

# What Holds Women Back at Workplace? –The Glass ceiling Effect

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## Abstract

In the present era, Women are empowering into all sectors of Job market and are contributing to the growth of the Organization to a greater extent. Women Engagement in the management has become a growing phenomenon in our modern society. Even though there is evidence of increased rate of women participation in the management, there are numerous factors influencing the career development of women in the male dominated professions. In spite of pursuing various Organizational skills, woman suffers a lot at workplace to climb into higher positions in her career. Existence of occupational threats hinders the growth of women across certain positions in the Organizational hierarchy. Hence the present study is emerged to unravel such factors that pull off the women employees from moving upward in the managerial grid. This is known as “Glass Ceiling Effect” in which women are highly struggling to reach top management positions. The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. The researcher has utilised 126 responses collected from women employees working in various organizations of different sectors. Convenience sampling techniques has been applied and data were analysed using Exploratory Factor Analysis and One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The results revealed the invisible barriers of women and also suggested various recommendations to break the glass ceiling effect.

**Keywords:** *Women Engagement, Glass Ceiling Effect, Barriers*

## A Brief Description of Glass Ceiling Effect:

The Glass Ceiling Effect implies the concept of invisible barriers that majority of the women faces at their workplace. Women participation in management is likely to grab the attention of Employers in the present labour market. As our culture benchmarks the rights and duties of women, they face many difficulties in escalating in their career. Occupational and personal barriers are suppressing the women to reach the top levels. In spite of women achievers in remarkable field such as Politics, Defence, Public Administration, Sports etc., gender inequalities behind the career mobility of women employees exists everywhere in the society. They are struggling a lot to break the barriers in the place of work. It is due to the presumed roles and responsibilities of women when compared to

men in our culture driven society. Work life balance of working women has become a challenging phenomenon whenever they enter into the leading roles in the Organization. Due to various hidden and unveiled factors woman strives hard for career advancement in their working environment. Several reviews supported the existence of glass ceiling effect. In that context, the present paper describes the magnitude of the hurdles that women employees toil to cope up in their day today work life.

### **Anectodes of Literature**

**1.Joyce Fosuah, Gilbert Osei Agyedu, Enoch Opanin Gyamfi (2017)** has conducted a study on the title causes and effects of ‘glass ceiling’ for women in public institutions in Ghana. A sample of 250 responses was collected. It is clearly understood from the study that there was male domination at workplace and also evidenced the existence of glass ceiling effect at middle and top level of management. The study found out that both women and public institutions have roles to play, in reducing glass ceiling and helping change people’s attitude, behaviour and perception towards women.

**2.Bombuwela, P. & De Alwis, A.. (2013).**Conducted a study on”Effects of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development in Private Sector Organizations – Case of Sri Lanka”.the motive was to showcase the Effect of Glass Ceiling on Women Career Development with regard to female executive level employees who were working in private sector organizations. The researcher ahs developed hypotheses to find out whether there was significant effect of Individual Factors, Family Factors, Organizational Factors and Cultural Factors on Women Career development. The sample consisted of 150 women executives and data have been collected through questionnaires. The findings revealed that the Glass Ceiling and Women Career Development have a moderate negative relationship, and also showed that Individual Factors, Organizational Factors and Cultural Factors have a significant effect on Women Career Development whereas Family Factor has effects on the Glass Ceiling effect.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To Examine the magnitude of Existence of Glass Ceiling Effect Among Women Employees
- To Identify the Invisible reasons that blocks Women Employees in escalating their career ladder.

### **Working Hypothesis**

There is significant influence ofDemographic profile on the reasons forGlass Ceiling effect among Women Employees.

## Research Design

The Study is carried out by conducting Survey among Women Employees working in various Public and Private Organizations in Chennai city. The Researcher has utilised 126 potential responses by way of circulating questionnaires to many working women directly and also through Google forms. SPSS tool was applied to analyse the data and results were interpreted based on the Statistical values arrived.

## Statistical Tools applied for the Study

Marital status			Department of work	Frequency	%
	Frequency	Percentage			
			Finance	41	32.5
Unmarried	62	49.2	Banking & insurance	12	9.5
Married	59	46.8	Logistics	15	11.9
Widow	3	2.4	Marketing	14	11.1
Divorcee	2	1.6	Operations	6	4.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	Production	9	7.1
<b>Age</b>			Others	29	23
20-25years	59	46.8	<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>
26-35years	44	34.9	<b>Work experience</b>		
36-45years	18	14.3	Below 5years	84	66.7
46-55years	4	3.2	6-10years	34	27
Above 56years	1	0.8	11-15years	4	3.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	16-20years	1	0.8
<b>Educational qualification</b>			Above 21 years	3	2.4
Diploma	8	6.3	<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>
Graduate	51	40.5	<b>Nature of job</b>		
Post Graduate	46	36.5	Contract	49	38.9
Professional Degree	19	15.1	Permanent	77	61.1
Others	2	1.6	<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Monthly income</b>		
<b>Place of hailing</b>			Below Rs.15000	28	22.2
Rural	31	24.6	Rs.15000-25000	55	43.7
Semi-urban	24	19	Rs.26000-Rs.35000	23	18.3
Urban	71	56.3	Above Rs.36000	20	15.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Designation</b>					
<b>Top Level</b>	6	4.8			
<b>Middle Level</b>	82	65.1			
<b>Bottom Level</b>	38	30.2			
<b>Total</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>100</b>			

Simple percentage analysis, Descriptive Statistics, Exploratory Factor Analysis and One Way Analysis of Variance(ANOVA)

### Limitations of the Study

- The Study is conducted in Chennai City only. Hence the results cannot be generalized for the Organizations in other cities of Tamilnadu.
- Likewise Women Employees working in Teaching fraternity are not covered as the evidences of breaking the glass ceiling effect in teaching field are emerging rapidly.

### Major Analysis and Discussions

**Table: 1 Demographic Profile Details of the Respondents**

#### Source:Primary Data

From the above table, it is well understood that maximum of the respondents are unmarried, falls in the age group of 20-25years, Holds Under Graduate Degree and hails from urban area. The sampling frame also reveals that maximum of the respondents' nature of work is in finance Department and large group of respondents possess work experience for less than 5 years whose job tenure is permanent. The respondents whose income ranges between Rs.15000-25000 constitute a sizable portion of sample size and are working in middle level of management.

#### Exploratory Factor Analysis(EFA)

Factor analysis was conducted in order to group the variables on the basis of relationship between the items. For testing if the data set suitable to the analysis, Kaiser-Meyer –Olkin (KMO) sampling adequacy and Bartlett test of Sphericity were applied. The data set was determined to be suitable for factor analysis with KMO value over 0.50 and Bartlett's test tail probability is significant at the 0.05 significance level.

**Table 2: Results of EFA**

Factors	Items	Mean (SD)	Communalities	Variance (Eigen Value)	Factor Loadings
<b>Role Conflict Factors</b>	They carry over their tension of work place and hence show their anger on family members.	3.413 (1.2411)	.770	34.097 (10.229)	.804
	They feel that their tension and anxiety from their family life usually decline their ability to do the job.	3.254 (1.2582)	.699		.753
	Due to family roles, woman feel that they don't have time to develop their career oriented skills.	3.500 (1.2759)	.691		.683
	Woman feel that they are lagging in ambitions when compared to men	3.397 (1.2269)	.570		.658
	I feel women who adopt	3.381	.731		.560

	masculine style of leadership tend to be disliked by colleagues	(1.1444)			
	Women feel that their work pressure makes them as an unpleasant person among their family members.	3.571 (1.1895)	.621		.523
	Woman face harassment in workplace	3.206 (1.3406)	.660		.476
<b>Feminism Factors</b>	In workplace women are primarily encouraged to apply for supporting roles rather than for operational, technical and general management positions	3.865 (.9827)	.674		.702
	Usually male colleagues progress their career quicker than females.	3.548 (1.1974)	.628		.697
	Viewpoint of women is often not heard at a meeting until it is supported and repeated by man.	3.048 (1.1514)	.612	7.153 (2.146)	.695
	Gender has impact on the chances of receiving a promotion at the workplace	3.556 (1.3118)	.636		.648
	Woman feel inferior when compared to men in skill set	3.040 (1.2674)	.719		.458
<b>Personal Factors</b>	Due to family roles (taking breaks during employment) woman hesitate to take up the higher responsibilities at workplace.	3.413 (1.1047)	.711		.796
	Due to age factor ,women are feeling as less competitive.	3.040 (1.2611)	.765		.728
	women are unable to concentrate wholeheartedly in the job due to the family obligations & commitments	3.349 (1.2349)	.691	6.848 (2.054)	.680
	Woman's personal space in life gets disturbed due to higher roles	3.341 (1.2274)	.694		.665
	Woman experience guilt feelings when they find difficult in rearing and parenting their children	3.571 (1.1130)	.631		.526
<b>Organizational Factors</b>	A woman must perform better than men to be promoted	3.421 (1.2545)	.734		.823
	There is lack of support and encouragement from senior employees	3.325 (1.3495)	.702		.691
	Management will not assign highly challenging projects to woman	2.992 (1.2617)	.726	5.916 (1.775)	.625
	Woman faces lack of personality traits (communication , fear,	3.048 (1.2640)	.564		.480

	inferiority complex, insecurity)				
	Woman experiences lack of Encouragement to take up training opportunities	3.190 (1.2504)	.565		.438
	There is pay inequality exists between males and females.	3.143 (1.2180)	.477		.411
<b>Male Domination Factors</b>	Female face struggles to find a leadership role in the workplace due to male domination	3.571 (1.2161)	.824	5.028 (1.508)	.807
	Expectation Standards are higher for women than men	3.413 (1.2018)	.615		.599
	Woman feel that they being envied and pulled down at work by their male counterparts even though they have been a remarkable achiever	3.183 (1.0911)	.632		.498
<b>Gender Bias Factor</b>	Rewards are based on performance and not on the gender	3.944 (.9235)	.805	4.501 (1.350)	.878
	Women and men are equally treated in workplace	3.762 (1.0232)	.663		.753
<b>Capability Factors</b>	I believe women are equally capable of men in serving at senior executive positions.	4.262 (1.0133)	.831	4.168 (1.251)	.902
	Men and women can perform the same work equally well	4.032 (1.0271)	.672		.586
<b>Total variance = 67.712% Meaningfully Extracted as 7 Dimensions</b>					
<b>Cronbach's Alpha Value = 0.917 of 30 items</b>					
<b>KMO and Bartlett's Test</b>					
<b>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy = .0.816</b>					
<b>(Bartlett's Test of Sphercity Approx. Chi-Square 2277.840; df = 435; Sig .000)</b>					

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.  
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

The resulting data were subjected to factor analysis in order to determine the glass ceiling syndrome subscales and the questions were analyzed using "Basic Components" (principal components), namely, Varimax rotation. The data set was determined to be suitable for factor analysis with KMO value over 0.50 and Bartlett's test tail probability is significant at the 0.05 significance level. KMO Sampling Adequacy (KMO) value is 0.816 which shows the suitability of variables and scale reliability was identified with Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ value) = 0.917 for 30 items in five Point Likert's scale. With the help of factor analysis, 30 variables are grouped Under 7 dimensions which are listed below. These dimensions' percentage (total variance) of explaining the concept of the glass ceiling effect was found as 67.712%.

#### **Factor 1-Role conflict Factors**

#### **Factor 2-Feminism Factors**

**Factors 3-Personal Factors****Factors 4- Organisational Factors****Factor 5- Male Domination Factors****Factor 6- Gender Bias Factors****Factor 7- Capability Factors****One way Analysis of Variance**

To test the Working Hypothesis, one way analysis of variance has been carried out.

**Table 3: Significance Influence of Demographic Profile and Factors related to Glass Ceiling Effect.**

**ANOVA : Marital Status**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
F7	Between Groups	30.519	3	10.173	3.676	.014**
	Within Groups	337.616	122	2.767		
	Total	368.135	125			

**ANOVA : Age**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
F7	Between Groups	53.051	4	13.263	5.093	.001*
	Within Groups	315.084	121	2.604		
	Total	368.135	125			

**ANOVA : Educational qualification**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
F7	Between Groups	43.954	4	10.988	4.101	.004*
	Within Groups	324.181	121	2.679		
	Total	368.135	125			
F2	Between Groups	282.017	4	70.504	4.081	.004*
	Within Groups	2090.594	121	17.278		
	Total	2372.611	125			
F3	Between Groups	229.798	4	57.450	2.851	.027**
	Within Groups	2437.916	121	20.148		
	Total	2667.714	125			
F5	Between Groups	105.620	4	26.405	3.466	.010**
	Within Groups	921.880	121	7.619		
	Total	1027.500	125			

**ANOVA :Designation**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
F3	Between Groups	165.096	2	82.548	4.057	.020**
	Within Groups	2502.618	123	20.346		
	Total	2667.714	125			

F4	Between Groups	199.785	2	99.893	3.387	.037**
	Within Groups	3627.429	123	29.491		
	Total	3827.214	125			

**ANOVA :Monthly Income**

F4	Between Groups	278.572	3	92.857	3.192	.026**
	Within Groups	3548.642	122	29.087		
	Total	3827.214	125			
F7	Between Groups	28.728	3	9.576	3.442	.019**
	Within Groups	339.407	122	2.782		
	Total	368.135	125			

\*significant at 1% level\*\* significant at 5% level source:computed data

From the above table it is easily understood that the factors related to glass ceiling effect are statistically significant with the demographic profile such as Age( $p=0.001$ ), Marital Status( $p=0.014$ ), Designation( $p=0.020$ ,  $p=0.037$ ), Educational Qualification ( $p=0.004, 0.027, 0.010$ ) And Monthly Income( $0.026, 0.019$ ). As the p value is less than 0.05, it is decided to reject null hypothesis and concluded that the demographic variables have influence on the factors contributing to the glass ceiling effect.

**Table 4: Influence of Independent variables on Dependent Factors**

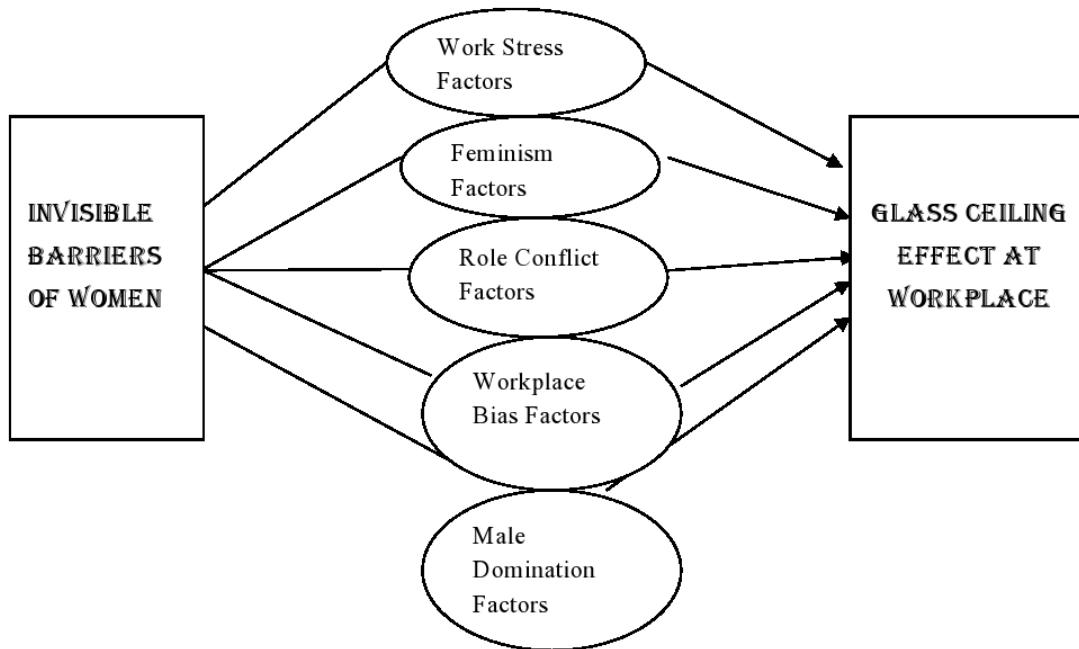
s.no	Demographic variable	Factor influence	Hypothesis
1.	Age	Capability Factors	Accepted
2	Marital status	Capability Factors	Accepted
3	Educational Qualification	Capability factors, Feminism, Personal factors, Male domination factors	Accepted
4	Designation	Personal Factors, Male domination factors	Accepted
5	Monthly income	Male Domination Factors, Capability factors	Accepted

Source: Composed by Researcher based on ANOVA table.

**Model of Glass Ceiling Effect:**

Based on the results of factor analysis, major factors are explored. Those factors are presented below in a diagrammatic manner. Independent factors such as work stress, Feminism, Role Conflict, Workplace bias and male domination factors are found to be invisible barriers found at workplace which hinders the career advancement of working women.





Source: Collated by the Researcher

### Major Findings and Suggestions:

On the basis of the data set, it is found that the invisible barrier for women career enhancement is their role in personal life as well as in the organisation. The results of the present study have evidenced that women strives to balance their work and personal life in the current scenario. They are often getting stress due to carry over of work burnouts to their home. Due to dual role of women by nature, they find difficult to crack the glass ceilings prevails in work environment. The present study shows that all the 30 factors have contributed upto 67.712% in which Role Conflict Factors alone have comprises 34.097 %. The respondents have agreed that due to family roles they unable to focus in their career.

Based on descriptive statistics values, the respondents have strongly agreed that they are equally capable of performing work when compared to male employees(4.262). In spite of being capable of better performances, they struggle to the core for reaching the top levels in the Organizations. The reasons are evidenced by the perception of respondents who have agreed that the Organizations are expecting higher standards from women (3.413) and are not encouraged for taking up higher responsibilities due to feminism factors (3.865). It is also to be noted that majority of the respondents have agreed to the factor that women faces harassment at workplace(3.206). Women feel that they being envied and pulled down at work by their male counterparts even though

they have been a remarkable achiever(3.183).The magnitude of glass ceiling effect is moderate and it can be broken easily by the women employees in the forthcoming scenario.

### **Suggestions of the Study**

- The Management has to frame policies in such a way to consider woman's work life balance and Gender disparity at work place. Organization's policy framework must inculcate participation of women in management to greater extent.
- The Family has to encourage women and support them in all possible aspects for their career growth. Their family roles to be supported by the counterparts as well as by other members of family for the betterment of quality of work life.
- The Society on the other hand must encourage and recognize women participation in all phases of work domains.

### **Conclusion**

Women education and participation in management at all the levels of management are increasing at an alarming rate. Despite, women face hardships due to cultural driven forces that exist in our male dominated society. Unless these factors are eradicated, the glass ceiling effect continues for a while. Women possess multiple personalities and play multiple roles in personal as well as in work life. The glass ceiling effect will be slowly vanished with the support of Organisation, Family and the Society in the longrun

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