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Glass Ceiling in Organisations in Ajmer District in Rajasthan State of India

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Abstract:

Women continue to enter managerial and professional jobs in increasing numbers in India yet they continue to face glass ceiling in organizations. Three facets of glass ceiling: lack of career exposure opportunities, lack of training opportunities, and lack of promotional opportunities at work were identified based on a review of literature. These three facets were studied through collection of data by an anonymously completed questionnaire by 153 women managers in Ajmer district of the State of Rajasthan in India. 13 demographic variables pertaining to women managers were studied in conjunction with four facets of gender inequality. The findings indicate that there are two demographic variables of age group and industry that have a significant statistical relationship with glass ceiling. Implications for management are discussed with reference to existence and consequences of glass ceiling and improving the situation of gender parity for women in Indian organisations. Limitations include study being conducted in a restricted geographical area and use of convenience sampling method. The study reported is one of a kind conducted in the State of Rajasthan in India and provides interesting insights into the situation of women managers.

Keywords: Glass ceiling, Women managers, Women in management, Career exposure, Training opportunities, Promotion opportunities, Ajmer, Rajasthan.

Introduction:

Glass ceiling syndrome is a widely discussed phenomenon in the field of women in management. The existence of this invisible barrier which prevents women from attaining leader positions is explained by lack of human capital, as well as by gender differences and prejudice. The reasons mentioned for the limited numbers of women in top management positions are, among others, that they take on significantly more domestic responsibilities, have less work experience, show different leadership styles, often assume informal leadership roles, and self-promotion among women is judged more harshly than among men. But there is also evidence that the glass ceiling has

been slowly changing in recent years due to adjustments in values with the increased labour force participation of women, altered legislation, changes in organizations, business culture, and among women themselves

There are myriad studies available that rely on counting the number of women managers in organisations, at senior levels, and at board positions. The assumption is that more women managers working in organisations, represented at senior levels, and appointed at board level strengthen the probability of women managers experiencing an environment conducive for them.

Even a cursory glance at the extant literature on women in management shows reliance on assessing or counting the participation of women managers in the higher echelons of managerial hierarchy within organisations. Thus, there are surveys galore which report on the trend of women's participation in the labour force as well as their presence in the higher levels of management. (See, for instance, CSR, 2009) A common observation is there are more women at lower levels with their number dwindling as one moves up to higher levels. The 'pipeline' argument in this context proposes that women's representation at higher levels in organisations should grow with their increased representation in the pipeline that leads to the higher from the lower levels. As women move up through the pipeline they accumulate knowledge, acquire skills and gain the necessary experience in order to be eligible to apply for the top jobs. According to Linda Wirth, author of the ILO study on glass ceiling (Wirth, 2001) women in all age groups have been increasing their participation in the work force over several decades. So it is likely that more women may be available in the pool of talent from which selections take place thereby increasing the probability of women being selected for higher positions. There are few studies, however, that support the pipeline argument as the number of women at the higher levels does not seem to grow in proportion to their participation at the lower levels. Women managers seem often to stagnate at lower levels with higher positions going to men.

Gender inequality issues are assessed through description of lack of career exposure opportunities, lack of training opportunities, and lack of promotional opportunities for women employees.

The Indian perspective to glass ceiling:

For a country that boasts of having had a woman president, a woman prime minister, and having two women *Lok Sabha* speaker, a woman president of the largest political party, a woman leader of opposition and women chief ministers in the States of Gujarat, New Delhi, Tamilnadu, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh it is ironic that the corporate world does not reflect such a positive attitude to woman managers. It has been observed that the number of women in the area of managerial occupation have increased, though their placement at the top hierarchy is still limited. It

is important as well as a subject of interest to study the reasons for this kind of phenomenon. Any issue in a field has a lot of dimensions. The trend, which is popularly called the glass ceiling, also has different angles to measure and analyze it. Some research studies have focussed on the structural barriers and some have hinted at the personal barriers. Structural barriers are composed of inequalities at the management level of the organizations. Personal barriers are differences in the career progress of women than that of men because of reasons like education, training and experience.

Sujhata (2008) in her study *Barriers to Career Growth of Women Managers: An Indian Scenario* makes an interesting observation about the factors that create hurdles in the path of women manager's road to the higher hierarchies in the organizational structures. These factors were categorized as structural barriers, managerial stereotypes, normative pressures, depersonalization process, family pressures and space for private lives. Structural barriers are those perceptions which are institutionalized in the organization within a male dominated social context. Managerial stereotypes form a negative impression for women managers and affect their performance. Normative pressures are the ones that hint towards the fact that women are confined to the traditional role of a homemaker; it is kind of an approval from the social norms. Depersonalization process refers to the alienation of self from the workplace. Women look forward to maintaining relationship at the personal as well as the professional level. Most women at the workplace face family pressures arising while trying to balance family responsibilities and work responsibilities. Space for private lives is the term used to depict the inability of women to work beyond the office hours along with the maternity leaves women tend to take during their course of work which become unavoidable for them.

Very interesting conclusions were made by Sujhata (2008) in the study quoted above. Her research posited that there are significant differences in the challenges faced by women and men at the workplace. The barriers can be removed when there is an effort from both the individual as well as the organization. A little more weight is given on the efforts by the organization's side. A deeper impact which organizations do not realize but is an important concern is that it takes away a pool of talents, skills, intelligence, experiences and commitment. In order to avoid such kind of attrition, organizations should provide a bias free environment and more supportive human resource policies towards women managers.

According to the major findings of the survey conducted by *Tata Consultancy Services* (2012) women continue to face many barriers on their way to the top, which are unique to their gender. They are often under-represented in organizations, especially in senior management roles and corporate boards. The report states that leadership development programs are key retention

measures for women. However, very few organizations provide such programs. Generally, organisations are not allocating their budgets, resources and targets to support the mandate on gender inclusion

Nath (2000) in her paper *Gently shattering the glass ceiling: Experiences of Indian women managers* examines the impact of social, organizational and personal biases on the progression of professional women in India. According to her, women managers in India have been generally successful in rising to the executive suite in Indian organizations, despite a culture that might suggest otherwise. These women were successful because of the interplay of organizational and familial support, coupled with the individual drive for success each woman demonstrated.

As for that matter any kind of disparity hampers the growth of organization and calls for thinking and action. The consequent effect of this kind of a trend is that it leads to lack of motivation and low productivity undermining the goal of the organization. As far as the structural barriers that hamper women manager's growth are considered various researches hint towards the human resource policies of the companies which seem to be biased in nature.

Despite obtaining access to a professional career, women in India have remained segregated in predominantly female occupations, at lower ranks of organizations and barred from moving up the hierarchy because they do not meet the promotion criteria. Kulkarni (2002) found that traditional and cultural inhibitions acquired by women from childhood, nurtured by parents, and reinforced by their socialization was the key hurdle that inhibited their urge to be in an executive or leadership position. This is further supplemented by a lack of self-direction, independence and self-motivation to enter the male-dominated world.

Kulkarni's conclusions are reinforced by another study by Maliye (2011) that found occupational segregation in the managerial field. This occupational segregation is at the horizontal as well as vertical levels. Maliye observed that in the departments of personnel management and industrial relations, a majority of women managers performed the perceived 'soft' functions such as health, insurance, welfare and training while men were allotted the 'tough' job of managing industrial relations. Very few women managers were seen managing functions such as corporate planning and finance. Such gender discrimination was also noticed in matter of promotion to higher ranks where senior key positions are not generally offered to women even though they are remarkably similar to men in their educational levels, length of experience and abilities. Most of the women managers stagnate at the middle level positions with the same level of qualifications and service.

Budhwar, et al. (2005) in their study discuss the causes of women not entering higher management. Interestingly they pointed out men's preconceptions about women, women's exclusion

from informal networks, and lack of significant general management and line experience on the part of women managers.

The results of a research by Anand (2002) show that many women employees do not aspire to managerial positions and are content with being lower level staff or in support positions. For example, a high percentage of women graduates from one of the premier institutions – the Indian Institute of Management, do not pursue a career. Some of the primary reasons for this include the lack of motivation and commitment on the part of women employees for fear that it will disrupt their family life. For Indian women, family responsibilities generally take precedence over professional matters. Middle to lower level jobs such as clerical positions are less subject to transfers therefore, many women prefer them. In addition, women find the work environment more hostile and 'women-unfriendly' as they move up the career path resulting in their decision to abstain from seeking higher managerial positions in the organizational hierarchy (Roy, 2004)

A contemporary research by Naqvi, 2011 on the perspectives of women managers in public enterprises highlights several issues including leadership. Commenting that the women in India have struggled to establish an identity and create a space for themselves at their workplaces, especially in terms of leadership. The study investigates women's perceptions and dilemmas when confronted with the ideas and expectations of traditional society simultaneously conforming to a modern-day code of conduct at work.

Overall, it is observed that studies in Indian context follow the patterns discerned in the studies conducted elsewhere. Thus, the glass ceiling syndrome could be encapsulated in terms of three deficiencies:

- a. **Lack of career exposure** by women either due to their inadequate qualifications, low level of motivation, unsupportive organisational policies, or a combination of such factors hindering their upward movement in the organisation.
- b. **Lack of training opportunities** for women either due to their own lack of interest in taking advantage of such opportunities or because of overt or covert organisational policies discouraging women to enrol themselves in such training programmes. Other reasons could also include the inability of women to be away from their family for extended period of time or even their reluctance to travel unescorted due to their conservative family background or a genuine concern for personal safety.

Lack of promotion opportunities for women may be due to the glass ceiling operating in an organisation. This might be due to a genuine lack of promotion chances for most people including men. But this might also be caused by passivity of top management of an organisation in considering women for higher positions or inherent biases among men managers. Sometimes, the women

themselves may forego opportunities for promotion especially if it may lead to transfer to other places where they might not feel comfortable living.

Context for Research: Ajmer District:

This research study is geographic concentrating on the district of Ajmer in the State of Rajasthan. Ajmer is quite a typical region that could be representative of the culture and society in Northern India. It is known for its educational institutions preparing aspiring women and men who often have to move to other parts of India to seek employment. Local employment, especially for women, is available on a highly competitive basis mainly in the services such as education, health, and financial services and in the government sector. Rising family expenditures, higher level of educational qualifications attained by women and rising aspiration levels have motivated higher number of women to take up jobs that hitherto were not looked upon as desirable in the deeply conservative society of Rajasthan.

The district of Ajmer is divided into six administrative sub-divisions of Ajmer, Beawer, Masuda, Nasirabad, Kekri and Kishangarh. According to the Directorate of Census Operations in Rajasthan figures, the total population of Ajmer district was 25.85 million in 2011 of which women were 12.6 million making up about 48.75% of the total population. A majority of 60% of the population is rural. The sex ratio for Ajmer district was 951 per 1000 male. The district had a population decadal growth rate during 2001-2011 of 18.5 per cent. Ajmer district cover an area of 8481 sq. km. with a population density of 305 persons per sq. km. The total literacy rate is 69.33 % with the female literacy just at 55.68% trailing far behind the male literacy rate of 82.44 % In Ajmer district eight medium scale industries and 17663 small scale and cottage industries were registered up to March, 2011. The main industries of the district are textile, food products, leather and leather products, wood products, feldspar and quartz grinding, marble, asbestos, and cement. A brief industrial profile of Ajmer District related to its micro, small and medium enterprises is available at the website of the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Government of India, at http://dcmsme.gov.in/dips/DIPR_Ajmer.pdf

Research objectives and hypothesis:

This paper reports findings on glass ceiling among women managers in Ajmer district. It is a part of a broader doctoral work that included two other issues of work-life balance and gender inequality. The broad research question envisaged for the study is: How does gender inequality relate to the demographic variables of women managers in Ajmer district? The proposition arising out of the broad research question is: Gender inequality relates to the demographic variables of women managers in Ajmer district.

The present research studies glass ceiling effect on the sample of women managers in Ajmer

district. In this study, glass ceiling effect is assumed to have three components of lack of career exposure opportunities, lack of training opportunities, and lack of promotional opportunities. There are 13 demographic variables covering various relevant aspects of women managers. Thus, there is a large canvas of exploring relationships between the study variables and their respective components with the demographic variables. The independent variable in each case of testing of relationship is the demographic variable (e.g. age). The dependent variable in each case of relationship testing is the study variable or one of its components (e.g. glass ceiling or lack of training opportunities). The hypotheses framed attempts to establish a relationship of the dependent variable with the independent variable. It is in this complex scenario that Chamberlin's idea of multiple working hypotheses (Chamberlin, 1965) is relevant as can be observed below.

H1 - 13: Glass ceiling effect is significantly related to each of the 13 demographic variables of women managers in Ajmer district.

Each of the hypotheses can be divided into sub-hypotheses in terms of the components of the glass ceiling issue and 13 demographic variables will result in a set of 13 sub-hypotheses. An example of sub-hypothesis for glass ceiling effect and demographic variable of educational attainment is stated as: Glass ceiling effect is significantly related the level of educational attainment of women manager in Ajmer district. An example of sub-hypothesis for a component of glass ceiling effect and demographic variable of educational attainment is stated as: Lack of promotional opportunities for women manager is significantly related to the educational attainment of the women manager in Ajmer district.

Method:

Data collection was done through female surveyors appointed by the researcher from among her ex-students. A short informal training session was conducted with each of the surveyor. The data collection was done during the period mid-June 2013 through mid-September 2013 a period of about 4 months. The surveyors started data collection in the city of Ajmer approaching female employees in various organisations consisting of government offices, educational institutions, hospitals, banks, insurance companies and factories situated in the industrial estates. It was possible to collect data in satisfactorily completed questionnaires from 153 respondents all of which were included in the study for the purpose of analysis.

Alongside the collection of data through surveyors, the use of social networking sites of Facebook and LinkedIn was made to post the questionnaire on pages that were pertinent to the educated and internet savvy class of Ajmer district. The use of Google docs was made to place the online survey questionnaire. The responses were also sought through emails from people who could be approached in the towns and other smaller habitations within Ajmer district besides approaching

them through snowball contacts. Thus, it was possible to collect data from Kishangarh, Beawer and Nasirabad towns besides Ajmer city.

Results and discussion:

Glass ceiling effect in Ajmer district -

This section presents the results and discussion based on the analysis of composite scores of glass ceiling and its three sub-variables: lack of career exposure opportunities, lack of training opportunities, and lack of promotional opportunities.

The demographic characteristics of the representative respondent are shown in Table 1. This study results indicate that there are only two of the thirteen demographic variables that have a significant relationship with glass ceiling effect. These two factors, as can be observed in Table 2 are of the age group of women managers and the industry they work in. The other eleven demographic factors do not have a significant relationship with glass ceiling effect.

Table 1: The representative respondent

Demographic variable	Representative data*
Age group	41 – 50 years
Place of residence	Urban
Highest level of educational attainment	Masters' degree or above
Area of specialisation / major for the highest level of educational attainment	Arts
Sector working in	Government / semi-government
Industry working in	Education
Functional area working in the present organisation	Financial management
Total working experience	Less than 10 years
Working experience in the present organisation	Less than 5 years
Title/role in the present organisation	Manager / Officer / Administrator
Marital status	Married
Number of children	1 – 2 children
Family size	Medium; 4 – 6 members

*Derived from survey data by author

Table 2: Summarised results of ANOVA: Glass ceiling effect by demographics

Demographic variables related to composite scores of glass ceiling effect	Value of F	Significance	Critical values of F	Inference
Age group	3.44	0.01	2.44 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$
Residence place	2.76	0.10	3.91 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Highest level of educational attainment	1.84	0.14	2.67 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Area of specialisation in education	2.10	0.06	2.17 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Sector working in	2.09	0.10	2.67 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Industry working in	2.18	0.05	2.17 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Significant at $\alpha = 0.05$
Functional area working in	1.67	0.12	2.08 ($\alpha = 0.01$)	Not significant
Total working experience	1.81	0.15	2.67 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Working experience in present organisation	0.57	0.68	2.44 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Title/role in organisation	1.81	0.68	2.67 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Marital status	1.68	0.17	2.67 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Number of children	2.41	0.07	2.67 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant
Family size	0.47	0.71	2.67 ($\alpha = 0.05$)	Not significant

The results of the study support past studies while there are some contradictions too. The age group relationship with glass ceiling is evident in the simple fact that rising to higher levels of management can only be expected when one has spent some years working thus aging in the process. It could also be explained by the reasoning that women managers would take some time - usually more than men would do - to climb the ladder in the organization. If after serving in the same organization for some years they are still not able to achieve the position they deserve and have aspired for some time then a rift starts to happen and they start experiencing the effects of glass

ceiling. As observed in the results, approximately 55% of the respondents fall in the combined age groups of 31-40 and 41-50. This is the age group when any employee looks to climb the organizational ladder if they have served for more than 5 years in the same organization. The results therefore reflect the frustration of women in the higher age groups of experiencing the glass ceiling syndrome.

Another facet of the glass ceiling effect could be the dysfunctional organisational culture that may prefer men for higher positions assuming that they possess the 'masculine' values necessary for handling higher-level responsibilities. Researchers like Crotty & Meier (2002) have found the existence of bureaucratic structures in the majority of organizations. They hamper the growth of women managers to the top ladder of the organizational hierarchy.

The other significant relation of glass ceiling is with the industry in which the women manager works in. The sample of this study has more women from education with many of them working in the government sector. As is the common experience, promotions in government take time in materialising thus creating glass ceiling for women. Further, to this the data shows lesser presence of women workers in certain industries for instance, manufacturing (11%) and marketing (12%). Since these industries are often male dominated the respondents may find it even harder to climb the organizational ladder. Nath (2000) in her study supports the findings. She opines that there are formidable barriers of entry for women into certain professional careers. Those who do gain access, are often segregated in female occupations, relegated to lower ranks in organisations, and barred from moving up the hierarchy because the promotion criteria are conditions they cannot meet. The fact that women may face barriers in upward movement is also seen in the phenomenon of occupational segregation. With many women managers working in 'non-strategic' areas such as human resources or administration they tend to be out of the loop within organisations that can offer them pathways to the higher levels of management. This fact is pointed out by Linda Wirth in her ILO study on glass ceiling effect. (Wirth, 2001, p. 25). Such phenomenon of women managers not being able to enter strategic areas within organisation is also referred to as the 'glass wall'. (Wirth, 2001, p. 47)

Analysis of career exposure opportunities:

In the research survey, the women managers were asked to compare themselves with their male colleagues doing similar work and express their opinion on whether they were offered opportunities for career exposure.

In the context of the present study, preliminary enquiries led to the identification of three dimensions along which career exposure could be investigated. These are: transfer to a better post, foreign assignment, and deputation to a better post. A fourth dimension of attendance at seminars

and conferences too emerged post-data collection. Transfer to a better post was chosen as the most popular means by the women managers to achieve career progression, followed by deputation to a better post. The least popular means was attending seminars and conferences. (Table 3)

Table 3: Frequency table for career exposure opportunities

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Transfer to a better post	1	3.00	73	47.71
Deputation to better post	2	2.00	53	34.64
Foreign assignment	3	1.00	14	9.15
Other career exposure opportunities (Seminar and conferences)	4	4.00	13	8.50
<i>Total</i>			153	100.0

Statistics: Mean = 2.56; Mode = 3.00; Median = 3.00 and Std dev = 0.78

Around 70% of the respondents are married working women. They favoured transfer to a better post as the most popular means followed by deputation to a better post. This may be because these means do not involve the shifting aspect which may be a tough call for married working female managers. Transfers and deputations as means of career development may be seen as more relevant to government and public services rather than those in the private sector where the career progression is seen in terms of on-the-job and off-the-job training programmes.

The data reveals that attending seminars and conferences was the least popular means, the reason being it is given the least weight when it comes to calculating the career exposure of any worker but at the same time it is the most convenient one to adopt as it might not involve travelling and even if it does it is for a very less time which could be manageable. Only 10% of the respondents have favoured foreign assignment as is evident in Table 3 as it might involve major upsets in the personal life so many women managers are hesitant to adopt this means though it brings with it a lot of experience besides exposure to cross-cultural experience.

Gupta, et al., (1998) refers to the motherhood and parenthood as gaining priority in an Indian women's life as compared to career. Career progression is also seen to suffer on account of reluctance to travel, getting transferred and living away from families.

Analysis of training opportunities:

Another means for overcoming the glass ceiling was taking advantage of training

opportunities. Two questions were there in the survey questionnaire on this aspect the data for both of which is presented in two tables (Table 4 and 5). A visual examination of the percentages of various opinions reveals that training opportunities are only available for one- fourth (about 24%) of the respondents. Availability of money and time for pursuing continuing education programmes that could help them overcome the glass ceiling is also expressed more or less equivocally by the respondents.

Table 4: Attend training programmes useful for career

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cum Percent</i>
Yes, always	1.00	13	8.50	8.50	8.50
Yes, often	2.00	23	15.03	15.03	23.53
Sometimes, yes	3.00	41	26.80	26.80	50.33
No, this happens rarely	4.00	37	24.18	24.18	74.51
No, this never happens	5.00	39	25.49	25.49	100.00
<i>Total</i>		153	100.0	100.0	

Statistics: Mean = 3.43; Mode = 3.00; Median = 3.00 and Std dev = 1.26

Overall, when the two items in the questionnaire related to lack of training opportunities are analysed the frequency table shows a tilt toward low to moderate deficiency of training opportunities thus revealing that the glass ceiling effect may operate but just moderately in preventing the women managers from seeking opportunities for career development.

Looking at it from the organization's perspective, training is any kind of investment organization does in its employees. When organizations give more emphasis to the male employees in comparison to the female, given a choice, they prefer investing in them. The reasons for this kind of a mindset could be organisational as well as personal factors.

The organisational factors may be the dysfunctional culture that does not support women employees getting training opportunities. Women often find the work environment more hostile and 'women-unfriendly' as they move up the career path resulting in their decision to abstain from seeking higher managerial positions in the organizational hierarchy (Roy, 2004) The negative organizational perspective is also supported a survey conducted by *Tata Consultancy Services* (2012) that states that leadership development programs are key retention measures for women. However, very few organizations provide such programs. Generally, organisations are not allocating budgets, resources and targets to support the mandate on gender inclusion.

On the other hand, personal factors may arise on the side of the women employees themselves. A study by Anand (2002) shows that many women employees do not aspire to managerial positions and are content with being lower level staff or in support positions. Middle to lower level jobs such as clerical positions are less subject to transfer; therefore, many women prefer them in the belief that doing so would not disturb their family life.

Table 5: Support in terms of money and time for continuing education programmes

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cum Percent</i>
Yes, always	1.00	26	16.99	16.99	16.99
Yes, often	2.00	32	20.92	20.92	37.91
Sometimes, yes	3.00	48	31.37	31.37	69.28
No, this happens rarely	4.00	28	18.30	18.30	87.58
No, this never happens	5.00	19	12.42	12.42	100.00
<i>Total</i>		153	100.0	100.0	

Statistics: Mean = 2.88; Mode = 3.00; Median = 3.00 and Std dev = 1.25

Table 6: Frequency table for lack of training opportunities as a factor of glass ceiling

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very low deficiency of training opportunities	1.00	10	6.54
Low deficiency of training opportunities	2.00	43	28.11
Moderate deficiency of training opportunities	3.00	55	35.95
High deficiency of training opportunities	4.00	29	18.95
Very high deficiency of training opportunities	5.00	16	10.45
<i>Total</i>		153	100.0

Statistics: Mean = 3.16; Mode = 3.00; Median = 3.00 and Std dev = 1.04

Data from the present research study bears out the situation described above. Just 24% of women managers have said that they are given training opportunities by their organizations. Regarding support from the organization in terms of time and money to continue education there are approximately 37% respondents who feel that their organizations support them but 30% feel that they are denied this kind of a support (Table 5). Overall, the respondents indicate a low to moderate deficiency of training opportunity (Table 6). The respondents are from Ajmer district and considering their background we can make some logical deductions like it is a common feeling that women shy away from taking transfers since it involves movement likely to create disturbance in their family life. Women avoid it being content with their current position giving way for male colleagues to be promoted. Since they are content with their current positions they lack motivation for training opportunities thus completing the vicious circle of lack of career development that starts from dysfunctional organisational culture which itself may arise looking to low motivation levels among women managers for training opportunities.

Analysis of promotional opportunities:

Promotional opportunities come to women managers through participation in selection process as well as through connecting with people who can help in career development through offering guidance and advice. There were two questions in the survey that investigated these issues. With regards to opportunities for trying for promotions the picture emerges optimistic with approximately 62% of women as evident from Table 7 expressing the view that most of the time they are not denied an opportunity for promotion. On the other issue, however, barely 20% of the respondents as evident from Table 8 say that their organisations help them get connected to people with whom they can network for career development and 50% of the respondents have said that this is a rare occurrence in their organization. Overall, the two questions on lack of promotional opportunities yield a picture of low to moderate glass ceiling for promotion opportunities for women managers in Ajmer.

Table 7: Denied opportunity for promotion even when deserving

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cum Percent</i>
No, this never happens	1.00	52	33.99	33.99	33.99
No, this happens rarely	2.00	43	28.10	28.10	62.09
Sometimes, yes	3.00	36	23.53	23.53	85.62

Yes, often	4.00	8	5.23	5.23	90.85
Yes, always	5.00	14	9.15	9.15	100.00
<i>Total</i>		153	100.0	100.0	

Statistics: Mean = 2.27; Mode = 1.00; Median = 2.00 and Std dev = 1.24

Table 8: Connect with people who help in career development

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>	<i>Cum Percent</i>
Yes, always	1.00	8	5.23	5.23	5.23
Yes, often	2.00	15	9.80	9.80	15.03
Sometimes, yes	3.00	51	33.33	33.33	48.37
No, this happens rarely	4.00	36	23.53	23.53	71.90
No, this never happens	5.00	43	28.10	28.10	100.00
<i>Total</i>		153	100.0	100.0	

Statistics: Mean = 3.59; Mode = 3.00; Median = 4.00 and Std dev = 1.15

Thus, the perception that women are routinely denied promotional opportunity is not true in the case of this research study. So we have a situation where women get promotion opportunities but they do so, on the basis of their competence without much support from outside. Overall, the respondents in the study hint towards low to moderate deficiency of promotional opportunity as can be observed in Table 9.

Table 9: Frequency table for lack of promotional opportunities as a factor of glass ceiling

<i>Value Label</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Very low glass ceiling for promotion	1.00	14	9.15
Low glass ceiling for promotion	2.00	50	32.68
Moderate glass ceiling for promotion	3.00	85	55.55

High glass ceiling for promotion	4.00	4	2.62
Very high ceiling for promotion	5.00	0	0
<i>Total</i>		153	100.0

Statistics: Mean = 2.70; Mode = 3.00; Median = 3.00 and Std dev = 0.64

To discuss the results that have emerged out of this component of the study, we find that, though less, there still are women managers who feel that they are denied opportunity for promotion even when they deserved it. A lot of studies in the literature on this subject support our findings. One of the popular studies by Gupta et al., (1998) highlighted the generally weaker position of women in management. Some of the findings included: fewer male managers believed that women are capable of acquiring the required managerial skills than did female managers; fewer male managers believed that women managers possess the required objectivity for evaluating business situations properly and possess the requisite self-confidence; a significant percentage of male managers and a third of female managers believed that women managers would let their emotions influence their managerial behaviour; women are considered less assertive, less competitive and less aggressive in meeting the demands of business situations. Other organizational barriers include, women face barriers to their advancement in at the workplace due to hostile work environments, gender stereotyping, prejudices, role stereotyping and cultural biases.

Another angle that comes across while studying women managers is that they themselves have denied promotions because of the role conflict they face. They are busy supporting their family needs that many a times their career needs take a back seat. In spite of possessing the requisite calibre and skills they choose to stay out of promotions since they involve transfers, travelling and residential training.

Sujhata (2008) observes that most women at the workplace face family pressures which are balancing of the family responsibilities and work responsibilities. Space for private lives is the term used to depict the inability of women to work beyond the office hours along with the maternity leaves women tend to take during their course of work which become unavoidable for them. Factors like these make fuller participation of women at the workplace a struggle, the result of which is their stagnation at the lower ranks in the organization.

There are studies at the global front also which support the case. Marshall (1995) reflected on the angle of personal barriers of women managers. He elaborates that the turnover of women employees is because of low level of adaptability to the work environment, lack of job involvement due to higher levels of job stress and long working hours, lack of emotional balance and women's

desire to spend more time for personal commitments.

Remarkably 50% of the respondents in the present study feel that they were not engaged in the informal networks in the organization. There could be two perspectives on this. One could be that women managers themselves shy away from getting involved in informal networks like these or it could be that organizational environment does not encourage them to do so.

A very interesting observation was made by Maheshwari (2012) about the exclusion of women workers from the informal networks in the organizations and the impact they face because of this. Women workers are excluded from the informal organizational networks, do not get the cooperation of their colleagues in decision making process and thus are less popular as effective strategic decision makers, even if they perform well in formal teams.

At the global front some researchers like Kirchmeyer (1998) found it interesting to study the structural barriers that women managers face. Some of the common examples include the lack of supportive relationships from mentors and superiors and barrier to access informal networks as a help and determinant of career progression of women.

Practical implications of the study:

Based on the research study, certain recommendations are made. This section suggests some actions for women managers as well as for organisations that employ them.

Reducing glass ceiling effect for individuals:

- Women managers should concentrate on pursuing professional specialized courses that give them an edge in surpassing the glass ceiling.
- Women should continue to make efforts for new and improved skill acquisition.
- Women managers should consciously seek mentors for professional help and accept their guidance in their career.
- Women managers should work consistently towards self-improvement

Reducing glass ceiling effect for organizations:

- Organisations need to provide support in the form of continuing education and skill development of women managers so they are ready to shoulder higher level responsibilities.
- Organisations should ensure fair treatment to women in matters of promotion and to remove hurdles to their career growth.
- Organisations can look for ways to encourage their women managers to network with professionals that help them mentor for seeking higher positions.
- Organizations can demonstrate their commitment to women managers by including women members on the top management committees and decision making bodies. When women are represented at higher levels it is a source of inspiration and encouragement to women managers

at lower levels.

- On a positive note, organizations should bring the work and accomplishments of their women managers in front of their stakeholders and the outside world so that these women managers are perceived as role models by others.

Limitations of study:

The results of the study are based on data collected through a survey questionnaire. Essentially, responding to a questionnaire is self-reporting and the credibility of the findings depends entirely on the way respondents prefer to self-report their experiences. Secondly, the sampling of the study was essentially convenience and thus the research findings are based on 'what respondents were available to answer the survey'. The researcher has, however, made all efforts to include other means such as purposive, judgmental, snowballing and quota sampling so as to ensure objectivity as far as possible.

Thirdly, the reliability of two study variables of gender inequality and glass ceiling effect in the questionnaire turned to be on the lower side affecting the confidence that one could have on the findings emerging out of the analysis based on those responses. Finally, there could be unintended, in-built bias in the present study. The study is on women, done by a woman, and data were collected by women. Most of the references quoted incidentally are also from writings by women.

Directions for future research:

Research interest in women in management in Indian context has yet to pick up. There are but a few academic research projects reported in women in management studies. Our literature review noted that these are mostly in the area of entrepreneurship, management, human resource management, and marketing. This is a clear indication that research in Indian context has yet to move up from the exploratory level.

Glass ceiling could be studied through three broad issues namely, lack of career exposure opportunities, lack of training opportunity, lack of promotion opportunity which could be the major areas for research. Some of the illustrative research topics that could be taken up by researchers could be: glass ceiling effect across selected industries in India, glass ceiling effect in Indian management consultancy organisations, and glass ceiling effect in Company X.

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