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## EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION IN PUBLIC SERVICE

*Abstract. There is a strong interest in discrimination and equality among specialists from Georgia and abroad. Non-governmental organizations in various countries have conducted numerous studies on the mentioned topics. We carried out research in the municipality of Nadzaladevi district. The research was based on a questionnaire. SPSS software was used to process the data. The results of the study revealed interesting trends. Based on the research, conclusions and recommendations were developed. The author's comments and suggestions for future improvements to the noted problem are given at the end of the paper.*

*Keywords: Equality, discrimination, public sector*

**Introduction.** The issues of equality and discrimination have always been relevant. Numerous articles and reports address topics of discrimination and equality, especially the role of women in the workplace [1],[2]. It is interesting to determine to what extent the issue of equality in the country and structural units is protected. There are many cases when we hear about individuals being discriminated against because of various signs. The struggle against discrimination has been intense in recent years. The law, public defender, and the court play an active role in this process, although it should be noted that problems remain [3].

It should be emphasized that the public defender participates less in discussions of discriminatory issues from private individuals. Solving the problem will require not just legislation but also systemic actions of society. Specifically, the issue should be considered in terms of a systemic approach and should take into account the collaborative involvement of representatives from different fields. There is a lack of efficient crime investigations regarding equality, and prevention measures must be improved. Furthermore, there are a few precedents of public involvement in the face of equality and discriminatory facts. We consider that cultural values and beliefs also influence the concerns listed above [4], [5], [6].

**Purpose.** The paper aims to introduce existing problems related to the issues of discrimination in the public sector. We will also define the employer's role in the equality process and discuss issues of equality management in the workplace. It is the behavior of the employer that influences the established relationships and the behavior of subordinates [7] [8].

**Results.** Several researchers have studied the mentioned topics, including scientists and non-governmental organizations [9],[10],[11]. We selected 73 employees of the structure of Nadzaladevi district. The research was conducted using the questionnaire survey method. 80% of employees participated in the study. Research materials were processed in the SPSS program. In the research process, we used logical analysis and reasoning methods. The developed questionnaire includes 20 questions and 101 answer options. The research was conducted using a

questionnaire. We processed the obtained data using the SPSS software package. During the research process, we asked whether the respondents had heard about the facts of discrimination. 16% of the respondents state that they have heard about the mentioned facts. In addition, it is also interesting to note that only 8.3% of the interviewed female respondents admit the existence of discrimination, while the number among the interviewed men is 21.6%. It is difficult to make a decisive conclusion, although we can assume that women are more reluctant to state their position openly than men.

Keeping employees at work after working hours without adequate compensation is a form of discrimination [12]. 39% of respondents frequently have to stay at an organization after working hours. 58.3% of the surveyed female respondents state that they often have to work during non-working hours, and 41.7% state the answer "rarely." Among men, similar answers were distributed as follows, "often" - 27%, "rarely" 67.6%, and "never" 5.4%. It is impossible to insist that women are forced to work overtime against their will and, therefore, are dealing with discrimination. We can also assume that women are more responsible than men and that women's commitment to work is high.

According to the findings, 75% of respondents claim that the overtime is paid by the organization, 7% state that they do not have to perform overtime work, 5% believe that overtime is paid only for some employees, and 13% state that overtime work is not paid at all.

Even though many surveyed respondents have a long working experience, 46% indicate that they have never been promoted. Furthermore, 82% of respondents claim they have the ability and deserve to be promoted, but their requirements are not fulfilled.

Although the respondents avoided the direct question about discrimination, many indirect questions revealed that, to a small extent, discrimination still exists in our society. In particular, 16% indicate that there are facts of nepotism in their organization. The presence of nepotism in the organization is confirmed by 4.2% of the surveyed women and 24.3% of the men.

To maintain harmonious relationships in a public institution, it is critical to design modern management methods in which the supervisor plays a fundamental role. Tensions are typically detected in organizations during unfair decisions or signals of discrimination. Throughout the research process, we were interested in whether different opinions are acknowledged in the organization. 82% of respondents gave a positive response. 16% partially agree with the expressed opinion, while 2% disagree. Furthermore, 73% of men and 95.8% of women agree with this opinion. It should be noted that even a single individual or organizational culture can impact the organizational climate [13], [14].

One indicator of discrimination is a feeling of hopelessness about career management and advancement. Job discrimination affects the career development of employees [15],[16]. When asked whether the respondents have equal opportunities for advancement and promotion, only 64% gave a positive answer, 29% partially agreed with the opinion, and 7% openly stated that they are not given equal opportunities in terms of promotion. 54% of men and 79.2% of women evaluate this fact negatively.

The extent to which the existing management system in the institution detects the facts of discrimination and eliminates them is crucial not just for the organization's effectiveness but also for improving its image [17]. 44% of respondents disagree with the opinion, 30% partially agree, and only 26% believe there is a fight against discrimination by the institution's management. It is surprising to get such responses from public officials when, in numerous questions, they did not confirm (only in part) the presence of any form of discrimination. The attitude of women and men in this particular issue is almost identical. 41.7% of women and 45.9% of men do not agree with the opinion.

Naturally, even little cases of discrimination within the organization exacerbate tense situations. Studies confirm that various forms of discrimination in the workplace increase the level of stress in an individual, thereby worsening his health. In addition, there is a connection between

the experience of discrimination and high blood pressure [18], [19]. 62% of respondents claim that the organization has no stressful environment, while 25% believe it is partially stressful.

Speaking loudly about the existence of discrimination by employees is an indicator of a high level of democracy and freedom of speech. It is interesting whether the respondents refer to the supervisor during the discrimination. 10% of respondents answer positively, whereas 10% answer negatively. 80% of respondents claimed they had not experienced discrimination.

Detecting and responding to discrimination by supervisors is critical for increasing the productivity of each employee. 11% of the interviewed respondents stated that there was no response from the supervisor to the facts of discrimination, while 5% responded positively.

Conclusions and recommendations developed as a result of these findings are presented in the final part.

### **Conclusions.**

— It is significant to highlight that discussing discrimination is far simpler for men than it is for women. It is critical to form groups in institutions that will assist employees in exposing the mentioned facts. More propaganda is needed to make it easier for victims of discrimination to speak openly and defend their interests;

— Furthermore, it is worth emphasizing that women are most likely to work overtime. The institution needs to examine the available facts to determine whether there is a place for discrimination against women or if the mentioned facts are related to their status.

— Even though some interviewees believe that advancement should be made within their capabilities, they are not allowed to do so. It is also crucial to have legal regulations that balance the career management of senior and experienced employees.

— In some cases, it can be assumed that employees do not understand the forms of discrimination and have little information about when their interests can be harmed and in what form they should defend themselves.

We believe that conducting relevant training with the assistance of lawyers is crucial to solving the problem mentioned above.

— As a result of the research, it was established that the administration discovers the facts of discrimination and fights against them. On the other hand, in direct questions, the employees denied the presence of discrimination.

— We believe assessing the current organizational climate and taking suitable measures will provide positive outcomes.

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## **CIRCULAR ECONOMY BUSINESS MODELS: A BRIEF LITERATURE REVIEW**

*Abstract. The introduction of circular economy business models is connected with the big changes. The effectiveness of transformation will depend on the introduction of appropriate technologies, education, etc. The author presents the interconnection of Sustainability and the Circular Economy Business Models in a three-dimensional plane.*

*Key words: Circular Economy Business Models, Sustainability, Education*

The European Commission adopted the new circular economy action plan (CEAP) in March 2020. It is one of the main building blocks of the European Green Deal, Europe’s new agenda for sustainable growth [1]. While the first Circular Economy Action Plan of 2015 focused on the recyclability of products, this second one emphasises the preventive actions to undertake, specifically in waste prevention and management.

According to the EEA report (2016) the concept of the circular economy reflects the recognition that European systems of production and consumption need to be fundamentally transformed to achieve the EU's 2050 vision of “living well within the limits of our planet” [2, p.1]. It is also a prerequisite to achieve the EU’s 2050 climate neutrality target and to halt biodiversity loss. According to a recent study by Cambridge Econometrics, the circular economy