

Breaking the Glass Ceiling and Modern Women

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ABSTARCT

“Women the better half”, as is said, but realizing the true meaning of it is still halfway. We are aware about the kind of intensive indulgence in actions the women of today is engaged in, the household chores, managing the professional arena with perfect equilibrium and so on and so forth. The Women have changed the entire perspective of the world, they have started plunging into the industry and running their enterprises also. It is actually a matter of pride seeing them grow into budding entrepreneur. They have been performing exceedingly well in almost all the spheres, be it academics, politics, business, administration, social work, etc. There has been an awakening and reckoning. Women have found a shift, which has been heard and expressed. Our cultural values are being redefined and acceptance generated. Lot of praise, value and admiration has been created for feminism. This paper would highlight the thought and action taken by the modern women to break the glass ceiling in the most optimistic manner.

Keywords: Awakening, reckoning, modern women, glass ceiling

I INTRODUCTION

The Women have changed the entire social, economic patterns of the world. It is evident from the huge increase of women in the workplace to supplement the male earning capacity. The social movements like the movement related to the women empowerment, equal opportunities legislation i.e. rights and duties, the expansion of the service sector and the knowledge economy. Besides this the increased access to education and the ever-increasing cost of living have contributed to this change.

The rise in these numbers have resulted in women entering a broader range of occupations, from supportive, nurturing roles as teaching and nursing to every field of professional life. Therefore, women are now seen in roles that were sole prerogative to men.

This difference in female employment patterns has had a significant impact on the economic empowerment of women, as independent purchasers, but perhaps even more importantly there has been a sea change in their wider contribution to macro value creation indices. For example, there is evidence to indicate that companies with higher numbers of female board members perform better financially than those with fewer women. (Joy et al 2007).

The economist has argued that increasing the number of women in the workforce can boost a country's economy. The female entrepreneurs and business owners are on the increase, often in lower revenue generating businesses.

II THE OBSTACLES DISABLING THE WOMEN

(a) **Cultural and Personal Perceptions:** The women have faced many structural obstacles in the employment arena. However, equally disabling have been the cultural and personal perceptions of the roles of women in the workplace, because culturally the workplaces seem to have favoured the men over women. On

a personal note, it is often argued that women lack confidence in the workplace and therefore are increasingly reluctant to put themselves forward for promotion. On the contrary research has shown that when making self-assessments of work-related performance, women use a more complicated platform of judgements as compared to men.

(b) **Motherhood Manacle:** Men with children are often viewed positively by employers; stability and investment in the future are constructive traits which will translate helpfully to the workplace. However, women with children are viewed in a much more negative light. It appears that having children offers a ‘double whammy’ setback to female careers. Not only do they take time out of work to have and care for their children, but when they return back after the childcare leave, they face challenges in securing their previous post and portfolio.

Many a times it is seen that in such condition the females take on part time assignment/jobs but part-time employment is often unsatisfactory in terms of hours invested vs financial reimbursement. The whole picture is one of discouragement for mothers; whose lack of enthusiasm for the packages simply reinforces the employer's that motherhood is bad news for the productivity and reliability of their company. Therefore, the females face setback in their careers.

On top of that, working mothers who tend to manage families and careers face some specific challenges such as-

- **Finding access to good quality and affordable childcare** – often a real barrier to managing the duality of home and career for many women.
- **Changing family relationship patterns** – inevitably working mothers have less time to spend on traditionally maternal activities. This is not necessarily negative but, it does mean that schedules are tight, and other

caring relationships such as child minders, after school clubs also become part of the mix. This many times takes the shape of dying relations of the couple leading to divorce and separation.

(c) Gender Discrimination at workplace:

Although women have made clear they have the ability to perform with the same skill and success in every endeavour engaged in by men, the issue of gender discrimination still holds many back. This is true not only to the service sector, where women are underpaid but also the business sector. It is evident in the family business organizations that women have no say in matters related to it. They are held responsible for all the personal related issues of the family, but when it comes to sharing equal opinion in the business then nobody seeks their advice, nor do they share legal rights in the business shares etc.

The issue is not about their efficacy, but it is about the mind-set of the people around. The females have been trying hard since ages for the upliftment of their family, but instead of acknowledging their efforts they are subjected to dishonesty and non-involvement. Education has tried to bridge the gap between the women and men in our society but if visualized from the close lens, the women are still subjugated. It is happening in the higher-class families of our society; they post high ethical thoughts and vision in the social media but the ground reality is opposite.

Despite being in a strong or stronger position to lead, change and shape the economic, social and political landscape they are still less likely than men to be associated with leadership positions in spheres such as politics and business.

The issue of gender discrimination in the workplace is no less disgraceful than racial or religious discrimination and its elimination is vital, not only as a matter of fundamental human rights, but also as effective and efficient business practices.

III BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING AND MARCHING AHEAD: THE JOURNEY IS FAR FROM OVER

Yes, we've come far. It is now widely acknowledged, and pretty much accepted, that there are no differences between men and women in either capability or potential. However, whilst this is true of all the professions, and broadly across all manufacturing and service sectors, there are still some stark limits to perceived parity.

Traditionally, the dominating social role of the woman was as housewife, and that of the man was focused on work and family maintenance. Nowadays, the social role of women is evolving in the direction of taking a profession, while increasingly men are taking care of the household.

In the same line when I interviewed many male members regarding the changing roles of the women in their families, surprisingly the responses were alarming. They had a wider acceptance of their mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters moving out of their pre- defined capacities to exploring newer heights in the professional world.

They are of the view that females are better managers rather fine managers, if they can handle the household chores so efficiently then they can even manage business houses. Studies have proved this fact and results have even suggested to empower our women for economic betterment of the society.

The men in the family reported enthusiasm in sharing the family responsibilities. There were men who were not fussy in taking leave to take care the newborn babies. This was even possible due to the paternity leave available in the corporate houses for men to equalize the parental responsibilities in the family.

The concept of day creche in corporate houses have embarked a revolution in the female working population. The HR policies for the welfare of the female employees have really made changes in the life of the working females. Gone are the days when the sole responsibility of child rearing was vested on the mothers, now-a-days the men are equal party to it from the day of conception of the child. They feel the same emotional attachment with the family as the females feel. They have started acknowledging that the women are far better managers.

The males in the research I had interviewed felt their actual being is impossible without the females in the family. They equally share the educational responsibilities of their children from arranging the admission in reputed schools, to attending parent-teacher meetings in the schools, to taking the children for outdoor activities and many other responsibilities. With such kind of support the women are actually marching ahead and breaking the glass ceiling. The strides that have been made have been enormously positive, but as with everything, the situation is complex in many ways.

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