Glass Ceiling in 21st Century: An Impact on Women Employees in different sectors of Indian Economy

Dr. Sakshi Arora, Associate Professor, Maharishi Arvind Institute of Science and Management
Ms. Sonali Singh Chauhan, Assistant Professor, Maharishi Arvind Institute of Science and Management
Dr. Shivraj Singh, Associate Professor, Maharishi Arvind Institute of Science and Management

Abstract

"Aim for the sky and you'll reach the ceiling. Aim of the ceiling and you'll stay on the floor".
Bill Shankly

This quotation holds true even in 21st century. Its strong presence can be seen in corporate sector; other sectors like education, politics, banking, administrative services are also effected with the rage of burning issue of glass ceiling. The progress of women still has been restricted by an obscure hindrance prominently known as "glass ceiling" in spite of the endless efforts put in by the government. The glass ceiling is a metaphor referring to an invisible barrier that prevents women and minorities from being promoted to managerial and executive level positions within an organization. Unfortunately even in 21st century the glass ceiling is continuing to stop women from entering and progressing in managerial and supervisory roles. The term "Glass Ceiling' was first point by "Marilyn Loden" in 1978 and was later popularized in the "wall street journal" article discussing the hierarchy and invisible barriers seemed to prevent women from advancing in their careers. Women are overlooked and ignored in many industries, just due to the fact of being a woman. For decades it has been felt and seen that the presence of women in managerial positions is very low in spite of good scholarly background, abundance of knowledge, quality and efficiency.

This paper aims at focusing on the effect of Glass Ceiling on Women working in various organizations in India and to determine the position of women in banking, politics, and education, service and corporate. This paper also throws light on gender biases and the steps that all organizations should adopt to encourage women in senior managerial positions.

Key Words: Glass Ceiling, Gender biases, managerial positions, restricted, executive level

Introduction

"Feminism isn't about making women stronger. Women are already strong, it's about changing the way the world perceives that strength" **G.D. Anderson**

The quotation talks about women empowerment and the strength woman holds in every sphere of life but unfortunately in this 21st Century women empowerment is the least preferred topic to discuss about. Women are still fighting for their rights in every aspect of life and struggling at the work place also. Society have deliberately maintained a tradition: "A woman's place is at home" (Jacob, 1999; Moore, 1995). Most of the women in India still believe that they are meant to do household chores and look after their children. But with the changing literacy level and

advancement of education in 21st century have encouraged women to put strong foothold in other areas leaving behind the traditional ones. Women are trying to participate and progress in higher level of management in their organizations and other sectors too. But the career path doesn't welcome women with red roses, they have to face invisible barriers like psychological, social, organizational barriers etc. in climbing up the ladder in career. Along with the glass ceiling women may have to face other metaphors like:

1. Glass escalator – It is phenomenon in which men are promoted and given opportunities in the areas that were previously dominated by women such as nursing and teaching.

2. Sticy floors – Sticy floor compliments the concept of glass ceiling. It can be described as the pattern in which women are compared to men and perceived less likely to start to climb the job ladder. It is also related to gender discrimination at the bottom of the wage distribution.

3. The frozen middle – Similar to the concept of sticy floor the frozen middle refers to the phenomenon where in the women progress in the career ladder is slow. They are mostly stuck in the middle management levels.

4. Second shift – it is a phenomenon which describes the workload of a working women managing the two shifts. 1st shift is doing domestic work and 2nd shift is doing the office work. Women generally suffer mental health problems such as depression, anxiety, low energy, lower motivation etc. in pursuit of striving balance b/w these two shifts.

5. Mommy Track – It refers to women who disregard their careers and professional duties in order to make their families happy. They are made to work for long hours which create an imbalance and leads to deterioration of health, mental illness, emotional breakdown etc.

Breaking the Glass Ceiling

Besides these metaphors working women come across many barriers like psychological barriers, societal barriers, organizational barriers against which they have to fight in order to strengthen their presence in the working organizations.

1. Psychological barriers – Women in India are forced to obey and follow so called social rules right from their childhood. These rules influence the roles of women in their mature age. As a result they become weak, timid, risk aversers, less competitive and emotional

2. Societal barriers – Indian women have not able to break the shackles of old tradition of "women at home" concept. As women have been considered as domestic or household workers, therefore, the education for women gets the least priority in the society. The ones who are educated have to face the problem of dual roles (employee of an organization and household workers)

3. Organisational barriers– The male employees in the organization have several stereotypes and preconceived notions for women employees as a result they create barriers which stops the upward mobility of women in the organization. Moreover women are also excluded from informal organizational network and get no help from male counter parts in decision making process. Besides, male imposed pressure makes women stressed throughout the day and affects their performance.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know the prevalence of glass ceiling in India.

2. Factors affecting the progress of women at work place.

3. To study and analyse the women participation in different sectors in India like corporate, academics, administration etc.

4. To recommend suggestions to reduce the effect of glass ceiling at work place.

Research Methodology

The study of the research paper is primarily based on primary data in the form of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of array of questions including various aspects related to glass ceiling. Due to the pandemic situation the respondents (152) from various sectors were asked to fill the questionnaire online through the google forms. The responses have been analyzed and the conclusion is drawn besides, secondary source has also been used in the research paper in the form of various websites and e-books.
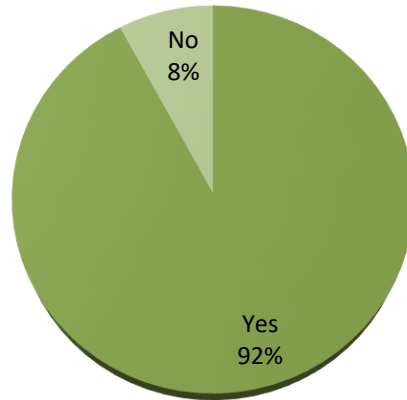
Data Analysis and Interpretation

The male female ratio in the primary data is 30:70. Most of the respondents are females. They are from different fields like academics (50%), corporate (25%) and other sectors (25%).

Q .1 Do you have any idea about the concept of glass ceiling.

Yes	No	Total
140	12	152

Do you have any idea about the concept of glass ceiling.

No
8%

Yes
92%

Interpretation: - Nearly 92.11% respondents have an idea about glass ceiling.

Analysis: the above data shows that people are aware about glass ceiling and its effect. This is a positive change which can be seen in the level of awareness among the people.

Q.2 To what extent do you feel a glass ceiling exists in your organization?

Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
55	76	21	152

**To what extent do you feel a glass ceiling exists in your organization?**
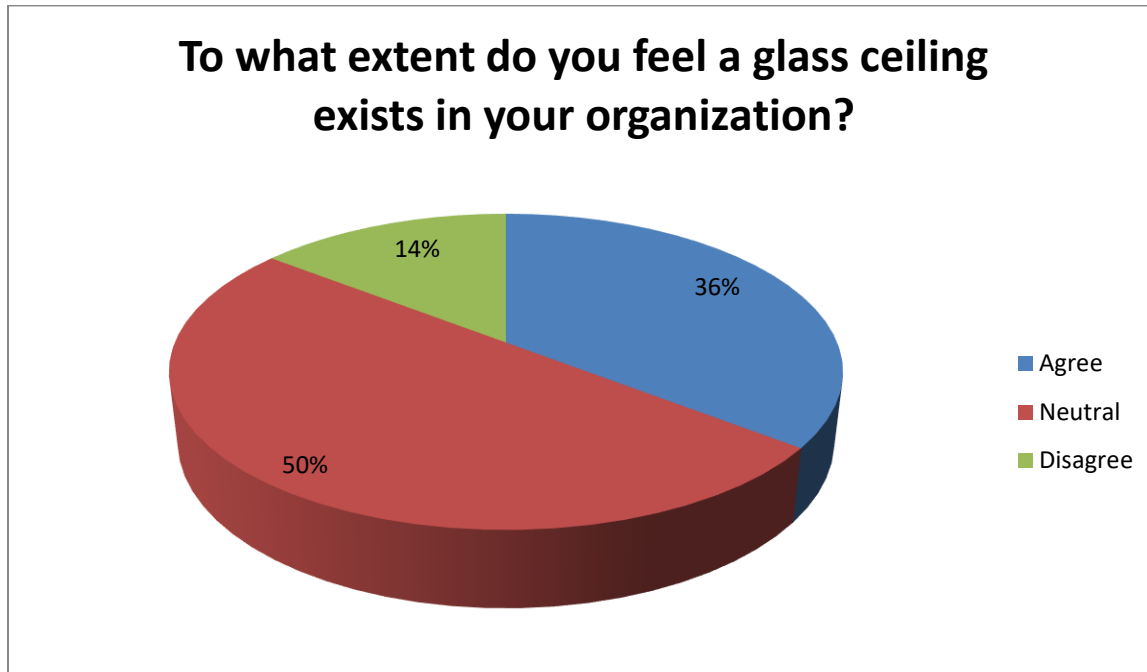
Interpretation: Nearly 36% of the respondents agree that the glass ceiling exist in their respective organizations. 50% of the respondents are neutral in their response. 14% completely disagree.

Analysis: Since most of the respondents feel neutral that glass ceiling is present in their response organization in various forms. This is a positive sign and shows that the concept of glass. Ceiling is losing its hold slowly and gradually in a country like India.

Q.3 What do you think woman and man can perform same work equally well?

Yes	No	Total
152	0	152

What do you think woman and man can perform same work equally well?

■ Yes ■ No

0%

100%
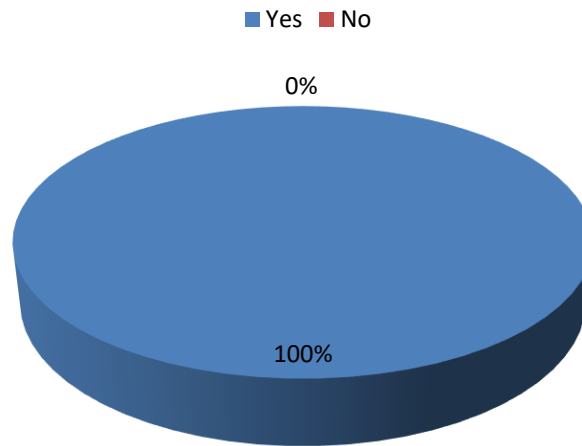
Interpretation: The graphs shows that 100% men and women can perform same work equally well. All the respondent agreed that men and women are equal.

Analysis: The data reveals a positive change in the outlook of males towards their female counter parts. They consider them equal at work place. According to then women can work equally well like males in organizations.

Q.4 In your opinion a women must perform better than a male to get promotion.

Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
43	33	76	152

In your opinion a women must perform better than a male to get promotion.

■ Agree ■ Neutral ■ Disagree ■

28%

22%

50%
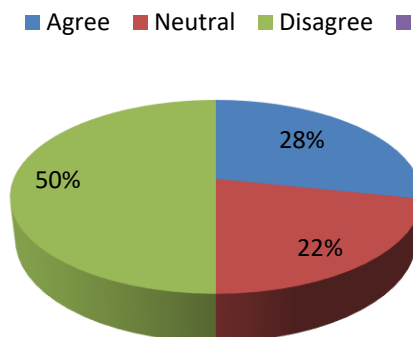
Interpretation: The graph shows that 50% of the respondents disagree that women must perform better than a male to get promotion. 28% of the respondents opine that women must perform better than a male to get promotion.

Analysis: This is a positive sign that women are given equal opportunities to work and get promotion similar to their male counter parts. Organisations are striving hard to make available equal opportunities to both male and females, thereby reducing the strong foot hold of glass ceiling.

Q.5 In your organization the no. of women penetrating the hierarchy and achieving senor positions is steadily rising.

Yes	No	Total
141	11	152

In your organization the no. of women penetrating the hierarchy and achieving senor positions is steadily rising.
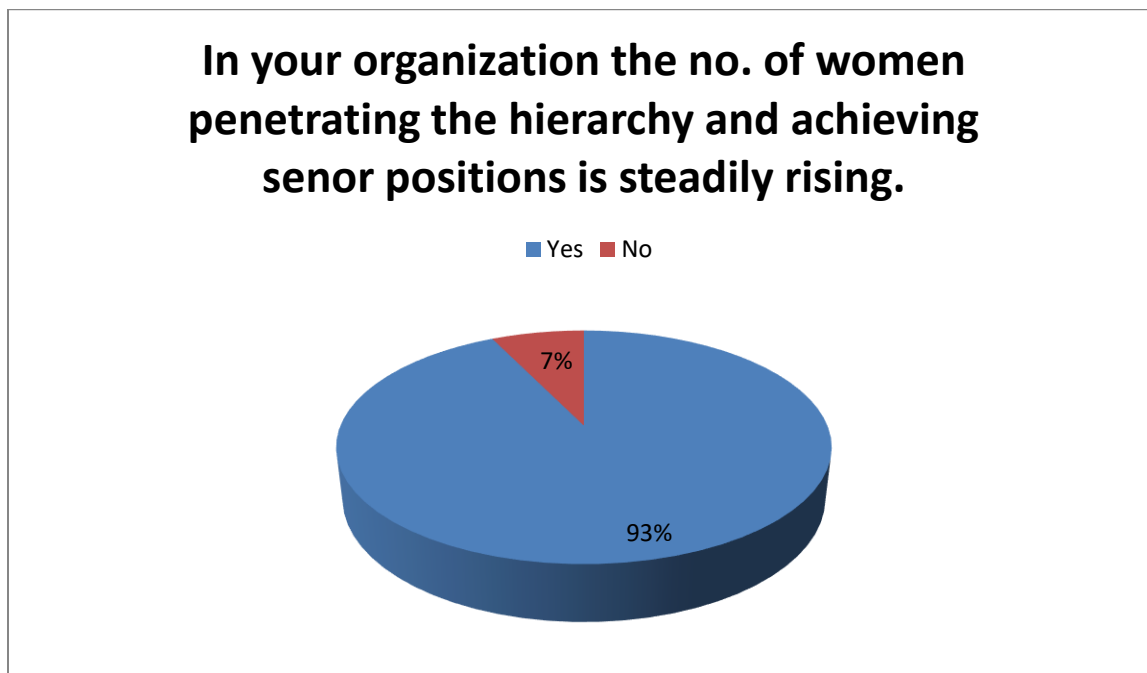
Interpretation: 92% respondents agree to the fact that the no. of women penetrating the hierarchy and achieving senior positions is steadily rising.

Analysis: The data reveals a clear picture that glass ceiling is losing its grip to a large extent specially in a like India. Where women are suppressed and oppressed in every sphere. The mindset of generation 'Y' is conducive in the growth of females in every sector.

Q.6 Does your organization provide equal career development opportunities for man and woman?

Yes	No	Total
131	21	152

**Does your organizations provide equal career development opportunities for man and woman?**

Interpretation: 86% respondents strongly believe that their organization provides equal career development opportunities for man and woman both.

Analysis: This is a clear indication of changing scenario in developing country like India. Not only the organizations but also the government initiatives have improved a lot the working conditions for women in various sectors of economy.

Q-7 Do you believe 'Pay in Equality' exists b/w males and females with the same credentials in workplace?

Yes	No	Total
65	87	152

**Do you believe 'Pay in Equality' exists b/w males and females with the same credentials in workplace?**
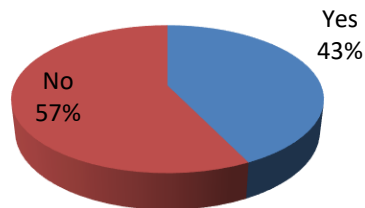
Interpretation: The graph shows that 57% respondents believe that 'pay in equality' doesn't exist.

Analysis: The data gives a clear warning to the organizations to adopt fair wage policy and should provide equal wages to both men and women with the same credentials in workplace.

Q.8 In what way would you say your Gender has impacted your chances of receiving or not receiving promotion at your current workplace?

Yes	No	Total
108	44	152

In what way would you say your has impacted your chances of receiving or not receiving promotion at your current workplace?
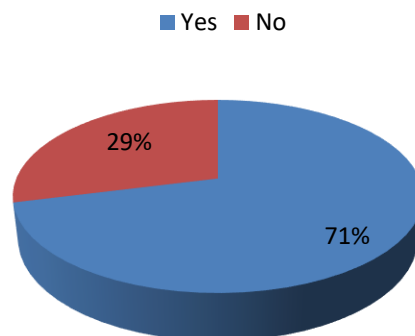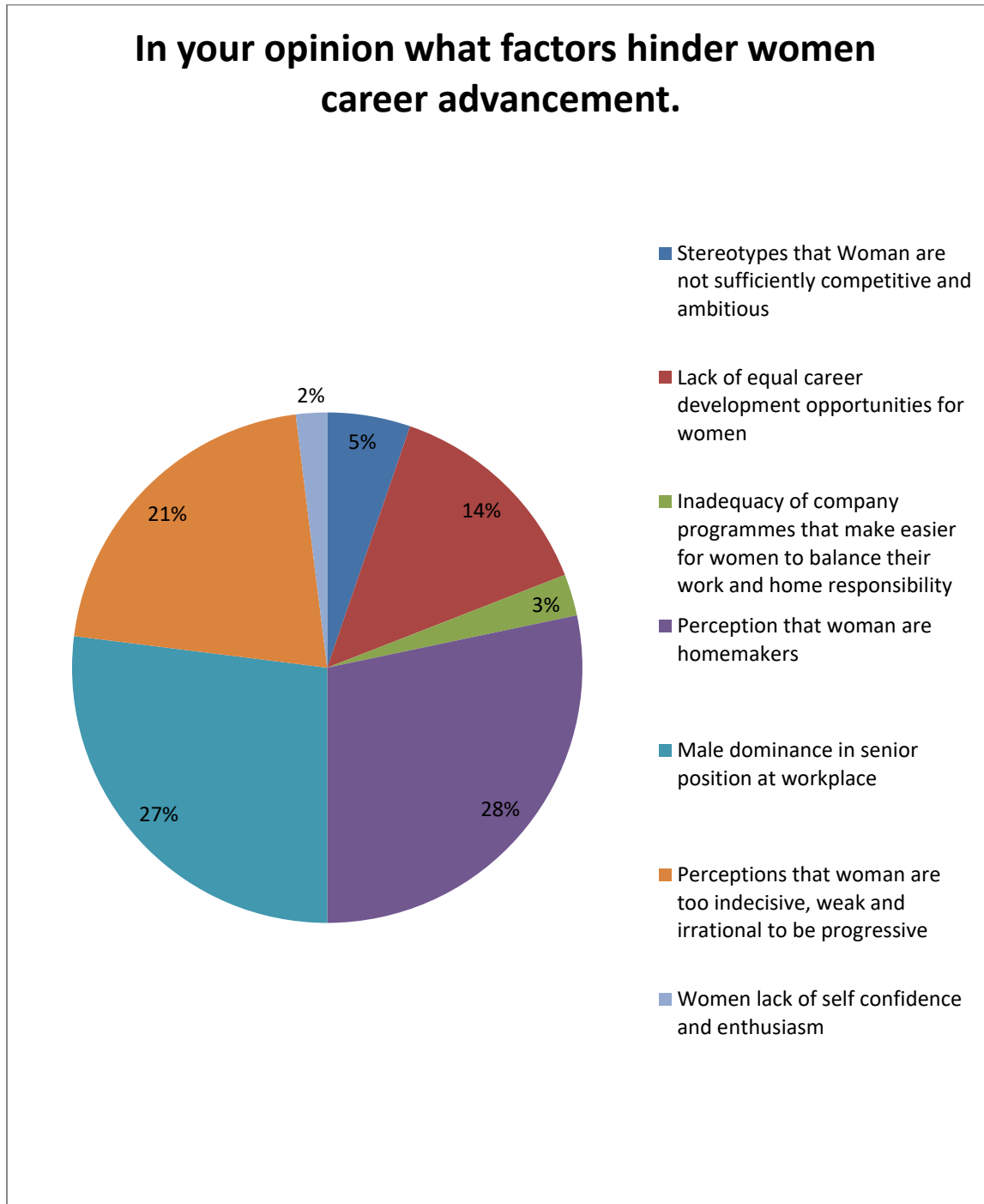

Interpretation: The data reveals that 71% respondents do not agree to the fact that their gender impacts the chances of receiving promotion.

Analysis: This clearly indicates the concept glass ceiling is fading away slow and gradually at work place and gender dosen't determines the chances of promotion. It is the caliber and skills which make an employee a successful one.

Q.9 In your opinion what factors hinder women career advancement.

Stereotypes that Woman are not sufficiently competitive and ambitious	Lack of equal career development opportunities for women	Inadequacy of company programmes that make easier for women to balance their work and home responsibility	Perception that woman are homemakers	Male dominance in senior position at workplace	Perceptions that woman are too indecisive, weak and irrational to be progressive	Women lack of self confidence and enthusiasm	Total
8	21	4	43	41	32	3	152

In your opinion what factors hinder women career advancement.

- Stereotypes that Woman are not sufficiently competitive and ambitious
- Lack of equal career development opportunities for women
- Inadequacy of company programmes that make easier for women to balance their work and home responsibility
- Perception that woman are homemakers
- Male dominance in senior position at workplace
- Perceptions that woman are too indecisive, weak and irrational to be progressive
- Women lack of self confidence and enthusiasm

Interpretation: The graph clearly indicates that 55% respondents feel that "perception that woman are home makers" and "male dominance in senior position at workplace" are the 2 factors mainly responsible for creating hurdles for women career advancement. Other factors 21% perceptions that woman are too indecisive, weak and irrational to be progressive.

Q.10 In your opinion what factors will help in enhancing woman career advancement.

Advanced education	Specialised training	Variety of work experiences	Membership in professional organisations	Proven record of accomplishments	Expressing interest in high stake, challenging and visible assignments	Governments initiatives to empower women at workplace	Mentoring by seniors at workplace	Total
110	6	5	3	1	7	11	9	152
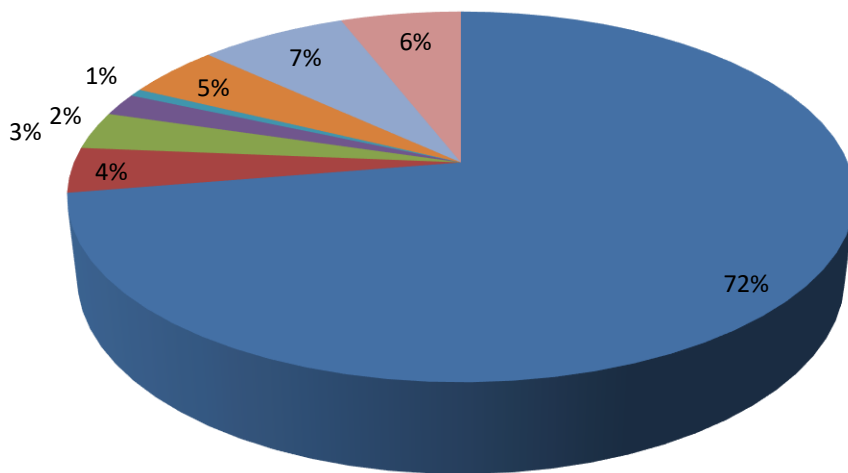
Interpretation: 72% respondents feel that advancement in education plays a major role in enhancing women career development.

Analysis: Other factors like "variety of work experiences", "Expressing interest in high stake, challenging and visible assignments" and "mentoring by seniors at workplace too play a significant role in enhancing women career advancement.

Recommendations and Suggestions

Breaking the glass ceiling is tough and requires efforts on several fronts. Government's (both central and state), employees, academic institutions and women themselves should play essential role in breaking down the barriers that are holding women back. Government should use various tools to address barriers in the workplace. It can act as catalyst and promote gender equality, creating awareness and formulating polices and legislations which can dismantle discriminatory practices. It should monitor the enforcement of these legislations and must work in reality to break down barriers.

Employees must be committed to gender equality. Employee should follow these characteristics to break glass ceiling: -

1. Comprehensive CEO Support

2. Address preconception and stereotypes.

3. Track progress

4. Setting voluntary targets for females

5. Establish Flexible work arrangements and work life balance policies for employees

6. Creation of mentoring programmes within an organization to help women move up the career ladder.

7. Implementation of approaches that identify and destroy roots of discrimination in the organization. Academic institutions must create and implement leadership development programmes related to general diversity and transformational leadership. Such, programmes will definitely change preconceived ideas, bias, assumptions about women leadership abilities.

8. Alternatively entrepreneurship can be a boon for women who have the passion for work and who want to prove themselves.

Conclusion: -

Till now women are regarded in such a way that they have come from different planets. They are not being treated equal in every sphere and are still facing barriers in career advancement. This scenario should be completely changed and the only way is the modernization of thought process

of the society and the organizations. Every organization should give priority to talent over anything else in order to grow which in turn helps the society to grow. It should focus on human resource rather than men resource. Our society should also encourage women in every step of their lives and respect their decisions keeping in mind that women are the creators of new life and thus can easily maintain life lines of the various organizations. Society, Govt. and private organizations should collectively make efforts to put a full stop on the practice of Glass Ceiling.

References

1. Deepika Nath, (2000) "Gently shattering the glass ceiling: experiences of Indian women managers", Women in Management Review, Vol. 15 Iss: 1, pp.44 – 52.
2. Jenny M. Hoobler, Grace Lemmon and Sandy J. Wayne (2014),Women's Managerial Aspirations: An Organizational Development Perspective, Journal of Management,40:3 703-730
3. The Glass Ceiling: Domestic and International Perspectives Nancy Lockwood, SPHR, GPHR HR Content expert, 2004 research quarterly.
4. Hymowitz .C. & schellhardt. T.D., (1996, march 24), the glasss ceiling: The wall street journal Special report on corpaorate women.
5. Glass Ceiling: What Keeps Women from Advancing to Higher Ranks? Available on http://womenshistory.about.com/.
6. http://www.sify.com/finance/in-india-women-bankers-have-broken-glass-ceiling.
7. The glass ceiling and gender diversity; available on http://glassceiling.info/ about-glass-ceiling-info/
8. India Inc. Needs 966 Women Directors: available on http:// forbesindia.com/ article/
9. S.K Yadav, Marginalization Of Women In Mughal Period, PARIPREKSYA (ISSN 2278-0602) Vol-VII 2013, pp 53-57
10. Benson, P . (1978) `Measuring Cross-cultural Adjustment: The Problem of Criteria', International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 2 : 21-37
11. Caligiuri, P.M. (1997) `Assessing Expatriate Success : Beyond Just Being There' . In Aycan, Z .(ed .) Expatriate Management: Theory and Practice, Vol . 4 . Greenwich, CT : JAI Press
12. Caligiuri, P.M., Joshi, A . and Lazarova, M . (1999) `Factors Influencing the Adjustment of Women on Global Assignments', International Journal of Human Resource Management, 10(2) : 163-79
13. Hampden-Turner, C . and Trompenaars, F . (1993) The Seven Cultures of Capitalism. New York:Currency Doubleday
14. Oddou, G. and Mendenhall, M .E. (1991) `Succession Planning for the 21st Century : How Well Are We Grooming our Future Business Leaders?', Business Horizons, 34 : 26-34.
15. Taylor, S . and Napier, N . (1996) `Working in Japan : Lessons from Western Expatriates', Sloan Management Review, 37 : 76-84 .
16. Tung, R .L. (1981) `Selection and Training of Personnel for Overseas Assignments', Columbia Journal of World Business, 16 : 21-5

17. Westwood, R .I. and Leung, S .M. (1994) `The Female Expatriate Manager Experience: Coping with Gender and Culture', International Studies of Management and Organization, 24 :64-85 .