



Beyond Words: Investigating Stakeholder Attitudes Toward GenderNeutral Language in Indian Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the orientations of academic stakeholders in India towards genderneutral language (GNL), a critical but often overlooked element of inclusive academic practice. Based on the IASNL (Instrument to Measure Attitudes Toward Sexist/Nonsexist Language), questionnaire was given to 198 participants across different levels of study, from postdoctoral researchers to PhD students, postgraduate students, and final-year dual-degree students. The research analyzes the influence of demographic factors, gender, age, and educational levels on three key aspects: gender-neutral language beliefs, awareness of gender bias in language, and willingness to adopt inclusive practices. Statistical analysis determines gender and age as determining factors, with differences between groups being observable in belief strength, sexist language awareness, and willingness to use GNL. Whereas educational achievement was found to have multifaceted consequences, its effect was less than on other variables. The findings offer empirical evidence of the ways that demographic contexts shape language-related attitudes within scholarly settings. Examining these patterns helps the research contribute to ongoing efforts to promote inclusive communication in higher education and to offer datainformed information for planning language awareness and training interventions.

Keywords: Bias perception, sexist language, Inclusive education, Attitudinal difference, language awareness