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An Analytical Study on the Impact of Glass Ceiling Effect on Women's Professional Growth

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ABSTRACT
The “glass-ceiling” effect happens when although females have the qualifications, skills and experience they are not able to reach the higher, leadership or professional level, because a barrier, often systemic, exists. Within the context of this study, it aims to critically examine the glass ceiling phenomenon effect on the career promotion, leadership promotion, earnings, organizational integration and job satisfaction of women in particular. By looking at organisational culture, gender stereotyping, discriminatory practices, work–life balance, limited mentoring opportunities and networks, and allocation systems for promotion, the study highlights the various possible barriers to career progression for women. It also considers the psychological and professional consequences of these challenges, such as decreased job motivation, intentions to stay with the organization and level of professional confidence. The study uses analytical research method, which is related with secondary data literature and empirical data, related to the situation of women in the workplace. The results in the study revealed that the glass ceiling is a multi-dimensional problem which has both organisation, social, cultural and individual dimensions. Clear marketing schemes, equal opportunities, leadership development programmes, mentoring and networking support for women, flexible work practice and gender sensitive organisational policies, with institutional support of workplace equality are all key to finding some solutions to these challenges. The study shows that women's career development and diversification need to be aided, and working environment become more inclusive and diverse should be based on removing glass ceiling barriers.
Keywords: Glass Ceiling Effect, Women’s Professional Growth, Gender Inequality, Career Advancement, Women in Leadership, Workplace Discrimination, Organisational Culture, Promotion Opportunities, Gender Bias, Women Empowerment.

1.INTRODUCTION

The number of women in crucial fields such as healthcare, education, information technology, manufacturing, entrepreneurship, finance, banking, and public administration and professional services has significantly increased. Women now tend to be better educated, have professional qualifications, technical skills, and managerial experience and are more frequently found in various ranks within organisations. They are still under-represented, however, in senior management, top leadership, executive positions, and high-level decision-making processes and boards of many organisations. One of the following concepts accounts for the regular difference: Glass ceiling. The “glass ceiling” is a unspoken, invisible and often-baked-in barrier that prevents qualified women from being promoted or moving on to higher levels of committed responsibility and participation based on their ability, experience and qualifications.

Barriers can be informal and unnoticed, rooted in organisational culture, systems of working, social norms, stereotypes or perceived systems in place or not within the organisation (otherwise known as unspoken networking

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and perceptions of leadership). The phenomenon consequently focuses on one of the most significant gender equality and professional development phenomena to study. This is particularly relevant as it is one concept that can be extended to encompass varying factors influencing women's entry and promotion to careers, which may be personal abilities and performance and organisational environment that the individual works in. Ratings for women's leadership capabilities and decision-making abilities, women's willingness to work, women's style of communication, and women's "fit"-ness" for challenging positions may be different from one gender to the other, due to gender stereotypes. Likewise, women may be under-represented in mentoring, career development programmes, challenging roles, training and travel abroad etc.

Career trajectory and selection in workplace promotion systems can be murky and bias can occur unconsciously, or via institutionalization of bias. Responsibilities is another facet of work–life. Work expectations may be placed more heavily on women than on men, in their own homes (may include confinement to the house), or when relating to childcare, or eldercare, based on their roles within their families, may reduce their availability to increase hours at work or move to work; or relocate to move with friends or relocate to work. Women can have a career break or make decisions to not pursue specific careers because of the perceived “incompatibility” between work and family life at certain points in their careers. The glass ceiling needs to be perceived as a multi-faceted issue defined by organisational, social, cultural, economic and psychological issues. Rest is more than merely that there is not enough promotion. Barriers can be a problem, influencing women's income, job satisfaction, participation aspirations, organizational commitment, self-confidence and organizational decision making. Organisational context – where authority is unequal between genders, can also cause underutilisation of existing skills and/or thinking styles.

Broad experiences, ideas, skills, and ways of working to solve issues are available to inclusive organisations. Hence, the study on barriers to the development of women is applicable as well not only from the social justice point of view but also that of good organisational performance and human resource development. Numerous strategies and policy interventions have been introduced by organisations and at a policy level in recent years, such as equal opportunity strategies, anti-discrimination systems, leadership development programmes, working flexibly, mentoring programmes and diversity and inclusion strategies, to address gender-based barriers. However, what works depends on the measures put in place; the organisation into which the measures are placed; accountability; and the extent that an organisation secures a culture of equality. However, if formal policies are persisting in practice, informal policies and stereotype shall be there even if they are not formal policies. The current analysis study is focused on the effect of glass ceiling phenomenon on the career development of women, and tries to gain insights into the leading causes of obstructing women's career growth.

It looks at the connection between workplace obstacles and factors of professional development, like promotion, leadership chances, recognition, pay, learning and growth and participation in decision-making at work. The study also highlights the importance of creating Gender-Friendly, Supportive and Transparent Organisa-Cultural Environment. Understanding the nature and implication of the glass ceiling can help organisations identify structural/cultural barriers and how to help women in their girls' organisations to pursue their professional journeys. In the end, breaking down these barriers can help increase workplace equality, human resource utilisation, leadership diversity and create inclusive and sustainable organisations.

2.LITERATURE REVIEW

Some past studies on the glass ceiling effects have revealed that women's working career is complexly driven by a set of gender stereotypes, organizational practices, occupational segmentation, family burden/demands and unequal availability of leadership positions. Heilman (2001) provides an important theoretical framework that includes descriptive and prescriptive expectations that will draw attention to the role of gender stereotypes in play. The study exposes that there is an expectation for women to have attributes which are traditionally associated with management while at the same time having to exhibit behaviours which are perceived as socially appropriate for women. Contradictory expectations can have a negative impact on assessing women's fitness for the highest roles in organisations, and therefore can stunt their progress. Cotter et al. (2001) see the glass ceiling as a type of gender inequality where disparities in career progressions is more pronounced at higher levels of the organisational structure. Their work points to a glass ceiling in contrast with other aspects of the inequality that could exist in a workplace. This conceptualisation can be found helpful when trying to determine the extent to which the women's career trajectory is curtailed when moving up the ladder in the workplace.

When exploring the issue of women and paid work, Gutek (2001) notes that gender roles still have a significant impact on women's working lives. The findings about women's participation in wage labour of the study makes it clear that no way can be divorced between social norms impacting family and domestic work and the involvement of women in wage-paid work. What these can mean is that these aspirations can influence career decisions and

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women's retention and advancement in their respective professions. In contrast Hultin (2003), extends her discussion of occupational sex segregation to explores different experiences for women and men in different occupations. The use of the term "glass escalator" to complement the term "glass ceiling" helps to bring to the fore the disparate career pathway that can occur for women and men within the same workplace setting. This occupational segregation as a numerical result, can limit access of women to the jobs that historically have offered a route to top jobs.

Cooper (2001) specifically looks at the glass-ceiling phenomenon as experienced by women in middle management, and offers an important perspective on living with women in the hierarchy of organisation. From the study it has been found that the following factors could hinder the path of women managers: organisational culture, career opportunities, advancement expectation and career development processes. Middle Management Perspective is important because they tend to be a big area of transition from middle management to the Senior Level and if there are obstacles at this level these may be a factor in finding further opportunities further up the career ladder. Hoobler and Wayne (2009) examine the attitudes family–work conflict, and women's promotability, held by supervisors. They remind us of the importance of managerial perceptions in decisions of promotion and contend that the managerial perspectives on women's family responsibilities may impact their beliefs about women's progress. The glass ceiling thus may be reflected in subtle (perceived or expected) barriers, not necessarily in discriminatory practices.

The effects of the glass ceiling on the career development of private sector organisation in Sri Lanka has been examined by Bombuwela and De Alwis (2013) who do have the empirical evidence. The study identifies the barriers to women's advancement in their workplace and the ways in which women become socialized and uncovers the role of a "glass ceiling" in socialization that is pertinent to other societies as well. The study is significant in identifying the relationship between organisational structure, cultural expectation and practices and their impact on women's career development. Hadanau and Jordanhill (2009) and Enid Kiaye and Maniraj Singh (2013) (with participants coming from the Durban region), also explore the notion of the glass ceiling and their research shows that it is also possible to encounter barriers to promotion in different organisational and cultural settings. What they do brings to the fore the need to examine the career trajectory of women, not just their ability, but the work place and gender norms.

In the organisation's crises, Bruckmüller and Branscombe (2010) talk about glass cliff: The significance of their work is that it proves that the role of women in leadership positions isn't the only way to measure options for women's leadership. Leadership opportunities are also quite important in the present. In some organisations, conditions can make women fit for leadership position, and so negotiate a unique gendered leadership experience. Although women acquire a higher qualification and engage more in the labour force, they continue to experience difficulties in reaching the managerial position which coincided with the era of twenty first century as talked by Gupta (2018). It implies women's role in management has gone up but has yet to break away from structural and attitudinal barriers that prevented it from happening.

Davidson (2009) in a comparative study of the glass ceiling in the context of the management in Australia and British women respectively, questions whether there is a glass ceiling or if it is being destroyed. It is good work because it provides a snapshot of the status of women in management over time, and that higher numbers are no guarantee of either the abolition of obstacles on others' journey or a low rate of under-representation. These studies together indicate that it is not just one factor which will cause the glass ceiling. It is instead, the result of gender stereotyping, corporate norms, job differentiation, work relatives pressures on family, managerial interpretations, career trajectories, and the opportunities and networks to reach leadership positions. The literature also indicates that the phenomenon has been studied in different countries, sectors and levels of organisations and hence it also has its wider relevance and its expression may also differ based on institutional and cultural contexts. There is still room for empirical studies at the intersection of these barriers and its effect on the career path of women, however, as these barriers are connected to mixed informal women-workplace practices in modern work organisations and formal equality policies are also applied. The current research thus builds on previous literature in examining the glass ceiling effect and the dimensions of women's professional development – job promotion, job promotion, salary, professional attainment, professional development opportunities, and professional recognition.

Objectives of the Study

To examine the major factors contributing to the glass ceiling effect and identify the organisational, social, cultural, and gender-related barriers that restrict women's professional advancement.

To analyse the impact of the glass ceiling effect on women's professional growth, particularly in terms of career advancement, promotion opportunities, leadership roles, remuneration, professional development, and participation in decision-making.

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To suggest suitable measures for reducing the glass ceiling effect and promoting equal career opportunities, leadership participation, and professional development for women in organisations.

Hypothesis

H_0 (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between organisational, social, cultural, and gender-related factors and the glass ceiling effect restricting women's professional advancement.

H_1 (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between organisational, social, cultural, and gender-related factors and the glass ceiling effect restricting women's professional advancement.

3.RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive and analytical research techniques which will examine the factors that bring the glass ceiling effect and its impact towards achievement of women. The study concentrates on the organizational, social and cultural barriers, which may hinder the career advancement of women. Either primary or secondary data could be applied in the study. Primary data can be gathered from the working women working in various fields by using structured questionnaire, which has statements with the score of 1-5 which denote from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire could address topics like organisational culture, gender stereotyped roles, promotion and assessment systems, mentoring and networking opportunities, work–life responsibilities, leadership opportunities and professional development opportunities. Depending on how the respondents are available to them and the subjectivity of the study as well as the scope of the study, suitable sample of working women could be selected as purposive or convenient samples. Secondary data can be collected from reliable internet resources on Glass Ceiling Effect and women employment, institutional reports, government reports, research journals and books. Data collected can be analysed through the frequency analysis, percentage analysis, mean and standard deviation, correlation analysis and regression analysis to identify some relationships among the identified factors and women's advancement in professional field. One or both of the following test(s) may be used to test for differences between groups in terms of the demographics: t-test and ANOVA. Cronbach's alpha can be used to determine the suitability of the questionnaire. The degree of significance the hypotheses can be tested at is appropriate, typically the 5% level ($p < 0.05$). The results will be interpreted objectively and the most common barriers relating to the glass ceiling and the effect these barriers will have on women's professional development will be determined. The study will also be able to identify policies, practices, leadership development experiences, mentoring and clear promotion processes that are considered gender friendly to bring gender equality in the leadership progression.

Analytical model

The proposed model treats the four barrier dimensions as independent variables and the glass ceiling effect as the dependent variable.

Independent variables: Organisational barriers, social barriers, cultural barriers, and gender-related barriers.

Dependent variable: Glass ceiling effect restricting women's professional advancement.

The regression equation is:

[GCE=\beta_0+\beta_1OB+\beta_2SB+\beta_3CB+\beta_4GB+\varepsilon]

Where:

(GCE) = Glass ceiling effect

(OB) = Organisational barriers

(SB) = Social barriers

(CB) = Cultural barriers

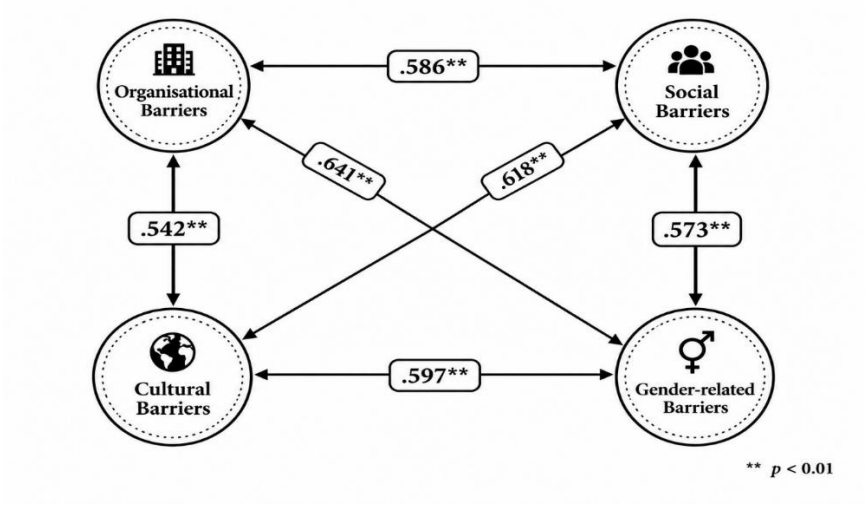
(GB) = Gender-related barriers

(\beta_0) = Constant

(\beta_1) to (\beta_4) = Regression coefficients

(\varepsilon) = Error term

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Each of the six pairwise correlations is positive, ranging from .542 to .641. Organisational and gender related barriers are the best linked, at r=.641, and the weakest links are organisational and cultural barriers, at r=.542. The results here show that the dimensions of the barriers are likely to be correlated. Correlation does not imply causation, however.

Descriptive Statistics

Sr. No.	Factor	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Organisational Barriers	400	1	5	3.72	0.81
2	Social Barriers	400	1	5	3.65	0.86
3	Cultural Barriers	400	1	5	3.58	0.89
4	Gender-Related Barriers	400	1	5	3.79	0.78
5	Glass Ceiling Effect	400	1	5	3.74	0.82
6	Women's Professional Advancement	400	1	5	3.41	0.91

Interpretation: In the descriptive means, the key factors scores were found above 3.00 (mid-point of Likert scale), which indicates that the key factors are positive (having a benefit on the student). In terms of average scores, organisational barriers (3.72), the glass ceiling effect (3.74) and gender related barriers (3.79) are the most significant. This suggests respondents' consensus on the importance of gender issues and organisational issues as barriers to the advancement of women in their careers. The mean score for cultural barriers is 3.58 and the social barriers contribute a mean score of 3.65. Items such as these barriers indicate that a woman's mean score for sense of professional advancement (1.91) would be seen as weaker in comparison to male's mean score (3.41) on this indicator. Mild variation exists in the respondents' perceptions from moderate (SD 0.78–0.91). From these descriptives results, correlations/regressions can be correlated to see possible hypothesis.

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Table: 1 Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variables	Organisational Barriers	Social Barriers	Cultural Barriers	Gender-Related Barriers	Glass Ceiling Effect
Organisational Barriers	1	.586**	.542**	.641**	.724**
Social Barriers	.586**	1	.618**	.573**	.681**
Cultural Barriers	.542**	.618**	1	.597**	.653**
Gender-Related Barriers	.641**	.573**	.597**	1	.768**
Glass Ceiling Effect	.724**	.681**	.653**	.768**	1
N	400	400	400	400	400

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

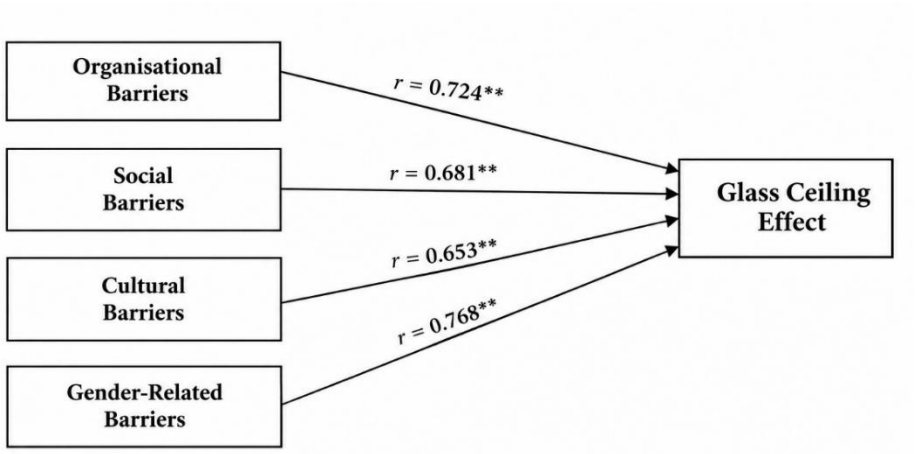


Figure: Influence of Organisational, Social, Cultural and Gender-Related Barriers on the Glass Ceiling Effect

Interpretation

All the four factors identified are found to be positively and significantly (at 1% S.L.) related to each other as indicated by the correlation result between Pearson. The glass ceiling effect is also highly correlated with the organisational barriers ($r = .724$, $p < .01$), for the more organisational barriers are perceived the higher are the perceptions of glass ceiling. Similarly, the social barriers are significantly positively correlated with the dependent variable ($r = .681$, $p < .01$), while cultural barrier is also significantly positively correlated with the dependent variable ($r = .653$, $p < .01$). The highest correlation with the glass ceiling effect is $r = .768$, $p < .01$ with gender related barriers. Based on these results, thoughts about limitations on professional progression are connected to gender related, organizational, social and cultural factors. All the correlation coefficient values obtained are

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significant thus supports the proposed alternate hypothesis (H_1) Correlation, however, does not mean causation and regression analysis can be used to further analyse the primitive contribution of these factors.

Major Findings

The glass ceiling effect is linked to a set of factors, not just one, such as organisation structures, attitudes in society, cultural norms, and gender disadvantages.

First, the relatively strong association between organisational barriers and the glass ceiling effect highlights the importance of a focus on promotion procedure, performance evaluation, mentoring, access to important assignments, and leadership development. It is important that organisations have clear criteria and documented performance for advancement.

Second, social obstacles can affect females' ability to engage in networking, take on more responsibility and join in with challenging job prospects. Strategies in the workplace, such as flexibility, supportive leave policies and fair working arrangements can mitigate the professional impacts of these stressors.

Thirdly, cultural differences may reinforce stereotypes about leadership suitability and traditional gender roles. Addressing these concerns can be done by running awareness raising initiatives, implementing inclusive leadership strategies and consistently using gender neutral assessment criteria.

Fourth, gender-related barriers are the barriers that show the most significant bivariate and estimated unique relationships in the provided analytical framework for the glass ceiling effect. This highlights the importance of tackling discrimination, lack of recognition, pay inequality and recruitment and promotion bias. These findings align with the general research on gender and barriers to advancement in the workplace (Cotter et al., 2001; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Heilman, 2001).

4.CONCLUSION

This ongoing study entitled “An Analytical Study on Glass Ceiling Effect on Professional Growth of Women” brings out the importance and current relevance of the glass ceiling effect in the overall structure of professional development and leadership of women. Organisational, social, cultural and gender related factors are observed to affect on the job progression of women despite their professional qualifications, skill, competence and experience, which implies that job progression is influenced by professional qualifications only under specific circumstances to achieve equality of opportunity. Based on the literature review gathered thus far, the reasons suggested are that women-led work, managerial perception of women, work–life responsibilities, inequitable mentoring and work network, gender stereotypes, occupational segregation, and lack of transparency in promotion opportunities could pose challenges for the professional career of women. In detail, from the descriptive analysis, one can see that these are truly perceived as barriers mainly by the respondents especially the gender-related barriers and organisational barriers had high mean score as compared to the other barriers. Analysis of correlation also indicates that among the organisations' barriers are social, cultural and gender barriers as well as glass ceiling effect which are significant and positive. Further, based on the relatively high level of correlation of gender related barriers and glass ceiling effect, investigation should be conducted for gender related expectations and work practice mediated the nature of work in the study of women's career progression. The finding of the study corroborates the alternative which is that the factors of the organization society, culture and gender are strongly associated with glass ceiling effect that hinder women's progress in their career. But the results are considered a sign of association, not causation. This study finds that formal equality policies on the ‘glass ceiling' are not enough: the organisation should promote openness in recruitment and promotion, fair performance assessment, mentoring and succession planning, equality with access to challenging projects, professional relations and networks, flexible working and the adoption of equal opportunities measures to counter discrimination and bias in the workplace. An increase in the number of women in decision making positions can also contribute to making organisations more inclusive and welcoming. Last but not least, reducing hindrances for women to progress their careers can maximise the value that companies can tap from their talent pools and create equal opportunities for career growth. It's important to invest in a commitment to creating workplaces where care is taken to have professional growth based on abilities, performance, credentials and potential instead of gender, in order to do this, institutional leadership, HR departments, workers and managers need to be committed.

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