



Glass ceiling: A study on women employees in select Indian service sectors

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Abstract. Many western studies support the existence of the glass ceiling based on numerous constructs such as social, cultural, individual barriers, and so on. In India, there is no solid evidence on this point. According to one of TeamLease's surveys on staffing services, and over half of those who participated have experienced workplace discrimination. Despite an increase in literacy and skills among women, the ratio of women progressing in their careers is very low. *Purpose.* The aim of the study is to uncover the dominant aspects that hinder the advancement of Indian women at work. *Study design.* The researcher used stratified random sampling to select respondents from the service sector's IT/ITES, financial firms, healthcare, hospitality, and education industries at the entry, junior, middle, and senior levels. The study's sample size was set at 500 people. Data was gathered both from male as well as female respondents to avoid bias. The respondents were made up of employees at various levels who were asked about their opinions of the term "glass ceiling." The Cronbach Alpha for all constructs was 0.7, indicating that the statements were internally consistent, and the survey form was reliable. SPSS 23.0 was used to analyse the data. *Findings.* The empirical analysis of independent factors on performance-enhancing aspects in the organisation is examined using multiple linear regressions. To investigate the factors influencing the glass ceiling, an exploratory factor analysis was performed, and five factors were identified: individual factors, social and societal factors, organizational factors, cultural factors, and gender related issues. Model summary depicted, correlation coefficient as .542, and R^2 is .451, which showed the explanatory power of independent variables on dependent variable. Results indicate that these factors can impact advancement of women by 45.1%.

Key words: glass ceiling, factors, career advancement of women.

Introduction

India has a long history of discrimination against both sexes, and this prejudice has an effect on both sexes' day-to-day life. Although the Indian Constitution acknowledges that men and women have equal rights, gender discrepancies still exist. Women workers are therefore thought to be at handicap in work. There are many different types of employment discrimination, including sex discrimination, poor or low visibility positions, unequal compensation, treatment differently for different classes of employees, and diminished chances of promotion for women. Male employees are chosen even when female employees have the same skills and perform the same tasks in an equally effective and efficient manner.

According to one of TeamLease's¹ staffing service surveys, and over half of respondents have experienced workplace discrimination (TeamLease, 2017). The most noticeable differences are discovered based on the employees' gender, age, and religion. It is important to note that 72% of female employees have encountered workplace discrimination based on gender on average. Women respondents also believe that they are under-represented at work or in their organisations due to gender stereotypes. Many businesses lack a clear policy statement outlining the anticipated and established practices for employees at work. Women employees are overrepresented in the financial and banking industries, as well as in software, however the percentage differs between 5–7%. Many women are employed in primary and secondary education, and their percentage decreases with employment in higher education.

Background of the study

According to M. Yousry, the term "Glass Ceiling" refers to any situation in which women face "challenges for advancement" (Yousry, 2006). According to International Labour Organization (ILO), when there are situations that impede the progress of a professional manner qualified and skilled person from the lesser and grinds to a halt there, it shows clearly some form of discrimination, most commonly related to the person's gender or race. According to the International Labour Organization, the increase in service industry jobs for women has been a global phenomenon.

Forty percent of all salaried workers globally in 2008 were women, and roughly 46.9% of them were employed in the service industry. In the so-called "man dominant" society, women have made significant strides. However, the workplace's narrow-mindedness is impeding their ability to improve their careers. Women's academic and professional literacy has significantly increased, yet there has been relatively modest advancement for women in high positions. Women are underrepresented in high managerial roles, if at all. They are restricted at the middle management levels even if they have the training and credentials for managerial jobs. Men are promoted to high positions in India more rapidly than women.

Literature review

D. A. Cotter with colleagues investigated how women's educational status, work experience, and duration of employment in an organisation are primarily used to measure workplace discrimination. They also believe that the manager must be supportive in order for female employees to excel in their jobs (Cotter et al., 2001). According to the Nation's Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific (2007), an increase in the number of female employees has increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 0.34%. However, this increase is focused only on the data entry level and decreases at the top. According to Neeraj Jain and Shoma Mukherji, women have good mentors who help them grow

¹ TeamLease Services Limited is an Indian recruitment and human resources services company established in 2002 with its headquarters in Bengaluru, Karnataka.

and advance in their careers, while male employees deny the existence of a glass ceiling in one's respective organisations (Jain, Mukherji, 2010).

C. Renner with colleagues discovered that executive remuneration in Fortune 500 businesses is based on the organization's performance, capability to pay, sector, size of the company, and so on, but never on gender (Renner et al., 2002). C. Ostroff and L. E. Atwater performed research on 4,000 managers in different companies and discovered that men have been paid more than women employees, and so this pays disparity widened as women employees progressed to higher levels (Ostroff, Atwater, 2003). Sarmistha Nandy with colleagues discovered that gender bias both inside and outside the organisation creates barriers to women's career advancement (Nandy et al., 2014). Awais Jabbar and Asma Imran discovered that the demographic profile of women played a crucial role in the individual advancement of women in the institution (Jabbar, Imran, 2013).

The few organisations try to support female staff by providing required info on opportunities for training and development obtainable through the organisation (Metz, 2003). The researchers asked to interview a few female employees, and the results show that many of the women believe they have few opportunities to advance (Ryan et al., 2006). When compared to male staff in the organization, this makes it hard to advance up the ladder. Individual impediments such as a low self-esteem and a lack of motivation for managerial positions are caused by social and cultural prejudices (Taparia, Lenka, 2022). Organizational hurdles are also a result of social norms, such as the "think boss, think male" stereotype and discriminatory company practises. These organisational obstacles further undermine women's self-esteem and exacerbate the conflict between work and family. For women working in the workforce, a glass ceiling is also created through policy obstacles in the shape of lax rules and regulations. Glass ceilings have a few negative effects that have been further divided into organisational and personal level effects. The study also shows that contextual factors including education level, age, social class, married status, and maternal status affect how people perceive the contribution of various causes to the creation of the glass ceiling. The "glass ceiling" for other women will immediately be "broken" by the existence of women holding leadership positions (Manzi, Heilman, 2021). We argue that evaluations of succeeding female candidates in leadership roles are influenced by a female leader's performance as well as her presence.

Research methodology

Statement of the problem

Women face a great deal of discrimination in the workplace. The institutional racism or inequity may not be overt, but it can take the form of pay discrimination, advancement, assigning less noticeable jobs, bad reviews at work, low career advancement, a lack of training and development opportunities for women, and so on. The researcher felt compelled to investigate whether the existence of a glass ceiling had any effect on the career advancement of female employees in organisations. The study focuses on employees at various levels in industries such as financial institutions, information technology, business process outsourcing, health care, the hospitality industry, education, and so on.

Conceptual framework

Glass Ceiling (GC) affects the performance of women employees. GC is an independent variable. Advancement in career is the dependent variable. Individual factors, social and societal factors, organisational factors, cultural factors considered as independent variable in this framework.

Objectives for the study

1. To identify the factors leading to glass ceiling in the organisations.
2. To analyse the effect of factors influencing glass ceiling on the career advancement of the women employees in the organisations.

Sampling

The study used stratified sampling. The survey includes every employee who works in those industries. Companies like IT/ITES, financial services, healthcare, hospitality, and education were included in the sampling frame. The sample size was determined to be typical of the selected industries. With a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error is acceptable, and a 50% response distribution is assumed. 384 people will make up the study's projected sample size. The sample size chosen by the researcher for Andhra Pradesh is 500.

To see if the responses could achieve the study's goals, a trial was carried out. Additionally, information about the respondents' age, position (entry level, lower-mid, upper-mid, higher level, and highest level), length of employment history, educational background, and average monthly salary was requested. Initial secondary research involved creating a draught questionnaire based on significant brainstorming, results from many published works on pertinent topics, and electronic sources. Before the questionnaire was finalised, this was pre-tested on a tiny subset of 15 randomly chosen respondents, and any necessary corrections were made. The final evaluation was carried out using SPSS 23.0 after the gathered data had been computerised tabulated.

Data analysis and interpretation

Descriptive statistics

Male respondents made up 49% of the sample, while female respondents made up 51%. Marital status: of the respondents, 66.8% are single, while 33.3% are married. Level of employment 15.5% of replies came from basic level employment, 40% from junior level employment, 34% from medium level employment, and 10.5% from senior level employment. The respondents were made up of employees at various levels who were asked about their opinions of the term "glass ceiling."

The correlation matrix's set of items are subjected to the KMO and Bartlett test to determine the strength of their linear associations. KMO evaluates sampling adequacy by comparing the observed correlation coefficients' magnitudes to their partial correlation coefficients' magnitudes. The KMO result is .830, which is better than .5 and higher. The Rotated Factor Matrix Table identifies five components. These are the names of the factors.

Factor 1: "Individual factors" (hard work of women, effective communication and problem-solving skills, support and guidance from mentor, women raising the hierarchy, problem solving skills).

Factor 2: "Social factors" (salary gaps between men and women, competitiveness / assertiveness viewed negatively, women are generally preferred for entry level, negative feedback, uncomfortable when they must criticize, women are not assigned challenging / high visibility projects).

Factor 3: "Organizational factors" (encourage women to maximize their potential, career advancement, Conflicts with family responsibilities, Sufficient opportunities exist, there is a counsellor or manager to talk to in my organization).

Factor 4: "Cultural factors" (employer perceives women may leave for family reasons, jealousy among co-workers, and male domination of senior positions).

Factor 5: "Performance enhancing factors" (opportunities for training, opportunities to grow).

Multiple linear regressions

The empirical analysis of independent factors on performance-enhancing aspects in the organisation is examined using multiple linear regressions (Table 1). Testing the prototype through regression, which established the relationship between a set of independent variables and the dependent variable, but determining whether the output is valid depends on determining whether the regression analysis's basic presumptions, such as normality, form, heteroscedasticity, and outliers, have been verified.

Table 1. Model summary

<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Std. error
.542	.451	.442	.71381

Model summary depicted, correlation coefficient as .542, and R^2 is .451, which showed the explanatory power of independent variables on dependent variable. In other word, factors under study like individual, social, organisational, cultural, performance enhancing factors can impact advancement of women by 45.1%.

Discussion and conclusion

Only if the favourable elements impacting women's professional advancement are increased will they be able to break through the "glass ceiling" in the workplace. This can be done through improving their financial clout, educational attainment, communication abilities, and access to a capable mentor who can offer them guidance and advice within the organisation. Women may encounter barriers that are within to the company as well as external.

The test supports the statement that there exists a glass ceiling in workplaces; an invisible barrier that hinders the advancement of women beyond a certain level. This is mainly evidenced by the fact that there exists an unequal treatment to women with respect to the male counterpart. The study evaluated variables in which related to promotions, pay packages, equal opportunity, variables of being heard, recognition earned social, and culture related and in which all the variables were segregated into five major factors using factor analysis. Similar observations were made in other studies. Although many anticipated that the huge influx of women trying to enter the workforce over the last two decades would eliminate this barrier, little change has taken place in the most senior ranks, according to Bernard M. Bass and B. J. Avolio, who noted that there is substantial evidence that women confront a glass ceiling or roadblock to advancement into to the executive ranks of organisations (Bass, Avolio, 1994). There is a glass ceiling since there is a big disparity between the average wage and the presence of women in top management (Sampson et al., 2008). In addition, the survey found that the wage disparity among men and women is getting wider over time. It was conducted a study to determine whether there is a glass ceiling by many managers in Malaysian organisations. The results showed that there is a glass ceiling, which means that women's career opportunities are limited and that they lack sufficient organisational support, such as a network, mentoring, and family-friendly initiatives (Man, Skerlavaj, Dimovski, 2009). The current study supports earlier studies that have found solid evidence of the so-called "glass ceiling," an unseen barrier that exists in workplaces. Form factorial analysis, the extracted variables are inequality in treatment and male superiority in comparison to women.

- Being a female has disadvantages, especially in the workplace (.826);
- Men are promoted more quickly than women with equivalent qualifications (.955);
- Women are not given equal opportunities to voice their opinions and decision making at higher levels of management (.940);
- Women are not treated at par with males especially in promotions and increments (.957);
- Affected by the glass ceiling (.798).

In understanding the factors that cause the 'glass ceiling effect, it can be inferred that most of the respondents are influenced by the glass ceiling.

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«Стеклянный потолок»: карьера женщин-работниц в отдельных секторах услуг Индии

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Аннотация. Многие западные исследования подтверждают существование «стеклянного потолка», основанного на многочисленных конструктах, таких как социальные, культурные, индивидуальные барьеры и так далее. В Индии нет убедительных доказательств по этому поводу. Согласно данным одного из опросов TeamLease по кадровым услугам, более половины респонденток сталкивались с дискриминацией на рабочем месте. Несмотря на рост грамотности и профессиональных навыков среди женщин, доля тех из них, кто делает карьеру, очень низкая. *Цель.* Цель исследования состоит в том, чтобы раскрыть доминирующие факторы, которые препятствуют продвижению на работе индийских женщин. *Дизайн исследования.* В исследовании использовалась стратифицированная случайная выборка для отбора респондентов из сферы информационных технологий, финансовых фирм, здравоохранения, гостиничного бизнеса и образования на начальном, младшем, среднем и старшем уровнях организационной иерархии. Размер выборки исследования был установлен на уровне 500 человек. Данные были собраны как от респондентов мужского, так и женского пола, чтобы избежать предвзятости. В число респондентов вошли сотрудники различных уровней, которых спрашивали об их мнении о термине «стеклянный потолок». Альфа Кронбаха для всех конструктов составила 0,7, что указывает на то, что утверждения были внутренне непротиворечивы, а форма опроса была надёжной. Для анализа данных использовался статистический пакет SPSS. Эмпирический анализ независимых факторов, связанных с аспектами повышения производительности в организации, проводился с использованием множественной линейной регрессии. *Выводы.* Чтобы исследовать факторы, влияющие на «стеклянный потолок», был проведён разведывательный факторный анализ, и были определены пять групп факторов: индивидуальные факторы, социальные факторы, организационные факторы, культурные факторы и гендерные факторы. Представлено краткое описание модели, коэффициент корреляции равен 0,542, а R^2 равен 0,451, что показывает объяснительную силу независимых переменных в отношении зависимой переменной. Результаты показывают, что эти факторы могут повлиять на улучшение положения женщин на 45,1%.

Ключевые слова: «стеклянный потолок», факторы, карьерный рост женщин.