

An Examination of Bias in the Engineering Workplace in India

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The Society of Women Engineers, in partnership with the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California and Hastings College of Law, explored bias reported by engineers in India. Almost 700 engineers completed a customized online survey developed to identify the existence of bias patterns in the engineering workplace. The results suggest that both men and women engineers in India experience high levels of bias, with women more likely to face gender bias and men more likely to face bias based on the region in India that they are from. This session will review the findings of the study and share best practices for implementing bias interrupters.

Key Issues

Higher levels of bias were associated with feelings of exclusion, belonging, and lower intent to stay with one's employer.

- Tightrope bias had the most pervasive effect: it was strongly linked to every workplace process and outcome we studied, including hiring, performance evaluations, assignments, and intent to leave one's current employer.
- An increase in Prove-It-Again bias was linked to a decrease in career satisfaction and an increase in intent to leave one's employer.

Employers who want to retain the women they hire, and want to give them equal opportunity to advance, need to care about workplace bias. In addition, employers need to assess whether Indian engineers from some regions are artificially advantaged over engineers from different regions.