

Stereotypes Exercise and Discussion

Course: MBA (Finance) Semester: II

This activity was designed to help students identify, reflect on, and critically examine common workplace stereotypes that influence hiring, promotion, team collaboration, and leadership decisions. The central aim was to make students aware of the unconscious biases that operate in professional settings and to foster empathy, inclusivity, and open-mindedness — essential qualities for any future manager.

The activity was conducted in three phases:

1. Individual Reflection: Each student was given a prompt sheet with incomplete statements like:

- "Women are usually good at _____ but not so good at _____."
- "Engineers are often seen as _____."
- "People who come from small towns are usually _____."
- "HR professionals are mostly _____."

Students were told to complete these statements quickly and spontaneously — not to write what was socially correct, but what came to their mind first. The goal was to surface implicit stereotypes they might carry without conscious awareness.

2. Group Sharing and Discussion: After this silent individual reflection, students were divided into small groups to share their responses and reactions. The room was filled with surprise, laughter, discomfort, and insight as students realized how many stereotypes — related to gender, region, profession, age, or appearance — they had encountered, believed, or internalized.

Prominent stereotypes included:

- Women are too emotional to lead.
 - North Indians are aggressive; South Indians are disciplined.
 - Finance people lack creativity.
 - Older employees resist technology.
 - MBA students from Tier-2 cities are less competent than those from metros.
3. Debrief: The discussion was then brought back to the whole class, where the facilitator introduced concepts such as:
- Implicit bias and stereotype threat
 - In-group vs. out-group behavior
 - Impact of labels on identity and performance
 - How stereotypes influence hiring, teamwork, and leadership potential

Real-world examples were shared where individuals broke stereotypes — such as women leading steel plants, people with disabilities excelling in corporate roles, or introverts becoming successful CEOs. Students experienced a range of powerful realizations