

Glass Ceiling Effect: Challenges Faced by Women in Leadership Roles in Higher Education

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Abstract: The position of women hardly changed substantially in recent decades regardless growing emphasis given through women empowerment and reservation. Women with highly qualified with necessary skills they are deprived from the key position and faces unseen barrier in the form of Glass -ceiling, which prevents them from rising in highest levels of academic roles. Higher Educational Institution has highest percentage of women in academic role. The faculty working and different departments certainly facing glass -ceiling effect. The highest position is filled with men and women are given as per reserve compulsion. So obviously it is nevertheless same situation as in the corporate.

This study will focus on evaluating the challenges women are facing in leadership role in Higher Education Institution. The survey is conducted in Bangalore city considering women who are in high academic role in different colleges. The sample size of 60 women selected through convenience sampling method. It is observed that highest percentage of women experienced the glass ceiling effect. So based on the study it can be concluded that the colleges should consider women to key roles in the organisation as a policy. Equal remuneration mechanism should be brought in private colleges based on the API scores of the faculties.

Keywords: Women Leadership, Glass Ceiling Effect, Higher Educational Institutions.

INTRODUCTION

The glass ceiling effect refers to the invisible barriers that prevent qualified women and minorities from reaching leadership positions within a company or industry. It's like a transparent ceiling – they can see the opportunities above them, but unseen obstacles make it difficult or impossible to reach those higher roles. This concept emerged in the 1980s to describe the challenges faced by women in male-dominated workplaces. While progress has been made, the glass

ceiling effect is still a relevant issue today, affecting not just women but also minorities and other marginalized groups. The glass ceiling effect is a metaphorical barrier that prevents women and minorities from advancing to upper levels of leadership and management within organizations, particularly in the corporate world. It represents the invisible yet formidable barriers, often stemming from societal biases and discriminatory practices, that hinder the career progression of certain demographic groups despite their qualifications and capabilities.

The term "glass ceiling" suggests that while individuals from marginalized groups can see the upper echelons of their professions, they are unable to break through due to systemic obstacles. These barriers manifest in various forms, including unequal access to opportunities, gender or racial bias in hiring and promotion decisions, stereotypes and prejudices influencing perceptions of leadership competence, and a lack of supportive organizational policies and practices. Despite significant progress, women in higher education continue to face a persistent obstacle: the glass ceiling. This invisible barrier restricts their advancement to the highest leadership positions, leaving them disproportionately represented in presidencies, provost roles, and other top spots.

Despite progress in raising awareness and implementing diversity initiatives, the glass ceiling effect persists in many industries and sectors. Addressing this complex issue requires ongoing commitment from individuals, organizations, and policymakers to dismantle systemic barriers and create truly equitable opportunities for all individuals to thrive and succeed in their chosen fields. By understanding these challenges, we can work towards creating a more equitable and inclusive leadership landscape in higher education.

In the realm of education, where knowledge and enlightenment are supposed to flourish uninhibitedly, there exists a phenomenon that stifles progress and hampers equal opportunities for all: the glass ceiling effect. Much like its presence in corporate settings, the glass ceiling in education represents an invisible yet formidable barrier that impedes the advancement of certain groups, particularly women and minorities, to top positions and leadership roles within academic institutions. While strides have been made in recent decades towards gender and racial equality in education, the glass ceiling remains a persistent challenge, casting a shadow over efforts to achieve true diversity and inclusion. Despite the increasing number of women and minorities entering the education field and obtaining advanced degrees, their representation in leadership positions does not reflect their presence in the workforce.

This paper seeks to delve into the intricacies of the glass ceiling effect within the education field, examining its causes, manifestations, and implications for individuals and institutions alike. By shedding light on this phenomenon, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of the systemic barriers that hinder progress and to explore potential strategies for breaking through these barriers. Through a comprehensive review of existing literature and empirical evidence, we will explore various factors contributing to the glass ceiling in education, including implicit biases, cultural norms, institutional policies, and societal expectations. Moreover, we will analyse the impact of the glass ceiling on individuals' career trajectories, organizational dynamics, and the broader educational landscape.

Furthermore, this paper will highlight successful initiatives and interventions aimed at dismantling the glass ceiling and promoting greater equity and inclusion in educational leadership. By examining case studies and best practices from diverse educational contexts.

In conclusion, addressing the glass ceiling effect in the education field is not merely a matter of fairness or social justice; it is essential for fostering innovation, creativity, and excellence in education. By confronting and dismantling these barriers, we can create a more equitable and inclusive educational environment where all individuals have the opportunity to thrive and contribute to the advancement of knowledge and society.

REVIEW OF LITEARTURE

ARTICLES:

1. Status of women leadership in the Indian higher education sector.

Authors: Darshna Vaghela Banker (Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management, New Delhi, India)(19 May 2023)

The analysis of this study is a follow-up attempt so that the knowledge around the status of women academic leaders in Indian higher education (2021) can be upgraded. This paper has aimed to discuss the aforementioned issue. In the two consecutive surveys conducted by the authors in 2015 and 2018, it was found that out of a total of 810 and 1008 Indian higher educational institutions, only 54 and 63 institutions (6.67 and 6.25%) were led by women, 725 and 934 institutions (89.51 and 92.7%) were led by men and 31 and 11 (3.83 and 1.1%) were reported to either have no information about their leaders or those posts were vacant.

2. Missing women in Indian university leadership: Barriers and facilitators.

Authors: Meenakshi Gandhi and Kakoli Sen (February 7, 2020)

This paper studies about exploring the barriers and enablers for women academicians' ascent to leadership roles. Gender diversity and equality in the workplace has been much researched and spoken about in the corporate sector but the higher education sector in India remains largely untouched by it, probably because women seemingly far outnumber men in the teaching fraternity. However, data also suggests that most women in the higher education sector remain restricted to middle-ranking posts, rising as high as heads of department, deans, controller of examination and even registrars but hardly ever becoming vice-chancellors.

3. Ladder To Leadership: A Study On Challenges Faced By Women In Heis In India.

Authors: Komakshi Chandan., Arti Maini

The research is conducted by the authors to report certain factors which challenges women to take up leadership positions in HEIs. Although many studies examine women's inclusion in the world, still there is a lack of studies regarding women in leadership positions in Indian Higher Educational Institutions.

This paper aims at gaining an insight into certain organisational, societal and personal factors which challenges women to take up senior positions in HEIs Design/methodology/approach. Findings- The research results in this paper suggest that there are factors that women academicians encounter in HEIs and their impact on their career development.

4. Women in leadership: Exploring the barriers and facilitators in the Indian higher education sector.

Author: Meenakshi Gandhi

Book : India Higher Education Report 2022

In this book the author has put forward how Women are least likely to select other women in various administrative roles as they pose a threat to themselves. The lacking policy discourse in India is a major concern and so is the necessity to engender the minds of men who are decision-makers for making choices of governance in higher education institutions. Barriers and facilitators both from family, society and peer group, as well from women themselves exist (Aiston et al. 2020). Social, cultural, organisational and family support has a profound contribution to enabling women to reach leadership positions.

5. Empowerment of Women Trough Higher Education in India.

Author: Kamini Jayanti Bhai Patel, Assistant Professor
This study focuses on the important role women play in higher education, the barriers they face in the teaching profession and the problems they face when balancing their professional and personal lives. Therefore, the paper focuses on the importance of women in higher education and the issues they face in higher education. It also sheds light on the balance between women's personal and professional lives. This paper is an attempt to analyse "Women's Empowerment through Higher Education in India".

6. A Study on Importance of Women Participants in Higher Education: A Case Study of Karnataka, India.

Authors: Prashanth Kumar C.P. and Santhosh V.

This paper focuses on the importance of women in higher education and what problems they are facing in higher education. It also throws light on the balance between personal and professional lives of women. Women enter the teaching profession because of the flexibility in time, which helps them manage both

professional and personal lives simultaneously. The study focuses on the important role that women play in higher education, constraints faced by them in the teaching profession as well as problems faced while balancing professional and personal lives.

7. Women And Leadership Positions: Social And Cultural Barriers To Success.

Author: Josephine M. Kiamba

This research explores how women continue to aspire for leadership positions in all spheres of governance in both the public and private sector. However, it has not been easy. This paper has examined the many challenges women still face in taking leadership Positions with specific reference to African women are included in the paper. The author has conducted study on the barriers related to culture and cultural expectations, the choice and/or Balance between work and family, and women's own fear of success.

8. A Study of Public and Private Universities in India

Title: Women in Higher Education and the Journey to Mid-Career: Challenges and Opportunities.

Authors: Shilpa Jain, Bhavna Bajaj, Aarushi Singh (2022)

This research describes the gender diversity and empowerment of mid-career women in the workplace have rightfully gained importance over the last decade. However, there is a paucity of research pertaining to the position of mid-career women in higher education institutions (HEI) in India. The data suggest that while there has been an increase in the number of women in the academic sphere, yet there is a visible lack of women in the top academic leadership positions across Indian HEIs. Using a mixed-method approach, the chapter identifies barriers to women's growth in academia.

9. Challenges of Working Women in India – An Analytical View.

Authors : Sundari, R.; Sathyanarayana, P.A.

This study is based on identifying and measuring the level of impact of these challenges on the working women. The study reveals that women employees feel staying beyond the working hours and compelling them to finish others work seems to be highly challenging and they are not willing to share the

burden of others. Domestic Challenges have greater impact on the career of women, they also feel they are compromising on the social obligations. At the workplace working with the male colleagues, attending corporate meetings, corporate communication, policy and procedures are highly challenging than other issues like challenging work and leadership.

10. Treading the no woman’s land’: the gender-STEM dynamics in higher education in premier institutions of India.

Authors: Sucharita Maji, Sharmili Mitra & Manish Kumar Asthana.

This qualitative research has proposed an attempt: (a) to explore the career-selection-related decision-making, (b) to detect whether gendered processes are evident in STEM research laboratories, and (c) to explore the psychological effects of gendered processes among female doctoral/postdoctoral researchers. The results revealed that the combination of individual (interest and self-efficacy) and contextual factors (parental support and role models) had impacted researchers’ decision to select and pursue higher studies in STEM. Furthermore, the research shows that higher studies in STEM are characterised by the four defining features of gendering, i.e., gendered division of labour, gendered symbols, gendered identity, and gendered interactions (Acker, 1990).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling method: Convenience sampling.
 Sampling size: 60 units
 Sampling frame: Higher education institutions in Bangalore.

Data collection:

➤ Primary data:
 The primary data is collected through structural questionnaire. Women in higher positions in various higher educational institutions have responded the questionnaire.

➤ Secondary data:
 The secondary data has been gathered from various websites, journals and textbooks.

Statement of the problem:
 To analyse impact of the challenges faced by women in leadership roles in higher educational institutions.

Despite comprising a significant portion of academia, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions within higher education. This persistent gender gap presents a critical problem. It hinders the advancement of talented women, limits the diversity of perspectives in institutional decision-making, and potentially overlooks valuable leadership qualities.

Objectives:

- To assess the challenges faced by women in leadership role in higher education.
- To examine the effect of barriers on leadership role of women.
- To suggest the strategies to overcome the barriers in leadership role of women in higher educational institutions.

NEED OF THE STUDY

There's a strong need to study the challenges faced by women in leadership roles within higher education. Understanding these barriers is crucial for creating a more equitable and effective system. Research can illuminate issues like unconscious bias in hiring practices, the pressure to conform to masculine leadership styles, and the difficulty of balancing work and family life. By bringing these challenges to light, we can develop solutions that empower women to thrive in leadership positions, ultimately benefiting both institutions and students.

Limitations:

- Limited Survey is within Bangalore.
- The sample unit is limited to 50 units.
- Time constraint.
- The outcome of survey is based on responses given by respondents, it may be biased.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.842	27

Interpretation: The reliability check shows that, 27 questions are consistently reflect with each of the variables which impact on leadership roles of women in higher education institution, all facts are come with equivalent outcome. Cronbach’s Alpha says reliability outcome is 0.842 is acceptable.

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
There are equal opportunities for women to attain leadership positions within higher education institutions.	20.077	59	0.000	1.81667	1.6356	1.9977
Institutional policies and practices support the career advancement of women in leadership positions.	19.805	59	0.000	1.93333	1.7380	2.1287
Women face barriers such as gender bias and stereotypes when seeking leadership roles in higher education.	18.578	59	0.000	2.43333	2.1712	2.6954
Work-life balance issues significantly impact women in leadership roles with higher education.	20.393	59	0.000	1.70000	1.5332	1.8668
Women from different ethnic backgrounds face unique challenges. In leadership, positions within higher education.	26.692	59	0.000	2.56667	2.3743	2.7591
The lack of representation of women in leadership positions affect the overall organizational culture within the higher education institution.	21.919	59	0.000	1.98333	1.8023	2.1644
The representation of women in senior leadership roles within higher education has improved over the past decade.	25.008	59	0.000	2.18333	2.0086	2.3580
How effectively do higher education institutions provide mentorship and professional development opportunities Specifically tailored to women in leadership roles?	20.954	59	0.000	2.66667	2.4120	2.9213
Societal perceptions of gender roles influence the recruitment and selection processes for leadership position within higher education.	23.521	59	0.000	2.46667	2.2568	2.6765
How prevalent do you perceive 'The glass ceiling' phenomenon to be for women aspiring to reach the highest levels of leadership within higher education institutions?	24.453	59	0.000	2.50000	2.2954	2.7046
To what extend do you think implicit bias impact the evaluation and promotion of women in leadership positions within higher education?	23.338	59	0.000	2.18333	1.9961	2.3705
In your experience, do women in leadership roles face challenges related to networking and forming professional connections within the higher education community?	14.933	59	0.000	1.68333	1.4578	1.9089
How strongly do you believe that creating an inclusive environment for women in leadership roles benefits the overall organizational culture of higher education institution?	20.736	59	0.000	1.78333	1.6112	1.9554
Promoting collaboration and mentorship among women in leadership roles can help overcome barriers and promote success within higher education institutions?	19.946	59	0.000	1.75000	1.5744	1.9256
Encouraging diversity in leadership positions within higher education is essential for promoting innovation and progress.	16.605	59	0.000	1.80000	1.5831	2.0169
Promoting gender equality in leadership positions positively impacts the recruitment and retention of talented individuals within higher education institutions.	21.169	59	0.000	1.73333	1.5695	1.8972
Does your institution provide satisfactory support systems for growth of women in leadership roles?	18.682	59	0.000	2.03333	1.8156	2.2511
Raising awareness about the challenges faced by women in leadership roles is crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive higher education environment.	18.935	59	0.000	2.13333	1.9079	2.3588
To what extent are you satisfied with your current position in your institution?	20.286	59	0.000	2.01667	1.8177	2.2156
Upskilling to pursue leadership role for women is important.	19.814	59	0.000	2.18333	1.9628	2.4038
How effectively do you believe higher education institutions address intersectional challenges faced by women, such as	17.762	59	0.000	1.63333	1.4493	1.8173

those related to race, ethnicity, or disability, in leadership roles?						
Co-operation from the co-employees in the organization play a vital role in pursuing leadership role.	27.651	59	0.000	2.36667	2.1954	2.5379
The long hours required for leadership roles in higher education make it difficult to maintain a work-life balance.	16.683	59	0.000	1.63333	1.4374	1.8292

Interpretation: Under one-sample t-test the P-value (0.000) is less than the chosen significance level of 0.005. Thus, null hypothesis refuted and believing that there really is an association. It can be inferred that there is significant association between the factors which impact on the glass ceiling effect.

KEY FINDINGS

1. From the study, it is identified that 62.1% of women in higher positions from educational institutions agree that over the past decade representation of women in leadership role is improved.
2. 55.2% of respondents have agreed that institutional policies and practices support career advancement of women and address the intersectional challenges faced by women in leadership roles.
3. Women agree at 41.4% that barriers such as gender bias and stereotypes are major problems while seeking leadership roles in higher education.
4. 51.7% of women from the survey agree that work-life balance issue has huge impact in their leadership roles in higher education.
5. According to the survey the glass ceiling effect is prevalent at 51.7% on women in leadership roles.
6. The respondents from survey agree at 58.6% that networking and communication at higher level is still a barrier.
7. 55.2% of survey respondents have agreed that promoting gender equality has positive impact on women career development.
8. Leadership roles requires long-hours of involvement which is a major barrier for women according to the respondents (41.4%).

KEY SUGGESTIONS

1. The institutions should provide mentorship and professional development opportunities specially tailored to women in leadership roles.
2. The societal perceptions of gender roles must not be considered during recruitment and selection process for leadership position in higher institutions.

3. Promoting collaboration and mentorship among women in leadership role can help overcome the barriers within higher education institutions.
4. By increasing the awareness about the challenges faced by women is crucial for creating a more equitable and inclusive higher education environment.
5. The institutions should work on upskilling of women for career development and leadership roles.
6. The co-operation from co-employees in the organisation will motivate the women in leadership roles for organisational development.

CONCLUSION

The study is conducted on glass ceiling effect: challenges faced by women in leadership roles in higher education within Bangalore. The respondents agree that development of women in leadership roles will play a vital role in development of institutions. The barriers faced by women in leadership roles can be resolved by institutions through implementing tailored policies for women development. The perception of women in higher positions regarding glass-ceiling effect has given insights for better analysis, for the effective development of women in leadership roles the support from institutions and co-operation from co-employees is essential. The paper gives better understanding about the challenges and the suggestions to improve women carrier development.

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