

Impact of Gender Bias on Organizational Commitment: Study of Glass Ceiling Practices in Corporate Sector

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ABSTRACT

The term “Glass ceiling” refers to “the unseen, yet unreachable barrier that restrains women from rising to the upper step of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or attainments”. To be more specific, it is one of the most captivating metaphors for analyzing inequalities between men and women in the workplace. The study suggests that although it may now be the case that women are able to get through the front door of managerial hierarchies but at some point they hit an invisible barrier that blocks any further upward movement. The study is entirely designed by centering the focal problem of the effect of glass ceiling on women career development.

The Glass ceiling practices in the corporate sector have been a subject of concern in the industry and in the policy-making quarters of the government. Present government legal framework does not have enough hold to curb on local glass ceiling practices effectively. There is a need to eliminate glass-ceiling practices in the corporate sector in order to keep female employees motivated. It will create congenial working environment and will lead to improvement in female employee’s attitude, commitment and ownership towards their work engagements in the organization. Women employees need to be recognized and given equal participation in each and every level of the organization. The objective of the study is to map environment of glass ceiling practices and to highlight female employees’ harassment, discrimination and carrier deterrence practices.

Keywords: Glass Ceiling, Discrimination, Organizational Commitment, Recognition, Training, Rewards.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management involves staffing, training, development and motivation of employees DeCenzo & Robins (1998). These areas are important considerations that help employees to feel sense of belonging to the organization. The trend of women participation in the workforce is increasing worldwide. According to the consensus of authors presented in the research women are discriminated at every level of management in the work place. It shows there is the presence of gender discrimination and glass ceiling in the organization. It’s important for the organization to understand the gender biasness because it’s the era of competition and only those organizations can succeed who can proactively manage the competition.

1.1 Gender discrimination

Discrimination is defined as “different treatment of individuals or groups based on arbitrary astrictive or acquires criteria such as sex, race, religion, age, marital or parental status, disability, sexual orientation, political opinions, socio-economic background, and trade union membership and activities” (Eurofound, 2012)

Gender discrimination is unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on gender. Sexual harassment is a form of illegal gender discrimination. Gender discrimination can be treating an individual differently based upon his/her gender in academia or extracurricular activities, academic programs, discipline, class assignments given in a classroom, class enrollment, physical education, grading, and/or athletics. Gender is a common term where as gender discrimination is meant only for women, because females are the only victims of gender discrimination. Gender discrimination is not biologically determined but it is determined by socially and the discrimination can be changed by the proper and perpetuate efforts. Denial of equality, rights and opportunity and supplement in any form on the basis of gender is gender discrimination. Half of the world’s population is females. They are doing two-third of work of the total work in the world but received only one-tenth of the world’s total income. Nearly two-third of the women is illiterates and they have possessed only one percent of the total world’s assets. In the world only one-fourth of the families are headed by female. India is a male dominant society and gender discrimination is customized habitually.

1.2 Glass ceiling

It is not known who used the term glass ceiling first but the term got familiar and popularized in 1986 when extensively read Wall Street Journal published the article by Carol Hywomiz and Timothy Schellhardt. As reported in Women History the term "Glass Ceiling" was used in 1984 by Gay Bryant in the book, "The Working Woman Report", which examined the status of female employees in the organizations. Federal Glass Ceiling Commission was established in 1991 to obtain and gather information about opportunities and barriers to advancement in career for females and minorities (Women History, 2012). The practice of Glass Ceiling hinders the qualified female employees in their career advancement in an organization's hierarchy (Appelbaum et al., 2011).

If we break this term, it has two parts, Glass Ceiling. "Glass" is a transparent and "Ceiling" is "top level". This situation is referred to as a "ceiling" as there is a limitation blocking upward advancement, and "glass" (transparent) because the limitation is not immediately apparent and is normally an unwritten and unofficial policy. This invisible barrier does not continue to exist, even though there are no explicit obstacles keeping minorities from acquiring advanced job positions - there are no advertisements that specifically say "no minorities hired at this establishment", nor are there any formal orders that say "minorities are not qualified" - but they do lie beneath the surface.

The "glass ceiling" is distinguished from formal barriers to advancement, such as education or experience requirements. Mainly this invisible barrier seems to exist in more the developing countries; in those businesses this effect is highly "visible". As compared to men, Women have also played a vital role in the history of human development. In fact, the nation's overall performance can be easily determined by the higher status given to a woman with respect to employment and significant work performed by them in a society. Undoubtedly, the lack of active participation of women in national activities, the social, economic or political progress of a nation will automatically deteriorate and become May also get stagnant. Gone are the days when women were considered no match for all powerful men in this world. The new generation women across the world have overcome all negative notions and have proved themselves beyond doubt in all spheres of life including the most intricate and cumbersome professional world. Women have come a long way from just being a homemaker. But, unfortunately, till date, women in India are still trying to prove themselves equal to men. Women here are often overlooked in many industries just due to the fact of being a woman. The challenges millennial women attest to extend far beyond their paycheck. Explicit gender bias may have largely disappeared from the workplace due to increased focus on diversity issues and tougher legislations in the country. However, according to the studies being conducted every now and then reveals that challenges for women in the office, compared to men still remain and extend beyond pay differences.

1.3 organizational commitments

Gender discrimination has an adverse effect on the organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behavior and job satisfaction (Ensher et al., 2001). Gender discrimination affects employees performance and as well as badly affects organization performance. The critical constructs of that impact organizational performance are organizational commitment, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. Organizational Commitment is defined by Mowday et al. (1974) as comparative potency of the recognition and identification of employees with their organization. Organizational commitment plays a vital role for any organization success. As found by Dost et al. (2002) glass ceiling and gender discrimination affect employee's commitment towards the organization negatively. This type of barrier decreases organizational commitment on part of an employee and also decreases job satisfaction level.

2. PROBLEM NEED ANALYSIS

Glass ceiling hinders the career progression of employees in the organization. Glass ceiling must be eliminated or it must be reduced to ensure the work engagement of employees and their commitment towards the organization. The study is aimed at achieving the facts and guidelines for working environment that ensures that the equal employment opportunity for the employee's especially female employees should prevail. In addition to find how the practices of Glass Ceiling and Gender Discrimination can be reduced in Rajasthan industrial and corporate practices especially in banking sector. The following research questions

need to be answered in order to understand the impact of glass ceiling in an organization. These questions will be supported by the rich literature.

Research Question: 1) - Do women get equal opportunity and access to organizations resources? 2) How glass ceiling & discrimination practices affect Organizational Commitment?

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Answer to Research Question (1) – “Do women get equal opportunity and access to organizations resources?” can be addressed by discussing the glass ceiling effects in different nations.

Glass ceiling is present at the workplace and it is also affecting the workforce diversity especially at the international assignments. Today is the era of competition and companies can survive only if they are proactive and are favoring the diversity at the workplace and essentially the workforce diversity. There must be equal employment opportunities for employees to help minimize the concept of glass ceiling. European world talk about equal employment opportunities for employees in the workplace but still there is lot of gender discrimination and glass ceiling. Whether the females are working in the public sector or in the private sector they have to face the glass ceiling. Analyzing gender pay gaps across the wage distribution in eleven countries Arulampalam et al. (2007) found that the magnitude of the pay gap varied largely in different sectors and private and public organizations. That gap is maximum at the top level positions and low at the lower level management, which is generally referred to as ‘sticky floor’ effect. It is observed by the Mohamed Zainal (2009) there are several other factors that hurdle the women promotability besides manager’s perception including the work and family life conflicts. He further added, in assessing the phenomena of glass ceiling in Malaysia there are many factors that can affect the female employee promotion, but he focused on manager’s perception toward women promotion. Gender bias environment is faced by women all over the world. Even in developed countries women face the challenges to their survival in job. Sub-continent is underdeveloped as compared to the European world. Women have to do take care of their kids and home besides their job. They are highly educated but they don’t get a chance to avail the status in top management. The same scenario is investigated by the (Jain & Mukherji, 2010). The gender stereotypes influences judgment and evaluation for the promotion of women in an organization. It affects the women motivation to hard work. Regardless of being highly educated, women remain in lower management level. Indian organizations are still lacking commitment to achieving workplace diversity. Women have to give up their career to take care of their kids. Women can progress if they rely on maids and home assistance from other family members (Jain & Mukherji, 2010). The impact of gender discrimination can be assessed by studying effects of wages, hiring, promotion practices or rated salary raise scales for female employees. There are stereotypes, which are of the view that the women should be paid less. Men should get priority on women during the whole career of her job. Even in developing countries female employees face the discrimination in pay. They are not given justified pay in comparison to the work they do. Gender discrimination is the phenomena that can be observed in every society. Females bear equal burden of work as men do but even then they are paid less than their colleagues. Pakistan Social and Living standard Measurement (PSLM) survey (2004-2005) supports the findings of Farooq & Sulaiman (2009) that the females are under paid as compared with their co-men workers. This discrimination can be eliminated through the proper investment in education sector that can help women to be acquainted with the required knowledge and skill for the particular job. As found by the Díaz & Sánchez (2011), there is a significant differences in pay for women than men in France, Germany, Italy, Spanish and United Kingdom. Potential wages are determined by the talent of the human capital while the actual wage differ in the sense that it is paid to employees depending on their ability to transform their human capital, knowledge and experience into the earnings of the organization. Female employees do share their experience and knowledge equally as the men do, during their employment career. Employees are discriminated on what they can potentially earn and what actually they have been paid. Employees work hard but they couldnot get the pay that is their right. Leutwiler & Kleiner (2003) found that the stereotypes among women, minorities, still exist and have an effect on placement of job, hiring, promotion and rewards and raises. If the best individual does not get the fair promotion just because of the fallacious stereotypes then the organizations productivity can decrease. If the organization is not responsive to employee complaint about this type of discrimination then employee should contact US Equal Opportunity Employment Commission. Organizations should respond to the needs

of the female employees if they are facing the wage discrimination. It can help improve the performance of the employees and ensure the performance of the organization. Channar et al. (2011) analyzed the effect of gender discrimination on the employees' satisfaction and motivation, commitment and enthusiasm and stress level. They found that in private sector women are more discriminated than they are in public sector. Gender discrimination lowers the job satisfaction and commitment. Women are less committed and enthusiastic toward job if they are discriminated on the ground of gender. Gender discrimination and stress level is highly positively related. If there is gender discrimination then women are more likely to do work under stress.

Answer to Research Question (2) – “How glass ceiling & discrimination practices affect Organizational Commitment??” can be addressed by following literature **Gender Discrimination and Organization:**

Discrimination also decreases the employees' organizational commitment. It also affects the job satisfaction. As said by Ensher et al. (2001) job satisfaction and organizational commitment is important constituent of employee attitudes and behaviors that can be largely affected by the perceived discrimination. Organizations must follow the steps to decrease the perceived discrimination and increase the commitment of employees towards the organization. Perceived discrimination results in increased work tension at one extreme and at the other it decreased the job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Sanchez & Brock, 1996). When there is discrimination in terms of wages, promotion and recognition, employees' commitment level towards the organization suffers a lot. Employees who face discrimination in terms of compensation, job assignment, promotion, layoff and/or disciplinary actions are most likely to file the grievances than those who face no or zero gender discrimination (Allen & Keaveny, 1985). Employees suffering from the discrimination are more likely to file the grievances towards the organization. There must be programs that develop the sense to curb the discrimination and enhance the organizational commitment. So that the employees enjoys employment satisfaction and enhanced organizational commitment. According to Gutek et al. (1996) perceived gender discrimination among female employees was related to lower and decreased feelings of power and authority and job esteem. When there is a perceived discrimination female employees are more likely to feel the decreased powers and lack the job esteem and show lower organizational commitment.

Glass Ceiling and Organizational Commitment

Glass Ceiling has also an affect on Organizational Commitment which is addressed by following authors. Dost et al. (2002) found moderate level of relationship between glass ceiling and organizational commitment. Therefore, employee commitment towards organization is fairly affected by the glass ceiling. Organizations should develop policies to minimize the glass ceiling practices. They should give proper career advancement opportunities to females in order to retain highly skilled and qualified professional. As quoted by Jawahar & Hemmasi (2006) when organizations do not give proper career advancement opportunities to women employees, they have to face unavoidably loss of competent, capable, skilled, experienced and knowledgeable professionals. Similarly, female employee shows decreasing organizational commitment when they work in the environment which is highly dominated by the gender bias and men stereotypes (Korabik & Rosin, 1991). This shows that gender biasness has an adverse effect on the commitment of female employees towards.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Al-Meer (1989) there were researchers who have recognized the need of study of relationship between the job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance with variables leadership style, gender and work experience. This relationship help find the commitment of the organization in the presence of any hurdle for the promote-ability of employees. When there is less barrier employee face they will perform better, enhance organizational productivity and increase organizational commitment.

Organizational commitment is generally considered as the employees' identification, emotional attachment and their strong desire to maintain membership towards the organization. Research suggested that organizational commitment has favorable impacts on organizational performance by lowering lateness, absenteeism and turnover. Hence, owning committed employees has imaginably positive effects for organizational performance. Recently, employee's organizational commitment has gain lots of attention in business management. The Employees Commitment Index is seen as a critical prognosticator of employee loyalty and the performance of an organization. Committed employees deliver potential values to the

organization through their determination, proactiveness, comparatively high productivity and an awareness of quality. They are also less likely to call in sick or to leave the organization. High committed employees display beneficial behaviors within organizations. In contrast, employees with low commitment can work against the organization and limit its prosperity. Glass ceiling affects employee's commitment towards the organization negatively. This type of barrier decreases organizational commitment on part of an employee and also decreases job satisfaction level. Similarly, female employees show decreasing organizational commitment when they work in the environment which is highly dominated by the gender bias and men stereotypes.

5. HYPOTHESIS

H1: Gender Discrimination has a Negative Association with Organizational Commitment H2: Glass Ceiling has a Negative Association with Organizational Commitment

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is an organized and efficient approach used for data collection. This is basically a pilot study done to see the effect of glass ceiling and gender discrimination on organizational commitment. The research design for this paper is exploratory in nature. The dynamic nature of the topic entailed an exploratory investigation, through synthesized data collection from secondary sources. Research papers have been retrieved from various national and international journals. Various related key words such as glass ceiling, women, managers, organizational barriers were used to locate the relevant studies for analysis. R software has been used for preliminary analysis of literature.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrated that females working in corporate develop high intentions to quit from the job due to the lack of advancement in career, promotional opportunities, biasness in treatment & allocation of work which increase the glass ceiling. So it can be easily taken as if there is more male domination in workplace setting then female will definitely develop their intentions to quit or may quit also. In the above study it is identified that if organizational commitment is weak among working females then it also affect significantly to the turnover intentions. The weak commitment towards the employer or the organization will takes place in situation due to lack of advancement opportunities for women, lack of support in dealing with social & family obligation, growth & advancement etc. for women employees so they perceive high intentions to quit from the current job & search for the other alternatives. Similarly, glass ceiling has a positive & strong significant relationship & influence organizational commitment. Due to the gender biasness in recruitment, promotion, opportunities allocation, gender stereotypes which exists at professional working environment where domination of male fellows & colleagues is high for females it has been seen that it affect their commitment, loyalty for their current employer or job which in long run converts into quitting from the job. The higher the perceived organizational support of individuals, the less intention to seek alternative jobs and probability of accepting these jobs. Human resources practices that recognize the contributions of employees and investing in them (e.g. career opportunities, awards, participation in decision making) contributes to an improvement in employees perceptions of organizational support. Further, there are many factors which affect the turnover intentions of employees at work place. So it would not be wrong to say that not only glass ceiling or organizational commitment affect the turnover intentions of working women. There could be demographic factors like education level of women employee, service tenure of women employee, age of women employee, marital status of women employee, position held within the organization etc. which could also be considered under scope of this research. Hence these factors could also be analyzed for further research over working women especially in the different states of India.

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