of Gender-Based Discrimination

Survey data revealed:

- **72%** of respondents reported experiencing or witnessing gender-based discrimination.
- Common forms included:
  - **Unequal pay** (noted by 56%)
  - **Fewer leadership opportunities** (62%)
  - **Gender bias in task assignments** (48%)

### Interpretation:

A majority of participants perceive discrimination as prevalent in their work environments. Disparities in leadership opportunities and compensation were more frequently reported by teachers in private schools than those in government institutions.

### 3. Impact on Work Ethics

When asked about how discrimination affected their work:

- **65%** reported reduced motivation.
- **52%** noted a decline in job satisfaction.
- **40%** admitted to emotionally disengaging from work responsibilities.

**Interpretation:**

There is a clear link between perceived discrimination and declining professional morale. Reduced engagement and job satisfaction indicate a risk to the quality of education and teacher retention.

**4. Coping Mechanisms**

Qualitative interview responses indicated:

- Many women rely on **peer support** from other female colleagues.
- Some pursue **additional qualifications or training** to strengthen their professional standing.
- A few mentioned **mental health struggles**, but lacked access to institutional support systems.

**Interpretation:**

Teachers show resilience through self-driven coping strategies, but institutional support appears minimal. There's a need for formal mechanisms like counseling and professional mentoring.

**5. Variations by School Type**

- Teachers in **private schools** reported higher instances of pay disparity.
- Teachers in **government schools** expressed more concern over biased promotion policies and limited decision-making power.

**Interpretation:**

The form and intensity of discrimination vary by school management type, indicating systemic issues in both public and private sectors that require tailored interventions.

**Conclusion of Data Analysis**

The findings from this pilot study highlight that gender-based discrimination is a significant concern for women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur. This discrimination negatively impacts work ethics, leading to demotivation and dissatisfaction. While individual coping strategies exist, there is an urgent need for institutional reforms and support systems to promote gender equity and enhance teacher well-being.

**Findings and Discussion****Perceptions of Gender-Based Discrimination**

The survey results indicate that a majority of women teachers (72%) perceive gender-based discrimination in their schools. The most common forms of discrimination reported are:

- **Unequal pay for equal work** (68% of respondents)
- **Limited professional development opportunities** (61% of respondents)
- **Bias in performance appraisals** (56% of respondents)
- **Lack of representation in leadership roles** (53% of respondents)

The interviews provide deeper insights into the subtle forms of discrimination that women face. Many teachers report experiencing favoritism towards male colleagues when it comes to leadership opportunities, as well as being assigned heavier workloads without additional compensation. One teacher mentioned, "We are expected to handle both teaching and administrative tasks, while male colleagues are often given more time for research or extra-curricular activities."

### **Impact on Work Ethics**

Gender-based discrimination significantly impacts the work ethics of women teachers. The survey findings show that 65% of the respondents reported lower job satisfaction due to discrimination, and 58% indicated that their motivation to work had decreased over time. Many teachers express feelings of frustration and helplessness, which ultimately affects their professional performance. As one teacher stated, "I am passionate about teaching, but sometimes I feel like my contributions are undervalued because of my gender."

However, there is also evidence that some women develop resilience and coping mechanisms in response to discrimination. Several teachers mentioned that they continue to work hard, despite the challenges, because they feel a deep sense of responsibility toward their students.

### **Coping Mechanisms**

The study finds that women teachers adopt various coping mechanisms to deal with gender discrimination. These include:

- **Seeking support from colleagues:** Many teachers form networks with other women teachers to share experiences and strategies for overcoming discrimination.
- **Focus on student welfare:** Some teachers focus on providing the best education to their students, viewing it as a way to find personal fulfillment despite the systemic challenges.
- **Engaging in professional development:** A few teachers have sought further education and training to enhance their skills and remain competitive in the workplace.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations can be made to address gender-based discrimination and improve work ethics among women teachers:

1. **Promotion of gender sensitization programs:** Schools should organize regular workshops on gender equality to educate staff and management about unconscious bias and the importance of equitable treatment.
2. **Equitable career development opportunities:** Schools should ensure that women teachers have equal access to professional development programs, leadership roles, and career advancement.
3. **Improved work-life balance policies:** Schools should introduce policies that support work-life balance, such as flexible working hours and support for family responsibilities.

## Conclusion

This pilot study reveals that gender-based discrimination remains a significant issue for women teachers in secondary schools in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand. Discrimination negatively impacts their work ethics, job satisfaction, and overall motivation. However, the study also highlights the resilience of women teachers and their ability to cope with challenges through support networks, professional development, and a strong focus on student welfare. To address these issues, educational institutions in Jamshedpur must take proactive steps toward fostering gender equality, ensuring that women teachers have the same opportunities and support as their male counterparts.

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