

# Glass – Ceiling And Women In Management with special reference to Tirunelveli District

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**ABSTRACT** - Despite, the considerable increase in the existence of women workforce in the post reform scenario in the Indian economy, marching record of entry into the higher managerial position is unreasonably restricted. This pitiless phenomena hampering the social economic development of women, this has been referred to as Glass Ceiling effect. This study focuses the Glass Ceiling of Women Executives in Management, the imaginary barriers that stop women from getting their due place in the Management though there are no specific rules to prevent the woman employees from getting the best jobs. The empirical analysis was based on snow ball sampling method and attracted 60 respondents. The study duly analyzed the work nature of female managers in different sectors. Dual responsibility, lack of opportunity, lack of motivation and patriarchal society plays vital role in women not being interested to hold manager position. However, it is therefore recommended that organizations embark on enlightenment campaign, nominate female mentor to counseling and also incorporate equal opportunity employment policy in their organizational policies.

**Keywords** – Glass Ceiling, Women, employment.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Women contribute to half of the population and their participation in economic development can lead to impressive growth of the nation. Women perform multiple roles as a home-maker and bread-winner to attain economic independence and to satisfy their familial and personal needs. Women engaged in professional service sectors work in a wide variety of occupations like scientists, engineers, architects, lawyers, accountants, economists, statisticians, administrators and managers. Financial and Professional employees thus play an essential role in enterprises in economy and in society. Despite, having professional eligibility and ample opportunities in the competitive job market, female employees are not aptly representing in the higher positions (Pillai, Prasad and Thomas 2011). Despite, remarkable increase in the available workforce for women, rights against women employees are restricted in the high level managerial positions. Globally, women make up slightly over 50% of the world population though they receive only a small proportion of the world's opportunities and benefits. The number of women as senior managers in large corporations is low and only in an average of about 3% of top Chief Executive Officers is women. In the United Nation System, women hold only 9% of the top management positions (Oakley, 2000; Black & Rothman, 1998). This phenomenon of hampering women's upward advancement to senior management positions in large

corporations is well documented and has been referred to as the glass ceiling effect (Morrison, Schreiber, & Price, 1995; Vianen et al., 2002).

In India, generally, women are in distinct minorities in many aspects since 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the field of management, traditionally, dominated by male and women are massively suppressed especially in the higher rank. Nevertheless, information technology field got vibrant since 1990s and the companies and organizations started to recognise women workforce. They believed that integrating women workforce would lead to boost economic growth at macro level and improve the quality of services. However, female employees are discriminated by male employees notably in higher positions. Adopting a wide range of the theoretical and methodological perspectives, including Marxist Feminism and dual system approaches, feminist studies constitute the major influence in developing the explicit analysis of gender in organizations. Feminist writers focus on patriarchy as a separate system of men's control over women.

In this backdrop, the present paper aims at contributing to the discussion on the female career advancement in the top level management in the service sector, trying to understand specifically if it is a culture where "male managerial behaviour" is prevalent and thereby inhibits the promotion of women to managerial positions. In this aspect, the present study duly represents the issues and opportunities

that obstruct the female workforce in the top level management in Tamil Nadu, especially in Tirunelveli district.

## II. BRIEF REVIEW OF LITERATURE

More women entered the workforce which were traditionally male jobs were opened to women as well. Other practical glass ceiling matters include unequal pay rates and the idea that women lose out on involvement in an organization if they take maternity leave. Again, there is a contrast with men, who may or may not take time off for the birth of a child and do not need physical recovery from the birth of children. Invisible barriers for women incorporate promotions; glass ceiling is primarily a barrier to upper management.

The glass ceiling restricts women's access to top management positions solely because their gender. Women are not allowed to advance in managerial hierarchies when compared with men with equivalent credentials. The entry of women into top management is influenced by the structure of the decision making process and the accountability of decision makers. Most organizations do not have a systematic procedure for making promotions to top management positions.

Majority of women, who wish to pursue a career, face issues both at domestic and at work which often cause imbalances. Gender discrimination is a natural and common phenomenon. Women make up 50% of the workplace but account for less than 4% of nation's top executives.

One of the major issues is the "glass ceiling effect"- a term used in reference to women is being prevented from reaching the top management positions. This ceiling often subtle and is uncovered only by examining the promotion statistics when one finds that women are executive suite. Women managers are clustered into administrative and support functions. Although a significant number of women have entered management positions for sufficient number of years, there are still noticeably absent at the top level of today's organizations.

Work-life and personal life are the two sides of the same coin. According to various work-life balance surveys, more than 60% of the respondents said that they were not able to find a balance between their personal and professional lives. Traditionally, creation and managing a balance between the work-life was considered to be a woman's issue. But, increasing work pressures, globalization and technological advancement have made it an issue with both the genders, all professionals working across the levels and throughout the work. Achieving "work-life balance" is not as simple as it is thought of.

There is no doubt that significant progress has been achieved in the advancement of women over recent years, with their increasing movement into occupations, professions and managerial jobs previously held only by

men. Real obstacles remain and are often rooted in the work itself and the difficulties involved in reconciling work and family commitments. Current debates on managerial styles and approaches, together with the importance in increasing number of enterprises and retaining women in order to benefit from their qualifications and talent in a competitive environment could provide positive perspectives for increasing women's share of managerial jobs.

It reviews the changing positions of women in the labour market and in professional and managerial work. It examines obstacles to women's career development and action taken to improve their opportunities and promote gender equality.

## III. SURVEY AND METHODOLOGY

In order to have an accurate background, a snow ball random sample method has been adopted. The general characteristics of the respondents involved in this survey amongst others include; current serving managers and must have served at least one year completed. The study covered 40 respondents from the scattered population and for analyzing the fact about the Glass ceiling in women managers, basic statistics were engaged as ratio and percentage analysis through a survey method during June 2016. In order to compare how do women differ from men management functioning and style and also compare the nature of problems, coping up techniques, balancing dual roles, challenges, threads in delivering their services, control group with 20 men respondents were studied and the results analyzed.

A detailed well-structured questionnaire was designed covering all the aspects relevant to the study that are socio-economic characteristics, domestic work, professional work, work life balance, strategies of work life balance, problems in the initial stages, responsibilities, gender issues, health issues and stress management.

## IV. RESULTS AND EMPIRICAL EVIDENCES

The information collected from the sample respondents covered two broad areas- one on their socio economic and demographic details as reflected in respondent's income, age and habitation. Secondly, as women obstructed in the higher position in the management as reflected respondent faced different harassment, professional problems, and initial issues while joining in the job. As the "Study is on Glass Ceiling of Women Executives in Management" in respect of Empirical Analysis, only the female respondents were taken as population to consider the Socio Economic Characteristics and hence it represents 100 percentage. Although we collected information from the respondents in Tirunelveli only so the inferences are not strictly comparable with other metropolitan cities. Because psychological environment in the metropolitan city different from other corporation and cities.

The study analyzed as based on 40 female respondents from various age group, respondents are mostly from urban areas and 47.5 percent of them income slab range between 2 – 4 lakhs given in table 1. Women with regard to their professional working days, about 75 per cent of the respondents work in all more than 6 days in a week; and only 7.5 per cent do work less than 5 days. It reflects both mental and physical stress due to more working days in a week. In respect to hours of working in the office, about 77 per cent of women employees are working in the office more than 8 hours a day.

Although women are earning much in various capacity in the management they must undergo domestic work at home that cease their serious on their professional work at the organization. However many of the women employees to enhance their professional knowledge and reach the executive position in job they expect moral support and sharing of domestic work, hardly few women had only received help from spouse, parents, and servants and 44.5 percent (table 2) of the respondents are felt none of the above source had helped them.

**Table: 1 Socioeconomic and demographic details (in %)**

|       |        |      |                |            |      |
|-------|--------|------|----------------|------------|------|
| Age   | 30-35  | 10   | Marital status | Married    | 80   |
|       | 35-40  | 27.5 |                | Unmarried  | 20   |
|       | 41-50  | 62.5 | Habitation     | Rural      | 12.5 |
| Caste | S.C.   | 17.5 |                | Urban      | 87.5 |
|       | S.T.   | 2.5  | Annual Income  | 2-4 lakhs  | 47.5 |
|       | B.C.   | 50   |                | 4-6 lakhs  | 35   |
|       | M.B.C. | 17.5 |                | 6-8 lakhs  | 12.5 |
|       | O.C.   | 12.5 |                | 8-10 lakhs | 5    |

**Table: 2 Professional Work Days in a week**

| Work in office days | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Less than 5 days    | 3                  | 7.5        |
| 5 days              | 7                  | 17.5       |
| 6 days              | 14                 | 35         |
| 7 days              | 16                 | 40         |

**Table: 3 Hours of work in the office**

| Work in office hours | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 7-8 hours            | 9                  | 22.5       |
| 8-9 hours            | 19                 | 47.5       |
| 9-10 hours           | 11                 | 27.5       |
| 10-12 hours          | 1                  | 2.5        |

**Table: 4 Help in their Domestic work (Caring of children) in %**

|             |      |
|-------------|------|
| Spouse      | 7.5  |
| Parents     | 15   |
| Servants    | 12.0 |
| No Children | 21.0 |
| None        | 44.5 |

Source: Primary data (author calculation)

In this dual role of engaging activities by women worker assess the work life balances. It has been a crucial area of study when it comes to assessing certain managerial qualities and performance in career. This concept becomes all the more important when it comes to women working in high profile and in managerial roles. This study attempted to capture the reasons that were generally prevalent among women in being able to balance their career and personal life. It was found that 45 per cent of the respondents felt that they were unable to entertain guests at home because of their career and 25 per cent of respondents expressed their absence in attending the needs of their spouse. There were also other reasons like inability to find personal time and in attending functions.

It is evident from the responses from the study group that there were certain reasons owing to which the respondents were unable to balance their work and personal life. This study also aimed at assessing the various issues arising out of the imbalance in career and personal life. Table 6 depicts the various issues faced in balancing work and life and it is evident from the table that 60 per cent of the respondents expressed their major issue as mental and psychological stress. Apart from these factors, there was also prevalence of physical stress and job dissatisfaction.

**Table:6 Issues of work life balance**

| Issues of work life balance | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Physical stress             | 6                  | 15         |
| Mental stress               | 20                 | 50         |
| Psychological stress        | 4                  | 10         |
| Job dissatisfaction         | 4                  | 10         |
| Life depression             | 6                  | 15         |

**Table: 7 Barriers for limiting administration opportunities for Women**

| Barriers               | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Lack of family support | 5                  | 12.5       |
| Gender discrimination  | 5                  | 12.5       |
| Familial               | 20                 | 50         |
| Responsibilities       | 6                  | 15         |
| Racial discrimination  | 4                  | 10         |

The table above represents the various barriers that limit administrative opportunities for women. It is clear from the table that 50 per cent of women cited “familial” conditions and 25 per cent expressed lack of family support and gender discrimination as the barriers that limit their exposure to administrative opportunities.

**Table: 8 Reasons for few numbers of women in management**

| Reasons             | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Stereotypes         | 4                  | 10         |
| Lack of role models | 2                  | 5          |

|                                     |    |      |
|-------------------------------------|----|------|
| Dual responsibilities               | 18 | 45   |
| Perception that it is a male domain | 2  | 5    |
| Lack of confidence                  | 5  | 12.5 |
| Patriarchal society                 | 9  | 22.5 |

The reasons cited in table 7 explain what limits the various opportunities for women in administrative roles. This is followed by the factors that contribute towards the presence of very few women in management or administrative roles (Table 8). 45 per cent of the women responded to assuming dual roles as their difficulty in taking up management roles. Other reasons cited were patriarchal mindset in society and lack of confidence to the tune of 23 per cent and 12 per cent respectively.

**Table: 9 Professional problems**

| Professional problems | No. of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------------|
| Gender discrimination | 7                  | 14.5       |
| Lack of co-operation  | 12                 | 30         |
| Gender inequality     | 8                  | 20         |
| Patriarchy            | 10                 | 25         |
| None                  | 3                  | 10.5       |

Table 9 shows the various problems faced by women at their professional front. 30 per cent of women mentioned lack of cooperation as the problem faced by them in their work place and 25 per cent cited patriarchy as the problem faced by them. Other problems mentioned were gender inequality and gender discrimination.

## V. CONCLUSION

The successful elimination of Glass Ceiling requires not just an effective enforcement strategy but the involvement of employers, employees and others in identifying and reducing attitudinal and other forms of organizational barriers encountered by minorities and women in advancing to higher level management positions in different workplace settings. Skill should be the criteria and not gender. To overcome this issue successful women or women at higher positions should act as mentors to other women and make women friendly organizations. Women's leadership training need to be emphasized so that they can tackle their issues more effectively. Gender Sensitivity Programmes at organizations must be conducted on regular basis. Organizations need to develop Women Development Cell for Soft Skill Training and Personality Development Programmes. Essentially, organizations have to take up work-life balance mechanisms.

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