

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN DISCRIMINATION IN HRM PRACTICES AND ORGANISATIONAL JUSTICE PERCEPTION: A REVIEW

Azra Khan^{*},
Riyaz Ahmad Rainayee^{**},
Imtiyaz Ahmad Gull^{***}

Abstract

From the past few decades, various international labour standard legislations have been passed from time to time, in order to ensure equality of women at workplaces and provide them better and protective measures. But, despite these large scale efforts, research reported that even in today's era of change and advancement, world is still plagued with the menace of discrimination against the women folk at workplaces. Further, research has witnessed that our societies are deeply embedded even today with the notion of gender-stereotyping which has its spill over effects across the workplaces as well. It has been found that these socially and culturally mandated structures often question the women's abilities, capabilities and suitability for organisational work and thus results into unconscious bias against them. Thus, it is to be concluded that women employees still face discrimination in following HRM practices viz- pay, career advancement, performance appraisals, task assignment and training, which in turn affects their organisational justice perception. Therefore, in the light of above, the present study aims to review the extant literature available on the relationship between women discrimination in HRM practices and organisational justice perception. In addition to it, the present review is done by classifying, summarizing and synthesizing the previous studies assessing the said relationship and on the basis of which, the various research gaps have been identified which provides insight to the future researchers to conduct further study on the relationship between above stated research constructs.

Keywords: *Gender stereotyping, HRM practices, organisational justice, Women Discrimination.*

Introduction

Research has revealed that human resource management practices play a critical role in shaping the extent of discrimination that occurs within an organisations as they influence the access that women employees have to opportunities within the workplaces viz- training, career advancement, equal rewards, fair performance appraisals and developmental assignments (Guttek et al., 1996). Researchers have defined women discrimination as a

^{*}Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, University of Kashmir.

^{**}Professor, Department of Commerce, University of Kashmir.

^{***}Research Scholar, Department of Commerce, University of Kashmir.

practice when personnel decisions such as selection, training, career advancement, compensation, performance appraisals, task assignment etc are based on their gender, an ascribed characteristic rather than on their qualifications or job performance (Guttek et al., 1996; Ngo et al., 2002). There is no doubt that women are the crucial component in the socio-economic development of any nation. But, traditionally their lives were confined to the four walls of the house and they didn't have equal participation in labour force market as their male counterparts had. Thus, in order to ensure the equality of women at workplaces and provide them same opportunities as available to the men, various international labour standard legislations have been passed from time to time viz -ILO convention on discrimination in employment & occupation 1958, UN convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against the women, the Equal Pay Act of 1963 (EPA); Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII) and amendment Act of 1991, Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Title II of the Genetic Information Non-discrimination Act of 2008 (GINA). These represent the significant milestones in the world history, where efforts were taken worldwide to provide better and protective measures for the women. But, it has been found that, despite these large scale efforts such practice continue to exist even today. Research studies conducted across the different nations reported that women still experience discrimination in terms of unequal pay, fewer training and advancement opportunities, biased performance appraisals, less developmental assignments (Pater et al., 2010; Diaz and Sanchez, 2011; Tlaiss and Dirani, 2015; Manisha and Reena, 2016; Khuong and Chi, 2017). Moreover, the World Economic Forum in its annual conference that was held in the month of December 2018 at Davos, Switzerland, has recently released its report about gender equality at workplaces in which almost 149 countries have been ranked on the parameters of gender equality and out of which India has been ranked 142. Further, the report has also concluded that though the world has closed almost 68% of the gender gap at workplaces, but still gender equality is a far-fetched dream across the world even today and it would take further 202 more years for the women to witness complete parity at workplaces throughout the world. Therefore, on the basis of the evidence found it is to be concluded that women discrimination in HRM practices exist even today at workplaces and thus resulting into incongruence between what is stated by law and the actual treatment of women at workplaces. Moreover, research reported that organisational structures and policies are deeply influenced by the socially and culturally mandated structures which question the women's abilities, capabilities and suitability for organisational work (Sanchez et al., 1996; Guttek et al., 1996). In addition, research has also revealed that discrimination at the workplace and organisational justice perception are important issues in HRM. In recent years, increasing research attention has been paid in the literature towards employment discrimination and organisational justice perception and strong links have been found between the two. Research witnessed that perceiving employment discrimination activates the sense of injustice and thus changes the justice perceptions of female employees (Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Colquitt, 2001). Further, research reports that organisational policies and practices such as- unequal pay, biased appraisals, less career- advancement and training opportunities and fewer challenging tasks simultaneously affect the women employees' perceptions of organisational justice and discrimination at workplace (Fernandez, 1999; Cohen-Charash and Spector, 2001; Ngo et al., 2002; Downes at al., 2014). Therefore, research has shown a strong association between women discrimination in HRM practices and organisational justice perception.

Objective

The main purpose of the present review study is to systematically and chronologically summarize, analyse and synthesize an extant body of literature pertaining to the relationship between women discrimination in HRM practices and organisational justice perception. Further, it provides the clear and deeper understanding that organisational justice perception of female employees is likely to change, when they experience that HRM policies and practices are biased against them.

Methodology

The literature review method given by Torraco (2005) has been used for the current study in order to summarize, analyse and synthesize an extant body of literature pertaining to the relationship between women discrimination in HRM practices and organisational justice perception. Further, the relevant literature available has been reviewed and expressed clearly and systematically which helps in clear understanding of the said relationship and on the basis of which various research gaps have been identified which provides the scope for future research.

Literature Review

This section provides a review of the extant literature available on women discrimination in HRM practices and its relationship with organisational justice perception.

Women discrimination in HRM practices: Women discrimination at workplace has received considerable attention from the researchers all over the globe and it has been defined as the practice when employment decisions about the women viz- selection, training, appraisals, promotion, reward allocation, task assignment etc are based on their gender rather than on their productivity, performance or qualification (Gutek et al., 1996; Sanchez and Brock, 1996; Ngo et al., 2002). Further, research has revealed that organisational policies and practices are deeply influenced by the socially and culturally mandated structures which question the women's abilities, capabilities and suitability for organisational work and thus result into unconscious bias against them in terms of less compensation, fewer training and career advancement opportunities, biased appraisals and less task assignment (Sackett et al., 1991; Ohlott et al., 1994; Shankar, 2008; Pater et al., 2010; Diaz and Sanchez, 2011; Adhikari, 2014; Tlaiss & Dirani, 2015; Khuong and Chi, 2017). Numerous studies have been conducted from time to time at both international and national workplace contexts about the discrimination experienced by the women employees in HRM practices viz: Tlaiss and Kauser, 2010; Khuong and Chi, 2017 have witnessed that women managers describe their working environments as characterized by the presence of negative perceptions and stereotypes about their professional abilities and commitment to work and thus they face discrimination in moving to the top ladders of the organisation. Tlaiss and Dirani (2015) have examined that woman employees in Lebanon experienced paucity of training and have illustrated that gender biased culture influence their learning at workplace. On the other hand, research has also witnessed that women employees are systematically rated as performing less well than men even after controlling for ability and experience (Sackett et al., 1991). Women employees are also discriminated in the task assignment as well and are provided less challenging tasks than male employees (Ohlott et al., 1994; Pater et al., 2010). Diaz and Sanchez (2011) have reported in their study conducted across the

different European countries viz- France, Germany, Italy, Spain and UK, that women are discriminated in pay even if they possess the same human capital, knowledge, and experience as men.

Within the Indian workplace context, Shankar (2008) has reported in his study conducted within IT sector of India that women professionals are mostly concentrated at the entry level and intermediate levels, rather than flocking at upper ranks. Adhikari (2014) has conducted a research on five IT Companies of Lucknow, the results of which revealed that female employees are underpaid as compared to their male counterparts. On the other hand, Ramya and Raghurama (2014) have revealed that women employees working in banks experience discrimination in training and are denied training opportunities with the belief that they will not be interested in joining such programmes. In addition to it, research has revealed that women executives working in banks experience bias in performance appraisals (Manisha and Reena, 2016).

Investigating the Relationship between Women Discrimination in HRM Practices and Organisational Justice Perception

Discrimination at workplace and organizational justice are inter-related concepts and important issues in the field of HRM. Extant literature has revealed that most of the research on equity and organisational justice perception underlies on the social identity and social comparison processes. Research has revealed that social identity theory connects the notion of perceived discrimination and organisational justice in a manner that people classify themselves and others into social categories and then identify more with members of their own group rather than with their out- group members, when status differentials between the groups are salient. Moreover, when women perceive discrimination in HRM practices, it accentuates the status differentials between genders and they began to identify themselves even more strongly with their gender group which in turn affects their organisational justice perception (Tajfel and Turner, 1986; Ely, 1995). Further, Wenzel (2000) has argued that identity process lies at the heart of justice phenomenon. It is the basis of justice motive itself and injustice threatens the identity. In addition to it, research has reported that social comparison process also helps the individuals in gauging the fairness of their own outcomes and resources with others (out groups) as it provides them information about what types of outcomes such as- salary, career- advancement, training, appraisals, it is possible to achieve (Major, 1994). Thus, when individuals found that others (out- groups) receive fair outcomes and resources than them, their organisational justice perception is likely to change and they perceive unfairness relating to distribution of resources and procedures adopted to allocate such resources. Therefore, it is evident that when female employees found that they do not get fair organisational resources viz- training, task assignment, career opportunities and equal pay in comparison to male employees, they are likely to question organisational justice perception.

In addition to above, organizational justice theories have suggested that when women employees experience discrimination at workplaces, they question the fairness relating to distribution of outcomes and procedures adopted to allocate such outcomes at workplace (Greenberg, 1987; Colquitt, 2001). Further, research has witnessed that when organisational policies and practices are biased against female workforce in terms of less rewards, fewer developmental assignments, fewer training and career opportunities and less pay, their perception of organisational justice is likely to change (Greenberg 1987,

Cropanzano, 2001 & Colquitt, 2001). Moreover, during the review of literature following empirical studies have been found which have shown the connection between women discrimination in HRM practices and organisational justice perception: A study conducted by Fernandez, (1999) showed that members of racial and ethnic minority groups (e.g., Hispanic Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans, and Native Americans) as well as women felt that white men were by far the most-favoured group providing some evidence of a linkage between the issues of discrimination and organisational justice. Another study was conducted by Foley et al., (2002), the results of which revealed that when female Hispanic lawyers experienced discrimination at workplace, they perceived low distributive justice i.e, unfairness regarding the distribution of organisational outcomes and resources. In addition to it, Downes et al., (2014) have reported in their study conducted among the women employees working across the different sectors of USA, that when women employees experience discrimination at workplace, their perception regarding the distributive justice is low. Therefore, it is to be concluded that extant literature available has shown a strong relationship between women discrimination in HRM practices and organisational justice perception.

Conclusion and Scope for Future Research

After reviewing the extant body of literature, it is to be concluded that equality of women at workplace is still a far- fetched dream and it would take further more centuries to close such gender gap at workplace completely. In addition to it, the following research gaps have been identified during the review of literature pertaining to the relationship between women discrimination in HRM Practices and organisational justice which provides the scope for future research. These gaps are illustrated below:

- During the review of literature, it was found that no empirical study has been conducted throughout the world till date which has simultaneously incorporated the following HRM practices in one research model viz- compensation, training, performance appraisal, career advancement and challenging task assignment. This will provide insight to the future researchers to fill this gap by incorporating all the above mentioned HRM practices in one research model and conduct a comprehensive empirical study.
- Literature review has also revealed that most of the empirical studies conducted worldwide have assessed the relationship of women discrimination in HRM practices with distributive justice only. This provides the scope for the future research in order to examine its relationship with procedural justice as well.
- It was also observed during the literature review that, within the Indian workplace context, no research work has been done till date on examining the relationship between women discrimination in HRM practices and organisational justice perception. Therefore, it provides the scope for the future researchers to explore the said relationship fully across the different sectors of India.

References

- Adhikari, S. (2014). Impact of Gender Discrimination at Workplace. *Research Journal of Education*, 2(4), 1-6.

- Cohen-Charash, Y., & Spector, P. E. (2001). The role of justice in organizations: A meta-analysis. *Organizational Behaviour & Human Decision Processes*, 2, 278-321.
- Colquitt, J. A.(2001). On the dimensionality of Organizational Justice: Construct validation of measures. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86, 386–400.
- Cropanzano, R., Rupp, D. E., Mohler, C. J., & Schminke, M. (2001). Three roads to organizational justice. *Research in personnel and human resources management*, 1-113.
- Diaz, M.A., & Sanchez, R. (2011). Gender and Potential Wage in Europe: A Stochastic Frontier Approach. *International Journal of Manpower*, 410-425.
- Downes, M., Hemmasi, M., & Eshghi, Golpira (2014). When a Perceived Glass Ceiling Impacts Organisational Commitment and turnover Intent: The mediating role of Distributive Justice. *Journal of diversity management*, 9(2).
- Ely, R. F. (1995). The power in demography: Women’s social constructions of gender identity at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 38, 589- 634.
- Fernandez, J. P. (1999). Race, gender, and rhetoric: The true state of race and gender relations in corporate America. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Foley, S., Kidder, D. L., & Powell, G. N. (2002). The perceived glass ceiling and justice perceptions: An investigation of Hispanic law associates. *Journal of Management*, 28(4), 471-496.
- Greenberg, J. (1987). A Taxonomy of Organizational Justice Theories. *Academy of Management Review*.
- Gutek, B. A., Cohen, A. G., & Tsui. A. (1996). Reactions to Perceived Discrimination. *Human Relations*, 49,791-813.
- Khuong, M. N., & Chi, N. T. (2017). Effects of the Corporate Glass Ceiling factors on female employees Organizational Commitment. *Journal of Advanced Management Science*, 5(4).
- Major, B. (1994). From Social Inequality to Personal Entitlement: The Role of Social Comparisons, Legitimacy Appraisals, and Group Membership. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 26, 293-356.
- Manisha, & Singh, R.K. (2016). Problems Faced by Working Women in Banking Sector. *International Journal of Emerging Research in Management &Technology*, 5(2).
- Ngo, H. Y., Foley, S., Wong, A., & Loi, R. (2003). Who Gets More Of The Pie? Predictors of Perceived Gender Inequity at Work. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 45, 227-241.
- Ohlott, P.J., Ruderman, M.N., & McCauley, C.D.(1994). Gender differences in managers’ developmental job experiences. *Academy of Management Journal* 37, (1), 46–67. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/256769>.
- Pater, D. E., Annelies, I., Vianen, E. M. V., & Bechtoldt, M. N. (2010). Gender Differences in Job Challenge: A matter of Task Allocation. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 17(4). doi:10.1111/j.1468-0432.2009.00477.x.

- Ramya, K.R., & Raghurama, A. (2016). Women Participation in Indian Banking Sector: Issues and Challenges, *International Journal of Science and Research Volume*, 5 (2).
- Sackett, P.R., Dubois, C.L., & Noe, A.W. (1991). Tokenism in performance evaluation: The Effects of work group representation on male-female and white-black differences in performance ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 263-267.
- Sanchez, J. I, & Brock, P. (1996). Outcomes of perceived discrimination among Hispanic employees: Is diversity management a luxury or a necessity? *Academy of Management Journal*, 39, 704-719.
- Shanker, D. (2008). Gender Relations in IT Companies: An Indian Experience. *Gender, Technology and Development*, 12(2), 185- 207.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behaviour. *Psychology of intergroup relations*, 7–24.
- Tlaiss, H.A., & Kauser, S. (2010). Perceived Organizational Barriers to Women’s Career Advancement in Lebanon, *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 25 (6), 462-496.
- Tlaiss, H.A., & Dirani, K.M. (2015). Women and training: An empirical investigation in the Arab Middle East. *Human Resource Development International*.
- Wenzel, M. (2000). Justice and identity: The significance of inclusion for perceptions of entitlement and the justice motive. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 26, 157–177.