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## Glass Ceiling in the Corporate world

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*Aside from other variables, every major organisational achievement may be attributed to the leader who led it to glory. Small groups, families, companies, nations, empires, and even the whole globe need effective leaders who can guide their respective followers and organisations to success. Leadership should not be mistaken with the role of just those who make headlines; in reality, virtually everyone has played a leading role at some point in their lives. There is continuous prejudice against women in the promotion process, which puts women in low-wage jobs with little prospects for advancement. Women confront a double stumbling block in their quest for employment equality, owing to centuries-old gender beliefs that hinder women from joining well-paying professions and, once there, from rising ahead. Women's presence at the highest levels of management is disproportionately low in comparison to males. There is a strong glass ceiling that exists and prevents women from moving up the professional ladder. This indicates that structural reforms are required if businesses are serious about increasing diversity in management and encouraging talented women to overcome the barriers that society puts in their professional path. The fact that women are sufficiently represented in the labour force but are underrepresented in senior management positions has been dubbed the glass ceiling, defined as a barrier so fragile that it is transparent but so powerful that it hinders women from rising in the management hierarchy. Women's under-representation in the corporate hierarchy, gendered wage disparities, occupational segregation, discriminatory corporate policies, a lack of attention to the specific needs of women, sexual harassment at work, and exclusion of women from informal networks are all examples of the glass ceiling. This article provides a brief analysis of the glass ceiling in the corporate world.*

**Keywords:** *ceiling, corporate, women.*

## INTRODUCTION

The glass ceiling is a metaphor that is used to describe the barriers faced by women in society. These barriers stop the career & personal growth of women in society. Glass ceiling can be faced by women in any profession. This can be due to the fact that certain people in society still feel the need for women to prove themselves to showcase their intellectual talent is similar to that of a man. This concept is worldwide known and faced. Although, one can say that women in developing countries face much more glass ceilings than women in developed countries. This is solely because of the culture, education background, developed policies, laws, the mindset of people living in, etc.

## HISTORY

Feminists invented the metaphor in response to impediments in the professions of high-achieving women. In the United States, the term is sometimes extended to include barriers to minority women's and men's advancement. Because they are at the crossroads of two historically marginalised groups: women and people of colour, minority women in white-majority countries sometimes have the most trouble "breaking the glass ceiling." The phrase "bamboo ceiling" was coined by East Asian and East Asian American news outlets to describe the barriers that all East Asian Americans encounter in furthering their careers. There are similar phrases for constraints and hurdles addressing women and their roles within businesses, as well as how they coincide with their parental responsibilities, within the same notions as the other terms surrounding the workplace. These "Invisible Barriers" serve as metaphors for the additional situations that women face when attempting to succeed in their careers, as well as in their personal lives.

I would like to bring the focus on how even after every factor favoring the economy, the glass ceiling occurs, maybe in small numbers but it exists. Let's see some numerical figures of one of the developed countries like America: Women made up 55.9% of the labor force in the United

States by the end of 2020.<sup>1</sup> 3 According to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, women held only 29.9% of chief executive jobs, while 88 percent of chief executive officers were classified as white.<sup>2</sup>

**With this let's proceed to some worldwide facts:**

Women are excluded from specific employment in 104 nations, 59 countries have no rules against workplace sexual harassment, and husbands can legally forbid their wives from working in 18 countries." Women are more educated and active in the labor field than ever before, and they are increasingly in management positions. Despite these increases, women's representation in top business positions continues to fall behind that of men. Let's introduce some viewpoints which will form a base as to why the Glass ceiling needs to be shattered and why we need a gender balanced workforce in the future.

The case for gender-balanced workplaces is becoming increasingly compelling. Diversity efforts enhanced business outcomes for two-thirds of enterprises polled by the ILO.<sup>3</sup> The possibility of generating greater profitability and productivity is 63 percent when businesses have an inclusive business culture and policies. The ability to attract and retain talent has improved by 60%. There is a 59 percent increase in creativity, innovation, and openness. The percentage of time that a company's reputation improves is 58 percent. 38 percent have a better understanding of consumer interest and demand. Companies with gender-balanced boards are about 20% more likely to have improved commercial outcomes

**WHERE DO WOMEN STAND CURRENTLY?**

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<sup>1</sup> 'Labor Force Participation Rate - 20 Yrs. & Over, Women' (*Fred.stlouisfed.org*, 2021)

< <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LNS11300026> > accessed 20 June 2021

<sup>2</sup> 'Labor Force Statistics from The Current Population Survey' (*US Bureau of Labour Statistics*, 2021)

< <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm> > accessed 20 June 2021

<sup>3</sup> 'Beyond The Glass Ceiling: Why Businesses Need Women at the Top' (*Ilo.org*, 2021)

< <https://www.ilo.org/infostories/en-GB/Stories/Employment/beyond-the-glass-ceiling#where> > accessed 20 June 2021

In comparison to men, around 50% of working-age women are employed globally, compared to 75% of men.<sup>4</sup> These figures, however, do not tell the whole story. In third-level schooling, women are likewise outpacing men. Africa is now the world's only region where women receive fewer third-level qualifications than men, albeit by a slight margin.<sup>5</sup>

- **Breaking Through The Glass Ceiling**

Women have been occupying management jobs faster than males since 1991, especially in high-income nations, while the figures reveal that they still have a long way to go before reaching parity with men in these positions. In the top echelons of business, in senior roles and boardrooms, we have yet to achieve anything close to gender balance. Furthermore, the larger the firm, the less likely we are to see women in leadership positions.

- **Beyond the barrier of the glass ceiling**

Almost 75% of businesses throughout the world have policies in place that promote equal opportunity, diversity, and inclusion.<sup>6</sup> However, according to our findings, these regulations are insufficient to address the gender gap at the top levels of the company. This is because the traditional glass ceiling isn't the only roadblock in the way of women's advancement in the workplace.

- **Anytime-Anywhere culture**

Even when they are engaged full-time in a paid job, women continue to conduct the majority of domestic labor and care work at home in both high- and low-income countries. Many companies have a culture of continual availability, where staff is expected to work extra, take calls outside of office hours, and respond to emails on their days off. As they continue to manage family duties with career commitments, this makes it extremely difficult for women to effectively compete with male colleagues and climb through the ranks.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*

- **The glass wall**

The glass wall is an occupational segregation phenomenon in which female managers are concentrated in business support functions such as HR, finance, and administration. Women in these positions have little decision-making power or strategic involvement, and thus few opportunities to advance in the firm.<sup>8</sup> Male managers, on the other hand, are overrepresented in R&D, profit and loss, and operations. These fields are frequently regarded as more "strategic" and lead to higher-level decision-making responsibilities.

- **The leaky pipeline**

This is due to the fact that the constraints that women face on their way to commercialising science result in greater "leakage" at the pipeline's end. The under-representation of women in science is sometimes blamed on a lack of women "in the pipeline" in academic circles.<sup>9</sup>

## **THE CHANGE**

It's never easy to be a trendsetter, especially if you're a woman who has been socialised to pursue traditional occupations. There is still a number of people who believe the glass ceiling is merely a myth that does not exist in reality. People have most likely been unresponsive to the wants and laments of their womenfolk for millennia. Despite everything, women must never accept this self-defeating mentality, which is the main contributor to the glass ceiling effect, which prevents women from achieving their full potential. The glass ceiling is a perception, and talented and determined women must continue to chip away at it until it is shattered. Corporate America must also encourage women who work hard every day to strike a balance between their personal and professional lives. The glass ceiling should be viewed as one of life's challenges rather than "THE" challenge in a woman's career. All we have to do now is take it in stride. If we can stay on track, it becomes easier. The glass ceiling itself would crumble once people realized how different women's leadership styles are.

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent of the glass ceiling for women (GCW) in terms of its three major barriers: personal barriers, organisational barriers, and societal barriers among women managers working in the Indian service sector, as well as the moderating effect of marital status (single or married) on the relationship. Using a multistage sample technique, 553 women managers working in the three major service industries of banking, hospitality, and information technology (IT) in the state of Punjab in northern India (Punjab) were selected. The hypotheses were examined using the 'Statistical Package for Social Sciences' and a one-sample t-test and moderated hierarchical regression analysis. The study's findings revealed that women managers face an above-average level of the glass ceiling in terms of organisational and cultural impediments. The study also found that organisational and societal barriers had a significant impact on work engagement, accounting for 39% of the total. Furthermore, the women managers' marital status worked as a moderator between GCW's organisational and societal barriers and their level of work engagement.

## **CROSS CULTURAL CONTEXT**

Few women are promoted to positions in society's highest tier, and organisations are still nearly entirely led by men. According to studies, the glass ceiling still exists in many forms in various countries and locations around the world. Women's emotional and sensitive preconceptions could be considered as major traits in why women struggle. It is apparent that, despite differences in culture, values, and traditions, women and their role in society are held in high regard in all societies. In communities where women are held to traditional standards, these stereotypes are frequently reinforced. [34] Women's preconceptions and perceptions are slowly changing around the world, reducing gender segregation in organisations.

## **WHAT TO DO NEXT?**

- To burst through a glass ceiling, you must first recognise that it is there. When it's possibly camouflaged as culture or tradition, this can be tough. However, there are indicators that one may exist in your company:

- To rationalise appointments or decisions, the statement "that's just the way things are done here" is used. At the top, there isn't much variety. To "fit in," atypical leaders mimic the conduct of "normal" leaders, changing their management approaches or engaging in new activities.
- People overlook sexist, racist, or other discriminatory remarks as "banter" throughout the organisation. There is apprehension about innovation and change, especially in the long run.
- Pay disparities between different groups of employees are unreasonable.
- Minority groups have access to fast-track professional programmes, but only a small percentage of those who enroll advance. (While many of these programmes are meant to correct an imbalance, others are designed to demonstrate equality rather than create it.)
- Employees have a hard time getting senior executives' attention, and there are few opportunities for mentorship from senior individuals.

## **WHAT CAN WE AS EMPLOYEES DO?**

The first thing to understand is that the glass ceiling has nothing to do with your worth as a person or as an employee. Because of the nature of glass ceilings, even if you've positioned yourself to meet all of a role's requirements, you'll still be denied the opportunity. So, we'll presume that you understand and possess the key talents and self-confidence required for your organization's upper echelons. Your role as a manager in assisting your organisation in breaking down glass ceilings is crucial. Change, on the other hand, will be significantly more difficult without the participation of senior leaders. We'll look at various ways of encouraging organisational change in the sections below.

To begin, you must initiate a discussion about the problem. This may necessitate uncomfortable dialogues and honest introspection on the part of senior executives. Is there anything they've done, accidentally or otherwise, that could be sabotaging people's progress? Do they worry about "losing out" as the company grows more diverse? Do they fear that it will have an impact on their performance?

Encourage open dialogue on these topics and see where it takes you. There may be a backlash, but you may mitigate this by emphasising that change does not have to be scary. It should simply make chances available to people who deserve them, regardless of gender, colour, or any other element.

## CONCLUSION

To sum up, the following research shows that the gender glass ceiling still remains in the workplace around the world. Not only do women hold less than 20% of senior management positions around the world, but they are also paid less for performing executive functions than their male colleagues. Accenture and the World Economic Forum's evaluations show that the government is on the right track. Governments pay little attention to equitable professional prospects for men and women, and they consistently fail to implement policies that support women's advancement. Companies also appear to be stifling women's advancement in the workplace. The companies are known for having a male corporate culture. Therefore, this change needs to be brought and the fact that this current generation is bringing up such issues is already the beginning of that.