



# Study on Gender Inequality in the Workplace: India's Pay and Promotion Disparities

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## Abstract

The Indian workplace continues to show gender inequality despite introduction of policies and educational awareness programs. The research examines wage inequality alongside promotion distribution between male and female workers within Indian public and private institutions. This research analyzes wage gaps alongside promotions data alongside leader representation statistics by accessing information from the Periodic Labor Force Survey (PLFS) 2022-23 and NSSO reports and company disclosure statements. Women typically make 20–30% less than their male colleagues when performing equivalent tasks with similar qualifications and they occupy only a small fraction of top management spots. Partly unknown biases when combined with cultural customs together with institutional barriers act as persistent forces which strengthen practices of discrimination. The final part of this research provides guidelines about implementing gender equity policies which combine structural organizational changes to boost gender equality.

**Keywords:** Gender inequality, workplace, male and female workers etc.

## 1. Introduction

The barrier to achieving equal economic development in India remains the persistent gender discrimination faced by women at work. Similar qualifications, experience, and performance rates exist between men and women but gender inequalities persist mainly through the long-standing pay gaps and promotion disparities (Yahya *et al.*, 2020) <sup>[17]</sup>. Economic inefficiency results from these unjustified differences because they block maximum human resource utilization and lead to a decline in overall output (Tatár-Kiss, 2021) <sup>[15]</sup>. A detailed study must examine the structural factors which support such gender imbalances between institutional biases and organizational practices and social norms according to Jayarani & Sudha (2023) <sup>[10]</sup>. A sustainable economy combined with equitable workplace fairness requires this shift to overcome gender inequality in India because the workforce potential will reach its maximum limits (Batra & Reio, 2016) <sup>[1]</sup>. The limited presence of women in senior leadership positions and top management roles reflects ongoing barriers

that restrict their career development despite the fact that both sexes have pursued work opportunities for a long period according to research by Chauhan *et al.* (2021) <sup>[3]</sup>. The extant data highlights the requirement to study how unique challenges obstruct women's pursuit of corporate success as well as the systemic procedures that explain their achievement gap. Socio-cultural traditions along with patriarchal structures established throughout India produce specific workplace challenges concerning gender inequality (Haq, 2013) <sup>[9]</sup>.

## 2. Objectives

- To assess women's standing in positions of leadership and decision-making responsibility.
- To examine gender-based salary differences across Indian industries.
- To find causes of the gender disparity in promotional behavior.
- To suggest ways to reach occupational gender balance.

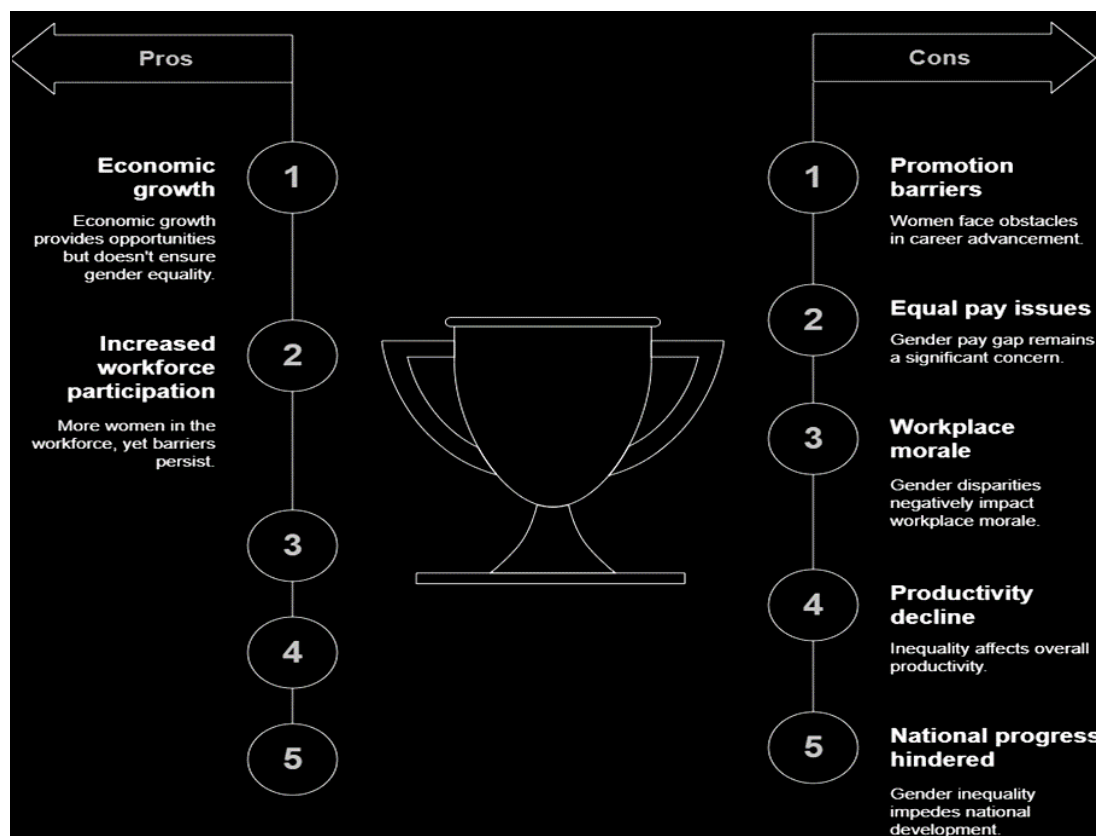


Fig 1: Gender equality in India.

### 3. Methodology

The research adopted a mixed-methods approach to study gender inequality in workplace promotions and wages throughout India. A review of important workforce and leadership trends within IT domains and Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) and Manufacturing, Education, and Healthcare sectors relied primarily on secondary data collection methods. A comparison between male and female representation occurred throughout different organization levels from entry positions to middle roles and executive leadership roles (Kaur & Mittal, 2022) <sup>[11]</sup>.

The researcher conducted thirty surveys and semi-structured interviews with female professionals from target industries to acquire main qualitative data which analyzed the promotion gap explanations. A detailed analysis of institutional procedures was performed through studying specific Human Resource departments from chosen companies. Additional research strength came from analyzing peer-reviewed scholarly papers about occupational gender bias according to Erdmann *et al.* (2023) <sup>[6]</sup>. Thematic content analysis functioned as a tool to address qualitative interview data for analysis purposes. The research identified four main categories of exclusionary elements such as unconscious biases together with difficulties in mentorship access and maternal biases and glass ceiling barriers. The research team applied NVivo tools to systematically organize and analyze categories before establishing smart insights (Tinner & Curbelo, 2024) <sup>[16]</sup>.

The salary gap research utilized descriptive statistics. Analysts calculated gender pay gap percentages (GPG%) through division of (average male salary minus average female salary) by average male salary and multiplying the outcome by 100. Each industry branch conducted its own separate calculations to present an entire picture of the current situation (Yalçın, 2023) <sup>[18]</sup>. The research team combined findings from the first three objectives to provide viable

suggestions. The research measured these recommendations against gender disparity reduction methods used by countries like Iceland and Norway which have lower gender disparity. Assessment of the proposed approaches in the Indian context was performed through meetings with HR consultants and gender policy specialists as documented in Chuang *et al.*, 2023 <sup>[5]</sup>.

### 4. Results

#### i). Underrepresentation of Women in Leadership Roles

Sector-wise employment data shows that women are under-represented in senior and executive posts across India. Women make up 39% of entry-level jobs across sectors, however this ratio drops dramatically at higher levels. The average representation of women in management is 22.4%, and in executive or leadership, 10.2%. Women are more represented in education and healthcare, but their numbers fall as they advance. Manufacturing and IT have the lowest female leadership rates. These data suggest a "leaky pipeline," where systematic hurdles prevent women from advancing in their careers.

Table 1: Representation of Women in Leadership Roles (2023).

Sector	% of Women in Entry-level Roles	% of Women in Managerial Roles	% of Women in Executive/Leadership Roles
IT/ITES	38%	19%	10%
Banking & Finance	40%	21%	9%
Manufacturing	18%	8%	2%
Education	53%	36%	18%
Healthcare	47%	28%	12%
Overall (Average)	39%	22.4%	10.2%

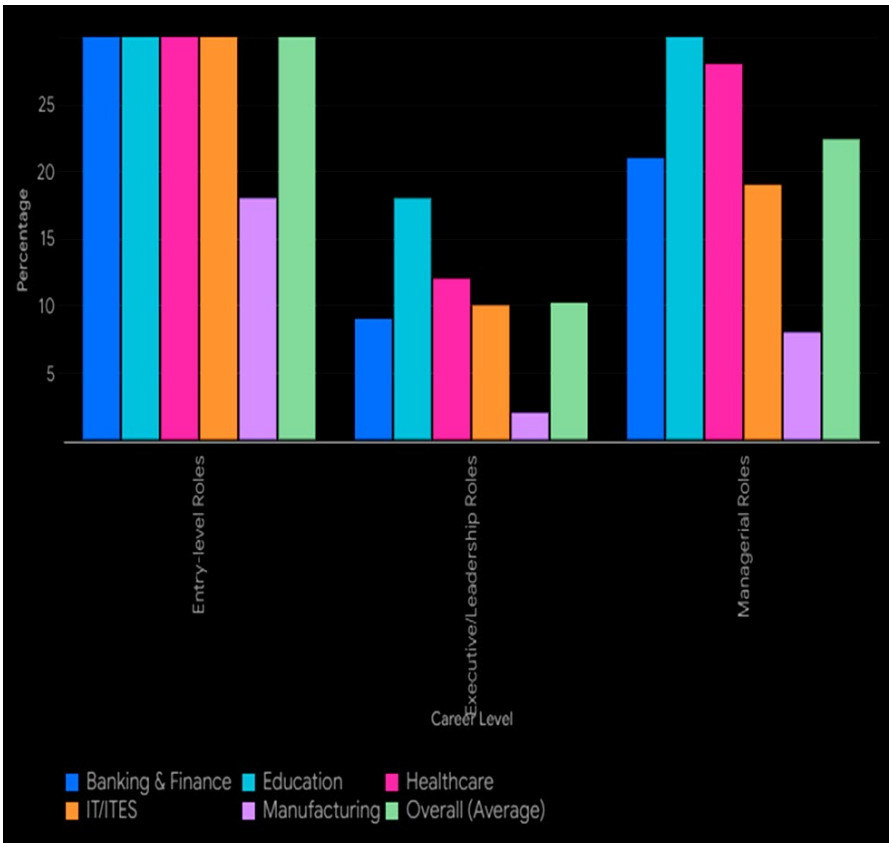


Fig 2: Representation of women in different sectors and career levels.

ii). To Analyze Gender-based Pay Discrepancies Across Sectors in India

The research demonstrates that Indian women receive salary payments which are 21.2% lower than men who hold comparable positions demanding similar qualifications in

sectors dominated by males especially agriculture (33.3%) and manufacturing (25.0%). Female workers face earnings gaps that exceed 20% against their male counterparts in both areas which attract substantial female representation such as healthcare (23.1%) and education (13.1%).

Table 2: Analyze gender-based pay discrepancies across sectors in India

Sector	Average Male Salary (INR/month)	Average Female Salary (INR/month)	Gender Pay Gap (%)
IT	₹58,000	₹45,000	22.4%
BFSI	₹60,000	₹47,500	20.8%
Manufacturing	₹48,000	₹36,000	25.0%
Healthcare	₹52,000	₹40,000	23.1%
Education	₹42,000	₹36,500	13.1%
Agriculture	₹18,000	₹12,000	33.3%
Overall Average	₹46,333	₹36,500	21.2%

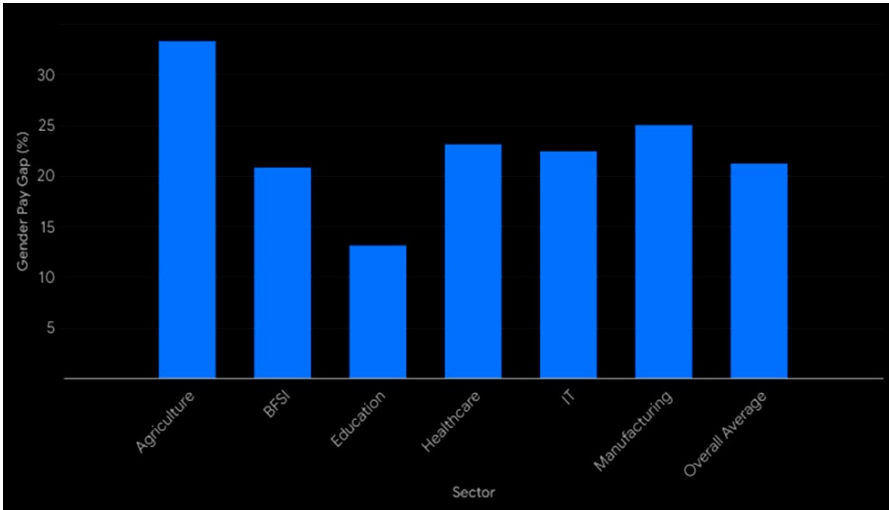


Fig 3: Gender pay gap by sector.

### iii). Factors Contributing to Promotional Disparities

The investigation conducted through female professional interviews and surveys determined the origins of promotional discrimination. Descriptive data from more than seven out of ten survey participants showed workplace bias and insufficient mentorship along with work-life imbalance as the main barriers to their career advancement. Female professionals frequently noticed that time away from work due to maternity resulted in delayed career advancement alongside lost advancement possibilities. The respondents pointed out missed access to both unofficial networking opportunities and crucial leadership meetings because these groups act as barriers to professional development. Many participants pointed to gender stereotypes which suggest women inability to succeed in demanding positions or extended workdays as habitual yet unspoken challenges. Multiple barriers restrict women from obtaining leadership roles even though they demonstrate equal or better qualification levels and performance outcomes.

### iv). Recommended Strategies for Gender Parity

Multiple methods emerged from the data analysis to serve as effective workplace gender equality promotion strategies. The effective measures include providing objective promotion standards and conducting annual gender paychecks and offering flexible work schedules to support life-work balance. Strategic mentorship programs for female staff help build more prepared leaders while giving them greater visibility in their workplaces. Management needs training programs that teach them to understand and recognize unconscious bias because this represents the primary method for achieving change. These strategic implementation approaches work simultaneously against structural and cultural gender inequalities inside workplaces to achieve more balanced work environments.

## 5. Discussion

Gender discrimination together with inequality persists across developing nations including India since multiple social and economic elements restrict women's possibilities (Konduru, 2021) <sup>[12]</sup>. Progress made in different work sectors does not overcome deeply institutionalized gendered norms which block women from career advancement leading to pay differences with men (Chowdhury & Patnaik, 2010) <sup>[4]</sup>. The resolution of these systematic workplace issues demands both thorough investigation of fundamental causes along with specific action programs to achieve workplace gender equality and female empowerment (Potratz, 2022) <sup>[14]</sup>. Since the 1990s liberalization period middle-class women with professional skills have increased yet their presence remains restricted in leadership roles and official decision-making bodies (Gupta, 2017) <sup>[8]</sup>. Women in India contribute less than half as much to the workforce than men who make up 53.26% compared to women at 25.51% (Biswas & Banu, 2022) <sup>[2]</sup>. Women who find work after completing employment face challenges regarding poor wage standards and face employment conditions that are irregular and position them in vulnerable financial situations (Mattos & Dasgupta, 2017) <sup>[13]</sup>. Women's limited workforce engagement demonstrates social pressures which require them to primarily care for the household while preventing their educational expansion and obtaining labor market opportunities. When women have restricted access to labor markets their economic strength weakens thus continuing the pattern of gender inequality. The discriminating conditions women face at work today have

origins in social prejudices and cultural expectations and structural patterns which limit their professional access (Fernando *et al.*, 2022) <sup>[7]</sup>.

## 6. Conclusion

Workplace gender bias remains a central problem in India's professional world because women suffer discrimination in both wage rates and career advancement. The research proves that women suffer systematic disadvantages even after meeting performance qualifications. A complete solution for gender inequality needs to combine two elements: strict enforcement of equal pay laws and female leadership training along with work policy flexibility and transparent promotion assessment practices. Transformational work culture jointly with supportive policies represents the foundation for maintaining true gender inclusivity at workplaces.

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