

Glass Ceiling Syndrome: An Impediment to Advancement of Women

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Abstract:

The scenario of women is slowly changing in recent years they have stepped out from their comfort zones to create their own images in the outside world and completely transformed in the modern day, the urban women specially has changed from being a mere homemaker to the modern-day multitasking women. Women of today, choose the right career paths that determine their future and thus we see them excelling in every walk of life. Despite this paradigm shift in women empowerment and development, there seems to be an invisible barrier that prevents women from reaching the top. This situation has returned to represent a spread of biases that forestall qualified minorities and women from advancing within the workplace notably into mid-and senior-level management positions. It is most present in lower levels of profession, such as care work. Feminized care professions are often paid lower wages than stereotypically male professions, but males experience a phenomenon in which they earn higher wages and have faster career mobility when they enter feminine careers. This idea is a parallel to the popular idea of the glass ceiling, where women face troubles advancing in the workplace. It is evident from various studies that historical background, socio cultural norms and self-imposed barriers are the major obstacles that are preventing women from entering into apex positions. As women were subjected to various forms of subordinations and inequalities since the ages, despite of many efforts both by government and non-government, still women are lagging behind man. This is seriously affecting not only the individual, but also the county. Hence, it is the need of the hour to realize the impact of glass ceiling and sensitize both men and women to overcome by empowering themselves. We need to really take steps to strengthen the relationship between men and women at work.

Key words: Glass Ceiling, Women empowerment, Syndrome, Barriers

Introduction:

Invisible but strong barrier for the lesser number of women in top level management positions is glass Ceiling. Glass ceiling is a term which symbolizes a variety of barriers faced by women and by minorities as they seek to improve their employment status. Many studies confirmed the glass ceiling, which continued to prevent women from moving up to a higher position in organizations. The glass-ceiling barriers are evidenced worldwide, often compounded by cultural values and traditional gender roles

In early times, the status of women in India was inferior to man in the practical life. However, they had a higher status in scriptures. The scenario of women is slowly changing in recent years they have stepped out from their comfort zones to create their own images in the outside world and completely transformed in the modern day, the urban women specially has changed from being a mere homemaker to the modern-day multitasking women. Women of today, choose the right career paths that determine their future and thus we see them excelling in every walk of life. But still the progress is at slow pace because of the effect of glass ceiling. The glass ceiling effect is the pervasive resistance to the efforts of women to reach the top ranks of management in major corporations. It is unclear exactly who named the phenomenon, but the term was heavily used during the mid-1980s. Women who entered the workforce in large numbers during the late 1970s and early 1980s found themselves unable to advance beyond a certain level of management.

Despite many efforts around gender diversity and affirmative action, corporate India has failed to bring more women into leadership positions in recent times. Out of every 100 CEOs and managing directors of companies listed on the National Stock Exchange, only about three are women, and this has been the case since 2014. Out of 1,814 chief executives and MDs of NSE-listed companies, only 67, or 3.69% are women as of March 6, 2019. Globally also, men are on the driver's seat in most multinationals. There were just 24, or 4.8%, women among CEOs of companies that made up the 2018 Fortune 500 list. This was a 25% fall from 2017 when women were at the helm of 32, or 6.4%, companies in the Fortune 500 list. Women account for only 13.8% of board directors from listed companies in India (The Economic Times, 27th march 2019).

As Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, chairperson of leading biotech firm Biocon, mentioned, its true that the two-way efforts are needed to create more women CEOs – firstly, women need to push themselves to take up leadership roles (they are usually not confident enough) and secondly men must not overlook women. With this backdrop this study has been initiated to analyze the overview of glass ceiling with the following objectives.

Objectives:

- To explore the causes of Glass ceiling and
- To examine the effects of glass ceiling on advancement of women

Review of Literature:

In the study on the Glass Ceiling for Women Managers: Antecedents and Consequences for Work-Family Interface and Well-Being at Work Babic A and Hansez I (2021), it was found that the glass ceiling was directly related to job satisfaction and intention to quit. Women managers who perceive a glass ceiling report being less satisfied with their job and having more intention to quit.

The research on The Effect of Glass Ceiling Syndrome on Women's Career Barriers in Management and Job Motivation (Imadoğlu, T. et. al. (2020)) holds even though women and men have same education experiences, knowledge-skills and talents, there are various barriers for women not to reach senior managements. The study revealed that women who do not get their deserved promotions have low motivation. Being unmotivated leads some women to reduce their job performances

An analysis of glass ceiling perceptions in the accounting profession (Cohen, J. R., Dalton, D. W., Holder-Webb, L. L., and McMillan, J. J., 2020) has found bias-driven effects, structural effects like lack of mentoring opportunities, and cultural effects like lack of social support from the male leaders within the organization among the accounting professionals.

The results of the study on the Glass Ceiling Effect on Women Career And Advancement In India – Information Technology (IT) Companies Perspective (Patil Jaya Lakshmi Reddy (2020) speaks that cultural variables contribute more prevention to the ladies in propelling their professions and the management observation about women arriving at higher position assumes a significant role.

Impact of Glass Ceiling on Stress, Well-Being, Self-Esteem, Effective Organizational Commitment and Job Satisfaction among Working Women International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (AbdulSattar Abulbaqi Al-Azzawi, Makarand Upadhyay , Nishi Tyagi, 2019) confirmed that women employees are under stress most of the time and this leads to low self-esteem, low well-being, low organizational commitment and also low job satisfaction among them.

Existence of Glass Ceiling and Factors Affecting Women in Reaching Top Positions., Madhulata (2017) In india also all studies show existence of glass ceiling, through review of literature critical factors were evaluated which leads to low representation of women in top positions and the sequence of factor effecting the most was organizational factor, personal factor, stereotyping factor, socio –cultural factor, political factor and sexual harassment.

The Glass Ceiling Effect and Its Impact on Women (Lisa Fritscher, 2017), has observed that there are so few top-level positions and the competition is so fierce, final hiring decisions invariably come down to personal feelings

The study identifies several factors such as lack of access to quality education stereotyping attitude, cultural barriers, occupational sex segregation and other biases that hinder females' progression to the top management positions (Sabharwal, 2013)

In the research carried on the glass ceiling effects have stated that the glass ceiling effect has an impact on the growth and career development of women. (Bombuwela P. M., De Alwis A. Chamaru, 2013)

Glass ceiling is not one ceiling or wall, they are varied and pervasive forms of gender bias that occur frequently in both overt and covert ways. (Chamaru and Bambuwela, 2013).

The study drew the interpretation of a strong evidence of glass ceiling in the workplaces. (James Albrecht, 2001). Men presume they have more managerial skills than women, they believe "think manager- think men." Many of the jobs in IT, especially leadership roles are considered as masculine than feminine (Gutek, 2001). A lot of studies established the assumption of glass ceiling and pointed out that women experienced a numeral barrier at some stage in their pronouncement of their career pathway (Phillips & Imhoff, 1997).

Methodology:

The study primarily relies on secondary data. The secondary data includes websites, eBook's, articles from various reputed journals, reports and opinions of leading women entrepreneurs, Ph.D theses etc. besides discussions with the subject experts.

Results and Discussions:

It is worth noting that over the last decades women have made steady progress and are moving to positions of leadership. India ranks third in the world for women working in senior management positions, according to the Women in Business 2021 report by global accounting firm Grant Thornton. Theoretically, every woman can reach the top of her organization. Glass ceiling could be

the result of unconscious bias which disproportionately affect women's success in the workplace. While the gender ratio may not be that skewed at entry level, it is alarming when looked at in leadership roles.

After 75 years of independence, one would expect at least 50% representation for women at all levels. According to data from the Union ministry of law and justice, out of 677 sitting judges in both the Supreme Court and high courts, only 81 are women. This makes out the representation of women judges in the total working strength to a mere 12%. Even out of 34 Judges in the Supreme court of India, only 4 are women judges which is highest ever in its history which represents only 11%.

If politics is seen despite increases in the number of women at the highest levels of political power globally, widespread gender inequalities persist: progression in women holding ministerial portfolios has slowed, with just a small increase to from 21.3 per cent in 2020 to 21.9 per cent in 2021; the number of countries with no women in government has increased; and only 25.5 per cent of national parliamentarians are women, compared to 24.9 per cent the year before.

Despite women being 50 percent of the voters, out of 542 MPs, only 78 are women in 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the highest ever after independence. Out of 78 ministers only 11 are women which is the highest in last 17 years. Out of 11 only 2 hold the cabinet rank positions. These are some of the examples of how women are denied of their opportunities and lagging behind due to the harmful or unintentional bias.

World Economic Forum global Gender Gap Index report 2021 clearly says that India has slipped 28 places. India ranks 140 among 153 countries and the biggest slump is in the political empowerment sub-index where India ranks 51 versus 18 last year.

Gender inequalities result in women flocking into certain occupations, getting low paying jobs, and working in jobs with fewer opportunities for advancement. The discrimination against women is due to erroneous beliefs regarding the capacity of women. UN report on The World's Women 2020: Trends and Statistics states that in terms of power and decision making, women held only 28% of managerial positions globally in 2019 – almost the same proportion as in 1995. And only 18% of enterprises surveyed had a female Chief Executive Officer in 2020. Among Fortune 500 corporations only 7.4%, or 37 Chief Executive Officers, were women. In political life, while women's representation in parliament has more than doubled globally, it has still not crossed the barrier of 25% of parliamentary seats in 2020. Women's representation among cabinet ministers has quadrupled over the last 25 years, yet remains well below parity at 22%. The report also says that unpaid domestic and care work falls disproportionately on women, restraining their economic potential as the COVID-19 pandemic additionally affects women's jobs and livelihoods. Hence, it is evident that even today we are not able to crack the glass ceiling.

Impact of Glass ceiling on women:

The glass ceiling is a very prevalent phenomenon in the corporate world today. Women have to work harder than men in general to gain the same recognition. One of the main reasons for this in India is the societal pressure on women. The glass ceiling keeps people from getting certain jobs, despite being well qualified and deserving. It's a phenomenon that affects career path, status, and lifetime earning potential. Potential women will lose their confidence, enthusiasm and interest to work because of this biased treatment. It also affects the health of women and creates lot of stress on them. If half of the human resource is undervalued or unrecognized, its big loss to the countries growth.

The glass ceiling syndrome which is a concept frequently encountered in working life, but is hardly known, is an important factor preventing women's career advancement. Despite the fact that women and men have same education experiences, knowledge-skills and talents, there are various barriers for women not to reach senior managements. In this context, this study aims to determine the levels of women's ability to cope with family and home responsibilities, problems of business life and how barriers they face affect their job motivation. The employment and development of women, which nowadays become an important part of the labor market, has become a necessity for companies to move ahead of their competitors by increasing their competition levels with competing firms. However, gender discrimination is one of the most important barriers for women.

Pathway:

Alternatively, Entrepreneurship may be the option for women who are ambitious, careerist and have passion for work and especially who want to prove themselves. On the other hand, society, government and private organizations should take collective efforts to diminish the practice of gender diversity and gender stereotyping for the amelioration of society, organizations and women. Ceiling is breachable only with increased awareness and empowerment of the leaders of tomorrow

In India, where the voice of women empowerment is high, the government is taking efforts to improve the social status of women but women are still expected to be responsible for doing household chores and taking care of children while men are the breadwinners, which can restrict women's career options. file a discrimination or harassment claim. Better conducive situations are accomplished in an association through giving the representatives great work life balance. Social help from the associates and family assumes a significant job in professional success.

Conclusion:

The glass ceiling is a vertical discrimination most frequently against women in companies. It is nothing but stopping women at lower level based on the sexism or racism from advancing even though she is qualified and potential. Women face several obstacles and barriers in order to attain high managerial positions as compared to men. It is evident from various studies that historical background, socio cultural norms and self imposed barriers are the major obstacles that are preventing women from entering into apex positions. As women were subjected to various forms of subordinations and inequalities since the ages, despite of many efforts both by government and non government, still women are lagging behind man. This is seriously affecting not only the individual, but also the county. Hence, it is the need of the hour to realize the impact of glass ceiling and sensitize both men and women to overcome by empowering themselves. We need to really take steps to strengthen the relationship between men and women at work.

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