

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS AND LEGAL RECOURSE AWARENESS IN THE CORPORATE SECTOR IN COLOMBO

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This study examines the awareness of employee rights and legal recourse mechanisms in the corporate sector of Colombo, addressing the issue of limited knowledge among employees and challenges in accessing justice. The research aimed to assess awareness levels, identify influencing factors, and explore barriers to legal remedies, contributing to improved labor practices. A qualitative research approach was employed, guided by the critical research paradigm, which explores power dynamics and structural inequalities. Purposive sampling was used to select nine participants from diverse sectors, including banking, logistics, technology, and apparel, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis, with a structured coding process to identify key themes and patterns. The research followed the case study protocol outlined by Dul and Hak (2008) to ensure rigorous analysis and consistency across interviews.

The findings reveal substantial gaps in awareness of statutory protections and legal mechanisms, varying significantly across sectors and organizational contexts. Employees in highly regulated industries demonstrated higher awareness due to union influence and compliance requirements, while those in less structured environments faced challenges such as inadequate training and poor internal communication. The study concludes that improving labor law dissemination and strengthening grievance mechanisms are crucial for fostering equitable workplaces.

Key recommendations include implementing mandatory rights-awareness training, simplifying access to legal recourse, and enhancing institutional frameworks to improve accessibility. This research contributes to policy by advocating effective labor regulations, assists organizations in promoting compliant and inclusive cultures, and enriches academic discourse on employee rights in developing economies.

Keywords: Colombo, Corporate Sector, Employee Rights, Grievance Mechanisms, Legal Recourse, Labor Law Awareness, Qualitative Research, Statutory Protections, Workplace Equity, Sri Lanka

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