

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2015, the Center for WorkLife Law at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law (WLL), and the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) conducted a large-scale study of bias experiences of engineers across the United States. Building upon this work, WLL and SWE conducted a subsequent study to explore bias reported by Indian engineers largely working for Western companies in India. Almost 700 engineers took our Workplace Experiences Survey and reported on their workplace climates.

## HIGH LEVELS OF BIAS

Indian engineers reported high levels of bias whether they were men or women. Our data suggest that women engineers are more likely to face gender bias, while men engineers are more likely to face bias based on where they come from (both their region and language). It may be that Indian engineers from one region were comparing themselves to Indian colleagues from other regions.

### Four Patterns

- **Prove-It-Again bias:** 76% of engineers reported having to prove themselves over and over to get the same level of respect as their colleagues.
- **Tightrope bias:** 77% of engineers reported that they were confined to a narrower range of acceptable behaviors than their colleagues.
- **Maternal Wall bias:** 40% of engineers in India reported bias against mothers in their workplaces.
- **Tug of War bias:** 45% of women reported that they have to compete with their female colleagues to get the one “woman’s spot” available.

### 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.

Clearly, 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.