Chapter 2

Literature Survey

(In this chapter, I will describe the scoping study of existing literature which formed the basis of the gender construct. The gender construct later informed the research design and the construction of the tools of research. The research done in the areas of work life balance, gender bias and structure and agency is also included. The chapter ends with a note on the gaps that this study fills.)

The exercise of doing an elaborate literature survey helped me to know the research done in the area; it helped me to discover gaps, and refine the purpose of this study. While the actual reading was not done in some predetermined order but snowballed from study to study, in the end it helped me to isolate the factors which are important to make my study holistic. The broad areas which affect a woman executive’s life are social, cultural, individual and organizational factors. Since gender in management is a much researched subject, and a lot of sub themes are studied in depth, my trail of literature review led me to other sub factors like work life balance, barriers and biases, definitions of self and role. (While there are many more subcategories due to the interdisciplinary character of gender studies, I am limiting them to what has immediate relevance to women executives only). This scoping exercise finally led me to create the gender construct, which is a tentative design or a conceptual scheme specifically invented for this research. It is hypothetical and is presumed to exist till it is tested. (See Figure 2.1)
Figure 2.1: The gender construct

The literature review of the scoping studies will be presented in same format as the construct, using its themes and sub themes as anchors. This will be followed by a brief account of literature survey done in ‘work life balance’ and in ‘gender bias’, which are the main areas of this study. The studies that led to choosing the theories of structure and agency and which are in consonance with the ontological stance of this study are also summarized in this chapter.

2.1 Scoping Studies

The preliminary studies give an idea about the field of research. The mind map of the scoping studies\(^1\) is presented and then the studies are enumerated below in a brief manner (Fig 2.2)

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\(^1\)“Scoping Studies are devices by which the ‘scope’ and aim of a proposed study are investigated” (Jones, 2004).
2.1 SCOPING STUDIES

Figure 2.2: Scoping studies

Organizational Factors
- Eagly & Carli (2007) Labyrinth of prejudice and subtle barriers in organizations
- Rosser (1999) Men identify with achievements, women with relationships
- Lannon (1998) Women are emotional and less objective
- Dauxoco (1998) Decision making style, gender role and leadership role are related
- Colwell & Tounsend (1990) Traditional male and female values affect communicating style
- Kanter (1977) Organizational barriers for women managers
- Moore, Grunberg & Greenberg (2004) Organizational barriers
- Balridge, Kimberley, Eddleston & Veiga (2006) Low mobility of managerial women
- Majumdar (2008) Institutional sexism
- Eagly & Carli (2007) Solutions

Cultural Factors
- Cales (1999) Women internalize cultural attitudes
- Baron & Byrne (2002) Social and cultural factors influence self identity
- Hofstede (1980) Differences between collectivist and individualistic cultures
- Ranganathananda (1971) Indian philosophical culture
- Chari (2000) Indian women
- Kaur (2000) Social status of Indian women
- Bhudiarw et al (2005) Impact of liberalization on social attitudes

Social Factors
- Dasgupta (2003) Impact of globalization or employment opportunities of women

Individual Factors
- Tung (1997) Self reported assertiveness and gender stereotyped
- Vinecombe & Singh (2000) Internalized bias

Scoping studies
2.1.1 Factors Affecting Women Executives

Since gender studies are multidisciplinary and approached through cultural, historical and social angles, other than the organizational or managerial perspective, it was necessary to scan a very broad domain to arrive at a basic understanding of the multiple factors that affect women executives. Broadly they can be divided into cultural, social, organizational and individual factors.

Cultural Factors

The broad framework of culture influences the society- its customs, attitudes and values. The society in turn influences the individuals who form it. The members of a society develop general attitudes towards each other and also define their social concept of self under the macro influence of culture and the micro influence of society. Though one’s self-concept is formed in the social context, there are cultural differences which influence social factors. Baron and Byrne (1984) declare that we define ourselves in terms of the social aspects. A part of who we are and how we think of ourselves is determined by a collective identity that is labeled as social self. They say that the social self has two components- that derived from interpersonal relationships, and that derived from belonging to collective groupings such as the race, ethnicity or culture. The culture affects the way we understand ourselves and our relationship with the external world. In case of women, the gendered perception of their status and role is culturally defined and this again will vary in individualistic and collectivistic cultures.

Further analysis of the collectivist and individualistic culture shows that they have specific common characteristics which can be classified as masculinity or feminity. These dimensions affect people’s values, method of work and relationships. Social and cultural studies categorize people by country, the region, ethnicity, religion or language and gender, generation and social class. Within each category cultural differences may be found.Hofstede (1980) identified four dimensions - Individualism / collectivism (loose or tight group bonds), Power distance (unequal power between sexes), Femininity/ masculinity (emphasis on
relationships and caring versus money progress, success). Uncertainty avoidance (the degree to which individuals feel threatened by unknown or uncertain situations). An analysis of Indian culture on the Hofstede scale reveals that India has the third highest rank (at 56) in masculinity, with the world average just slightly lower at 51. The higher the country ranks in this dimension, the greater the gap between values of men and women.

The influence of religiosity and the epics on role definition in India also makes the response of the women in India, different from other women in the Asian nations (Swamy, 1971). The Indian Vedantic thought views woman as a person with a destiny. She is a pilgrim in search of worldly excellence and spiritual realization. She must be willing to practice the austerity, the responsibility and the discipline required to be truly independent and free. Indian culture’s stress on the human spirit has far reaching implications into the Indian psyche. Feminist movements in India have not been as forceful as in the west. One factor is the strong spiritual and cultural influence which prevents Indian women from believing in radical feminism in a big way. The other factor is social attitude which permeates the culture. The collectivist attitude which dominates Asian nations does not view an individual as a separate factor but as a part of society. Social approval is the cornerstone of such cultures. Consequently its members do not diverge from it, as radically, as members in the individualistic western cultures do. They look for solutions and improvements for their problems and situations within the larger framework of their culture and beliefs (Triandis & Suh, 2002).

While India has always upheld in theory, this world view, she has failed to do so in actual practice. In the physical sphere of social life, women have suffered greatly. This is due to many factors which have created disturbed social conditions and the consequent diminishing of the human spirit. The long continuance of social and physical deprivation has arrested the development of women’s personality (Char, 2000). And this social handicap has affected her role, position and treatment in society. And over a period of time women internalize biases they face (Claes, 1999). As more women enter workplaces and redefine their
personal and social values within the broad framework of their cultural values, the struggles and conflicts they face increase. This aspect is not researched adequately in India and offers a fertile ground for further research. Especially, when culture is studied in terms of its effect on organizational attitudes, personal attitudes and social attitudes of men and women in the organization, new perspectives emerge.

**Social Factors**

The position of women in India is paradoxical. She is a goddess, worthy of worship, but at home she is a slave. As a wife she can lead the husband astray but as a mother she is regarded as an important source of power (Char, 2000). Families believe that the daughter is a source of misery while the son is the savior of the family. This paradoxical status creates greater pressures on an Indian woman and it is important to understand her position while trying to improve her status in society (Nath, 2000). However these traditional views are on a decline. As more women get educated and seek employment, their status undergoes a subtle shift.

Liberalization has brought a change in the lives of a section of women. (The vast majority still face formidable barriers). The present study confines itself to understanding the social attitudes that help or hamper women working in organizations at higher levels. Budhwar et al. (2005) examined the impact of liberalization on the Indian economy and the effect on the women employment opportunities. They discussed historical, social, cultural and economic factors influencing women managers and other barriers to women’s movement to the top managerial positions. Dasgupta (2003) studied the impact of globalization on employment opportunities for women. Her study had a broad focus and included working women in India in the rural, unorganized sector and the corporate sector. She found that globalization has a positive impact on their position. The family is considered the primary responsibility of women world over, though in some countries it is not considered so.

Organizational and family adjustments are necessary to help working women discharge dual responsibilities. *Work Life Balance Report* (1990) while inves-
tigating work/life balance found three factors were critical for those with children living at home, who believed their families helped their career progress. First and most prevalent was a sense of family support. A second factor was ‘shared home responsibilities’. The third was adequate and convenient child care. D. A. O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005), explored the nature of women’s career experiences over the life course by examining career patterns, career locus, career contexts, and career beliefs. They found that women careers differ from that of men and the chief reasons for this were identified as- the differential impact of family responsibilities on men’s and women’s career, the relational focus of women in their jobs lead to tokenism. Wood and Newton (2006) found that the choice to be childlessness may be promoted because of the structural and situational constraints imposed by the workplace. These constraints in the work place mirror the social beliefs that are reflected in organizations.

The east and the west vary in terms of their definition of a woman’s role culturally and socially. This difference could be one of degree, rather than content, but all the same, it does impose different challenges to women who wish to break the glass ceiling. Asian organizations are hierarchical structured (Sengupta, 2000). The society provides a superior position to male members and the secondary position to the female members. In the Asian society men are perceived to be assertive and commanding whereas women are expected to comply, obey and be submissive and docile. In the Indian context, the male and female perceive themselves to have different roles in the social space. Men are supposed to maintain external contacts, whereas, women are primarily expected to fulfill their family responsibilities. Social attitudes and beliefs affect organizational culture. These beliefs act like a barrier for women managers when they break traditional expectations to forge their way in a man’s domain.

Organizational Factors

Eagly and Carli (2007) believe that it is not a glass barrier that prevents women from growing in a career but a labyrinth of prejudices and subtle barriers which make them opt out of a career. Resistance to women leadership, difference in style of leadership and family responsibilities are a few barriers quoted by
them. The barriers that women face are subtle. Baskerville (1991) quotes the findings of Catalyst, a New York-based nonprofit research firm, which found that the majority of women in senior management were in staff roles, rather than the line positions which traditionally lead to executive advancement. They also found that the barriers to women advancing to top levels of management, as identified by CEOs interviewed were - Stereotyping/preconceptions (81%), Homophilly (49%), Lack of careful career planning and planned job assignments (47%), Exclusion from the informal network of communications (38%) and Counterproductive behavior of male colleagues (35%) , Other barriers (21%)

In India too the patriarchal culture seeps into organizational culture. Majumdar (2007) said that the reason for fewer women at the top in Indian organizations is stereotyping. Majority of Indian companies still have a kind of institutional sexism that assumes women are less able than men. Stereotyping is yet another barrier women face in organizations and in society.

Moore, Grunberg, and Greenberg (2004) found that women do face a greater number of obstacles and critical judgments about their work performance as compared to managerial men. Women also give up advancement on careers because they lack mobility. Baldridge, Eddleston, and Veiga (2006) found that women managers are less willing to relocate. A more difficult problem to tackle is the subtle forms of exclusion within our workplace cultures where men dominate – at least demographically. These subtle barriers are often bundled into what is commonly described as a ‘male-dominated’ culture’. Attributes of this culture typically include an emphasis on long working hours, limited flexibility, aggressive communication styles and absence of emotion (Spearritt, 1999). Olsson (2000) says that heroic masculinity in organizations is supported by organizational myths and stories which are vehicles of communication to support organizational goals and provide role models. Meritocracy is an impact of the masculine paradigm. The price of membership is silence or conformity. She says that an archetype of leadership is not a style, which is a reflection of an individual personality, but the social construction. This can put great pressure on women to conform to the masculine paradigm. The heroic masculinity
in organizations expresses itself in the following attitudes—Invisibility (-women are denied visibility in wage promotions, etc.), Sexuality (-is the thought that women use their sex to grow and organizations.) and stereotyping (-women are born to serve.) Some researchers found reasons behind the discrimination towards women for higher positions. Feminine qualities are not valued in a masculine culture and so women are seen as unsuitable for higher positions.

Butruille et al. (1989) argues that it is assumed in the business world that women are more emotional than men, and correspondingly less objective and productive, but now it is seen as a management strength rather than a weakness, particularly in industries that prize personal creativity and teamwork. Kanter (1977) summarizes the barriers preventing women’s access to the top positions which range from their unaggressive style, their relational focus to their indirect way of seeking approval. The impact of these barriers is the lack of respect for women.

Wolfram, Mohr, and Schyns (2007) found that female leaders are at risk of receiving less professional respect from their followers than male leaders. To provide equal opportunity to women organizations will have to address social and organizational attitudes. They can then understand the unique pressures faced by women and make suitable policies for their growth. Koonce (2004) says that creating places where women can learn with their professional peers in all-female settings builds special bonds of connection and trust. It also encourages risk taking and collaborative group learning, much of which occurs as the result of women connecting with each other around shared experiences. Another method to ensure the growth of career women is mentoring. Tharenou (2005) conducted a study to assess whether mentor career-support assists women’s career advancement more than it does men’s and whether it has more positive effects than psychosocial support does.

Research has also been done to counter these effects in organizations. Eagly and Carli (2007) suggest the following managerial interventions to improve the position of women in the organization and make the workplace culture more women friendly. They suggest increasing people’s awareness of psychological
drivers of prejudice towards female leaders, and work to dispel those perceptions, change longer hour's norm, reducing the subjectivity of performance evaluation and avoiding tokenism.

The measures taken by Indian organizations to improve their position and the way in which these measures are received by women managers needs to be investigated. One of the purposes of this study is to know what subtle barriers exist in organizations and which organizational facilities are more helpful for women executives.

**Individual Factors**

Women have to counter many barriers within themselves and in their external circumstances to find their place in organizations. Society’s constant emphasis on women’s dependence, other directness, self sacrifice and nurturing, caring role contributes to women’s ambivalence about their own worth (Claes, 1999). This problem is further compounded when women work in organizations which have a predominantly masculine culture. They are forced to adopt masculine traits to prove themselves and to compete with others (Zanetti, 2002). But, a woman is a woman first, and a manager second. When she is constantly measured by a yard stick determined by men she can experience a feeling of ‘loss of self’ since her feminine traits are suppressed. Zanetti (2002) further says that when men and women deny the feminine side of their personality it has repercussions on them. Men who deny the feminine side of their personality feel sucked dry of emotion and women who project their masculine side and suppress their feminine side feel violated. The price of not balancing the two sides of the personality can be heavy.

Social change has occurred over a period of time and the masculine paradigm is losing its stronghold in organizations. Sczesny, Bosak, Neff, and Schyns, (2004) quote (Twenge, 1997) who observed a decrease in gender differences in self-description of masculine and feminine traits over a 20-year period (1973–1993). She also found no gender differences in self-reported assertiveness. Women described themselves as similarly assertive and dominant as men. She concluded that “Women’s assertiveness varies with their status and roles. Social change is
2.2. **STUDIES IN THE AREA OF WORK LIFE BALANCE**

The perception of men and women about the ideal style of management affects their actions. Women’s perception of successful management styles are important too, especially when women’s own preferred management style differs from the view of the top team. Such differences can lead to women not putting themselves forward for promotion. Vinnicombe and Singh (2002) conducted a study which reports about male and female managers’ perception of the ‘style of successful managers’ and their ‘own style of management’, in a large insurance company by using the PAQ. The study provides further evidence of a shift in perceptions of leadership styles towards androgynous management style. However, women are still thinking in “think manager, think male” mode, which may limit their confidence to put themselves forward for promotion. The individual personality is also an important determinant of managerial style.

The personal values and the psychological makeup of a woman manager define her. This again is influenced by the organizational culture and the expectations of society. By including all these factors while studying women managers in Indian corporate a holistic understanding about executive women can be drawn.

2.2 **Studies in the Area of Work Life Balance**

One of the focus areas of this study is work life balance. The different studies have been categorized in terms of impact of work life conflict, factors influencing work life balance, solutions and benefits of promoting work life balance. These are presented in a mind map. (See Figure 2.3)

**Factors Affecting Work Life Balance**

Work life balance has been researched in many angles. It can be seen from a country perspective, where the social, cultural and economic factors shape it. In India work life balance takes a unique form due to the socio-historic factors and the cultural values of the country. Though liberalization has created opportunities, gender stereotyping and other barriers retard the growth of women executives (Budhwar et al., 2005). It can also be approached in terms of an
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Figure 2.3: Studies in work life balance
individual in a new cultural setting. For instance a study of work life balance for female expatriate managers identified the major factors which influence it as leisure time, social networking, personal confidence and organizational support (Fischlmayr & Kollinger, 2010).

Social factors have a more direct impact on women executives (Burchielli, Bartram, & Thanacoody, 2008). Rabinowitz (2007) reviews the work life balance discourse comprehensively and focuses mainly on the gender differences in care giving, work, family, and well-being. Organizational factors, social and cultural factors and their influence on work life balance have been comprehensively discussed in his review article. General social attitudes percolate into organizations and homes. A Brazilian study shows that the prejudices against a woman’s career are many. The overload of work, strained relationships with partners, social pressure to have children etc. exist but they (women managers) are particular not to give up careers (Carvalho Neto, Tanure, & Andrade, 2010). A longitudinal study, spanning eight years, of attitudes that men and women students hold about women executives shows that men have more negative attitudes than women. There is also no great change in this attitude over eight years. In the light of this study, one can expect stereotyping and discrimination to continue over a period of time (Dubno, 1985).

However, there are also studies that report just the opposite. The declining impact of male hierarchical attitudes is evidenced in a study in Australia on 848 women in the banking sector, which reveals that more than male hierarchy, it is organizational size impacts the career support. Career support refers to support in the form of mentor support and internal networks (Metz, 2009). Attitudes at work also influence the amount of time women executives are able to devote at home. The ‘long work hours’ culture and mobility issues are still found to inhibit women executives’ ability to balance work and life. These barriers operate in both the individuals psyche and collective culture of an organization (Guillaume & Pochic, 2009). The long hours’ culture puts pressures of work life balance on both men and women. Men lose time with family but for women it may mean delay in child bearing or even childlessness (Wood & Newton, 2006). Another
study examining the attrition of talented professionals found that retention and recruitment practices and the work culture which believes that more time spent at office is a proof of commitment, are not compatible with work life balance. The authors recommend transparent and clear promotion process, more communication and positive role models to be provided if organizations wish to retain their female talent (Baldiga, 2005). Cleveland, Cordeiro, Fisk, and Mulvaney (2006) discuss the impact of organizational climate on work life balance. Women report greater work family conflict than men. Perceived growth in work demands had negative effects on employee well being but spousal employment showed no impact on work family conflict.

**Impact of Work Life Conflict**

Gender studies show that work life balance is an issue for both men and women. The long hours’ culture puts pressures of work life balance on both men and women. Men lose time with family but for women it may mean delay in child bearing or even childlessness (Wood & Newton, 2006). Women get worst hit by the long hours culture. Long hours are seen as a positive point for promotion and so women with caring positions get sidelined or leave the organization (Waumsley & Houston, 2009). A British study reveals the multiple role demands made and the sacrifices made by women managers while balancing home and career demands. The findings showed that both male and female managers are making sacrifices in one domain in order to accommodate the other. However, women made sacrifices with regard to having children (Broadbridge, 2010).

It may be argued that women in senior positions have greater autonomy as compared to women in lower positions. But the work life conflict does force many personal sacrifices on the part of women in organizations to even reach the top (Burchielli et al., 2008)). Besides, the unwillingness of a woman executive to relocate, which often dampens her career prospect is affected by family attributes too (Baldridge et al., 2006). Some studies believe that increased number of women joining into management level, coupled with the awareness of the benefits of gender diversity in Indian organizations makes for the creation of a conducive environment for women managers. For this, they assert that the
support of top management is essential (Kannan, 2009). Yet other studies say that despite the increase of women in the workplace and the widespread acceptance of the contribution and skills of women executives, barriers continue to exist. It was found that equal opportunity is a myth and segregation of jobs is found vertically and horizontally (Lopez-Fernandez, Martin-Alcazar, & Romero-Fernandez, 2009).

Some researchers study the impact of the struggle involved in achieving work life balance. A study was done on how occupational stress affects men and women managers in the work arena, home arena, individual arena, and it was found that women face greater stress than men (Davidson & Cooper, 1984). A strong case for gender inclusion in organizations is also made by Henrekson and Stenkula (2009) who believe that until careers are made compatible with child rearing, women will continue to leave organizations because the emotional costs are too high. The struggle to balance home and work has resulted in an opting out revolution which has resulted in four types of opting out strategies-the supermom heroine (one who tries to be both mom and careerist); non traditional patterns like the opt-out prioritizer (tries to balance but family comes first); the late-blooming careerist (serves the family first and then decides to pursue a career); the traditionalist (devoted to the family); and the nonconformist (self oriented) (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2006).

**Solutions to Work Life Conflict and Benefits of Work Life Balance**

An intensive study of the work life balance discourse, examines the family and work related factors that affect work life balance. It also suggests the different benefits that both organizations and individuals will accrue if work life balance is achieved (Naithani, 2010). In order to make a business case to promote women to top positions, a comparison was made between the financial performance of the firm and number of women directors. Though the results were mixed, they indicated that women executives did influence profitability, subject to certain situations (Simpson, Carter, & DSouza, 2010).

It was also found that the work life issues actually enhance skills. The multiple roles that women play in their personal lives actually enrich their ability
to work in teams and providing emotional support. The task related skills and interpersonal skills improve with their ability to multitask. The psychological benefits of self esteem and self confidence due to their other roles in social spaces have positive impact on their jobs too (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002).

On the negative side, achieving work life balance is not an easy task. A qualitative study in the Petroleum Industry on how work life conflicts are defined and what factors in work place affected the employees, revealed that the conflicts at work were complex, personal, and related to role definition, load of work, competencies required and culture (De Villiers & Kotze, 2003). Female friendly organizations are created not merely by a cosmetic makeover but by a change in the very culture itself. The process of change will require identifying the root biases; making gender parity a top management issue; propagating diversity in the organization; advertising internally for vacant posts and encouraging the women to apply; providing training, mentoring and high profile opportunities to women (Galbraith, 2010).

At a more superficial level, non standard jobs do provide the flexibility required for better work life balance. But to have job satisfaction, the work status and work schedule have to be matched to the employee preference (Omar, 2010). A leadership model specially catering to the needs of women was created by Barsh, Cranston, and Craske (2009) which revolve around four dimensions, namely – meaning, managing energy, positive framing and connecting. This model has been found to be useful for women executives in being effective at work and in their personal life. Work life balance does not need organizational makeover alone; the individuals also have to make some changes. It was found that working mothers need to reframe their image of themselves to be able to cope with their work life stress. They believe that they are good mothers who arrange quality care for their child and do more than their spouse in terms of child rearing (Buzzanell et al., 2005).

The motives which govern a woman manager’s career will also affect her work life balance. It is generally assumed that women work to supplement family
2.3. STUDIES IN THE AREA OF GENDER BIAS

income while men work to achieve professional competence and satisfaction. This was studied in India and was found not to be true (Singh, 1994). Though organizations are taking active measures to improve the work life balance, the representation of women at the top levels is far from satisfactory. So some studies focus on the efficacy of the organizational facilities offered to employees. Flexible work schedules are perceived differently by men and women. Men are concerned about flexible options without loss of pay while women are more concerned about reduced hours and ad-hoc leave to achieve work life balance. Men were also more concerned about public opinion regarding their level of commitment, if they used more flexi time. Besides flexi times are useful not only for women who are mothers but also to other women and men who have aged parents, hobbies to pursue etc. So there is a wider usage of flexible options than the one envisaged (Albion, 2004).

2.3 Studies in the Area of Gender Bias

The number of women executives in C-suite is low because women lack line experience, their socializing styles are different from men, there not enough career opportunities, tokenism and gender based stereotyping and old boy networks exist (Oakley, 1999). The gender biases identified in the scoping stage of literature survey are categorized into nine types of biases and details of work done in each type of bias were explored. The synopsis of the background work in the area of gender bias is presented in the mind map. (See Fig 2.4)

**Heroic Masculinity**

In organization bias takes the form of heroic masculine culture. Conventional images of heroic masculinity include a ‘man of action’, a ‘hero’, ‘a person in control’ and instances of ‘understated emotions’. This identity has the traits of aggressiveness, competitiveness, strength, autonomy, rationality and emotional detachment. The heroic man has to beat lesser men, and negate others by his achievement. The shadow side of this macho image is insecurity and an overbearing attitude towards others (Collinson, 2003; Due Billing & Alvesson,
Figure 2.4: Studies in gender bias
2.3. STUDIES IN THE AREA OF GENDER BIAS

Organizations too have essentially had a masculine identity (Kanter, 1977). This idealized image is the direct progeny of a patriarchal society, scientific management and division of labour (Jayal, 2008; Bowles, 1993; Olsson, 2000). Examining organizational story telling and heroic masculinity, the author makes a case for gender narratives in organizational setting. The continuing pervasiveness of heroic masculinity, organizational stories show executives as solitary (male) heroes engaged in unending trials of endurance. This marginalizes women whose styles and narratives are different.

The masculine culture of the organization influences all the members of the organization but does greater damage to women. Stereotyping, bias due to role incongruity, tokenism, bias in promotions and pays, denial of power and position are due to the exclusionary attitude of masculine hegemony (Hoobler, Wayne, & Lemmon, 2009; Schein, 1978; Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008). It was found that firms which were doing badly associated with the female stereotypes while describing managers, which was not found in successful firms. This suggested that women are favored in times of poor performance. This is because they are seen to be good people managers and therefore are expected to take the blame for organizational failure. It was not because they are expected to bring about a turnaround through able leadership (Ryan & Haslam, 2007).

Stereotyping

(Due Billing & Alvesson, 2000), in his article examines the dangers of stereotyping leadership or management style as masculine or feminine. Rosener et al. (1990) say that sexual bias is subtle and is prevalent in organizations. Socially prescribed roles are expected out of men and women. Therefore many women are not supported by their organizations as much as the men are supported. Vianen and Fischer (2002) report that an examination of the effect of organizational culture and women’s career motives revealed that a masculine culture affected women in non managerial posts more than those in managerial posts. It is also found that women in general are less ambitious than men and that work life conflicts were a major cause for this. G. E. Miller (2004) found that the industries which have predominantly masculine culture create a pressure
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on women who use coping strategies to fit into the system. This results in reinforcing the male culture in the organization. K. Miller (2009) also studied the impact of masculine culture, transactional management styles and stereotypical attitudes on female manager’s progression in public sector organization. The impact of this subtle image is that it marginalizes women, alienates men from fulfilling relationships at work and home, encourages transaction styles of management, and compromises the quality of decision making in organizations (Due Billing & Alvesson, 2000). Organizations become explicitly meritocratic and this further reinforces the exclusion of women (Castilla & Benard, 2010).

**Tokenism**

Helfat, Harris, and Wolfson (2006) found that a narrow pipeline does exist for women to reach at the top. They found that most organizations did not have women at the top and in those that had women; they had a mere token presence. The career pattern of women is different from that of men as they have greater responsibility at home. Besides they have a different psychological development and are more relational in nature. Organizations too give them token status.

There are three phases of a woman’s career progression they are- Idealistic achievement, pragmatic endurance, re-inventive contribution. (D. A. O’Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). The study examines the global trend of rising participation of women in professions and public space. It shows that though the participation has increased in terms of number, decision making power is still denied to women in Asia and Africa (Ebohon, Osemwota, & Agbebaku, 2011). Female tokenism and the think manager - think male are still prevalent as barriers to women. The issue of gender inequity was investigated from a woman perspective and the psychological climate that they work in by King, Hebl, George, and Matusik (2010). It was found that token women perceived their environment to be more inequitable. Women in construction industry indicated that behaviours and attitudes on the job create the inequitable climate in the work spaces. The article reports the impact of gender and the gender ratio on the leadership style and the mental health of employees. The authors conclude that women in
male dominated industries where the gender ratio is skewed face greater stress and pressure from discrimination (Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999) is confirmed by other researchers too. Floge and Merrill (1986) in a study of tokenism in hospital setting revealed that gender factors do affect women negatively and men positively. However, the extent of the impact is affected by other organizational and occupational factors.

**Think Manager, Think Male**

Schein, Müller, Lituchy, and Liu (1996) This study compared the sex role stereotypes perceived by men and women in China, Japan, U.S., Great Britain and Germany and found that the ‘Think manager- Think male’ is a global phenomenon. While the male management students in all the countries showed similar degree of stereotyping the women management students were not similar. This could be affected by the opportunities available to women in each of these countries. The paper compared the alignment of the managerial stereotype with the male stereotype in the continental US and Hawai’. Surprisingly a high Think manager, think male was found in CUS but not in Hawai’i. The stereotypes exist but not universally (de Pillis, Kernochan, Meilich, Prosser, & Whiting, 2008)

**Homophilly**

When an organization is explicitly meritocratic, then it creates a bias against women. The tendency to favour a male employee over an equally qualified female employee was evident according to Castilla and Benard (2010). It was found that the influence of senior management on the talent management process promotes homophilly. Gender bias in tools and procedures effectively exclude women and thus destroy opportunities of women advancement (Warren, 2009). The bosses’ perception of women subordinates and their work life conflicts, influences their chances of promotion. This could be another reason for bias (Hoobler et al., 2009). Another form of discrimination is the ‘glass cliff’. It is the promotion of women to positions which appear challenging but are very problematic. The causes behind the glass cliff and the reaction of women executives to the glass cliff are analysed by Ryan and Haslam (2007).
Cultures of Advantage

Women lack some advantages which are naturally accessible to men. The upward influence of employees to their superiors was found to be influenced by a variety of factors like, the organizational power, gender ratio and networking of the major group of employees and supervisors (J. O’Neil, 2004). Despite the rise in the number of women employed in first and middle management levels, bias at the top levels continues. A comparison in salaries, benefits to men and women at top levels in Turkish and British banks reveals that bias exists in practice at top levels despite claims to equal opportunities. The differentiation was on the basis of age, class, sex, religion and marriage, networking, safety, ability to travel etc. Though the cultures in the two countries vary, the bias exists against women (Özbilgin & Woodward, 2004). Another study by Worrall, Harris, Stewart, Thomas, and McDermott (2010) in UK on the low representation of women in the construction industry revealed that masculine organizational cultures, inflexible work are the main block. Support systems, networking and confidence inducing development programmes are needed.

Women themselves are also inhibited in developing contacts in Asian countries. Bu and Roy (2008) used structured interviews with Chinese managers to study their career success networks, which revealed that female leaders had lesser interaction with male Chinese managers when it was person centric, but were more willing to interact with position related ties. These have implication for their career. However, the use of internet and network sites overcomes this problem to an extent. An exploration of three dimensions of social capital, namely family, peer group and new contact reveals that majority of the use of social network sites is about social relationships and less of family contact (Brandtzaeg, Heim, & Kaare, 2010).

Double Bind

Kanter (1977) introduced the concept of double bind. Women are criticized when they use masculine styles of management and are considered unfit when they use feminine style. “I’m either a bitch or a bimbo.” So said Carly Fiorina, the high-profile former CEO of Hewlett Packard, describing a phenomenon
social scientists call ‘ambivalent sexism’. Women are considered communal and prosocial and have to fit their behaviour at work. The attributes associated with leaders (e.g. self-confidence, assertiveness, take-charge, problem-solver, inspirational, risk taker, and action oriented) and with managers (such as leadership potential, self-confidence, and ability to take initiative) are more congruent with stereotypical male behavior (Eagly, 2009). The impact of the double bind was described by Warren (2009) in three ways. Stereotype behaviour was expected and criticized. Women have to prove themselves more than men. Competent women are respected but disliked.

**Devaluation**

P. N. Cohen and Huffman (2003) describe the devaluation of women in terms of pay. They also describe how the work in families (unpaid work) is neither recognized nor valued. Devaluation is internalized and can affect performance of women (Bergeron, Block, & Echtenkamp, 2006).

**Cinderella Complex**

The hidden fear of independence and self assertion among women was first introduced by Collete Dowling. She says that women are required and also desire dependence. At the same time, women seek to prove and be independent (Dowling, 1981). Some women use their femininity to their advantage by acting helpless to invite help. They also can subtly coerce men to give them concessions at work.

### 2.4 Indian Studies

Buddhapriya (2009), in her study found that family responsibilities curtailed women professionals in their career advancement. There are also gender insensitive practices in organizations, which further marginalizes them. Another study in Indian banks measured and analyzed psychographic variables using the statistical tool of discriminant analysis found that the most important factor that prejudiced the rise of women executives is the lack of equality of opportunities, non-supportive organizational environment, perceived lack of managerial
abilities, and gender stereotypes (Sandhu & Mehta, 2007). The study further indicates that there is a lack of appreciation for women’s capabilities and insensitivity to gender issues. While firms are making efforts to retain women and create conducive atmospheres, the issue is more complicated. Bhattacharya (2011) reports on the retention strategies employed by firms to ensure that women employees do not opt out says that 68% changed their policies to let women advance in careers, 70% planned implementation of formal flexible policies, 34% expressed that awareness program for all their employees. Also the gender identities and self concepts of employees in global software companies where, the work settings have influences of global culture and of local social culture develop differently (D’Mello, 2006). Attitudes of Indian women were found to be more open and favourable towards women as compared to the attitude of men towards women (Diwan & Menezes, 1992). The way women and men acquire power varies in terms of motives and power bases. The authors make a case for deeper analysis of conscious and unconscious behavior of men and women in order to create a sustainable equity (Mathur & Salmi, 2006).

2.5 Impact on Women

Sex role stereotyping affects the performance of women managers adversely. In organizations it takes the form of tokenism, bias in supervision and placement. It also limits the ability of women executives to develop behaviours needed to get work related power (Schein, 1978). An in depth study about the leadership prototype of male and female leadership reveals that role incongruity exists. It is found that female leaders are expected to be sensitive and strong while male leaders need not exhibit sensitivity (Johnson et al., 2008). Thus it confirmed the existence of gender bias in the form of role incongruity.

Women executives find it difficult to access to information, and get advice from mentors and accumulate the necessary social capital which could account for their low visibility and their scarcity at the top levels. Social capital refers to guidance, access to information, assignments and important projects. It is found
that these career enhancing resources are available to men more than women. While women are aware that they need impression management techniques to create favourable impressions, they say that masculine organizational cultures, gender stereotypes limit them from accumulating social capital (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2010).

Lyons and McArthur (2007) prove how gender impacts performance evaluations in organizations. When women executives try to adapt to this unconscious but existing bias, their effort puts them at greater disadvantage. They conclude saying that a woman’s gender can prevent her success. The risk of believing a negative stereotype as truth about oneself and acting upon it is called stereotype threat. When women internalize the negative belief they underperform in masculine sex role-typed conditions (Bergeron et al., 2006).

## 2.6 Benefits of Addressing Bias

Many studies prove that the increase in the number of women at work place will reduce bias. Butruille et al. (1989) in his article discusses the measures companies can take to attract and retain women workers. He also describes the need to reinvent the workplace in terms of revision of patriarchal attitudes and allowing a better redress to family related issues. The role of women in the workplace as harbingers of change is also discussed. Linehan and Walsh (2001) focused on women expatriate managers and the barriers they faced in their career in Europe. They make a case for the inclusion of more women in senior management levels to achieve competitive advantage (Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011).

An analysis of three stereotypes of masculine culture- ‘think manager, think male’, agency communion paradigm and ‘masculinity – feminity’ paradigm shows that the masculine leadership construct is on the decline and is greater for male leaders than female leaders. There is also an overwhelming body of evidence proving that there is a change in attitude in the west and in other nations too (Mostafa, 2005; White & Özkanlı, 2010). There is increasing aware-
ness of the need to integrate women into management (V. Gupta, 2009; Sircar, 2009; Singh, 1994).

An alternative concept of feminine management has also been developed to serve the purpose of gender equity in a basic sense and create ethical organizations in a broader sense (Maier, 1997; White & Özkanlı, 2010) This study in educational setting found that there is an increased acceptance of the transformational style of leadership over the transactional style of leadership. Though the Turkish Universities reported lesser preference to inclusive leadership as compared to Australian Universities, there is a definite change from the attitude of heroic masculinity to inclusive leadership. (Mostafa, 2005) This study investigates the attitude of society in UAE about women managers. It is found that though females had a different view as compared to male respondents, in an overall sense there is a significant change in attitude towards women managers which evidences that modernity decreases patriarchal attitudes. While these measures go a long way in mitigating the obvious and glaring effects of gender bias, a complete eradication is not achievable in the immediate future (Duehr & Bono, 2006). Therefore women executives still contend with bias in a subtle form. They use coping strategies which actually reinforce the masculine culture (G. E. Miller, 2004).

Women executives may also internalize the negative belief and they underperform in masculine cultures (Bergeron et al., 2006). The subtle masculine culture not only marginalizes women but also affects men adversely (Metz & Simon, 2008). Men and women prefer supportive organizations to competitive and masculine cultures in organizations (Catanzaro, Moore, & Marshall, 2010). Thus the study of social attitudes as perceived by women and men managers and the methods adopted by women managers to achieve work life balance in India, after almost two decades of globalization will be useful.

What is more important to know is how these women managers have balanced or faced in themselves the need to follow their own path as against fulfilling the role ascribed to them. Their ability to face this conflict not only defines their role as leaders but also contributes to their ability to face controversy and
2.7. STRUCTURE AND AGENCY

The self construal of a woman executive cannot be studied in isolation from all the factors which influence them.

2.7 Structure and Agency

The social theories of Bourdieu, Giddens, Archer and Lois McNay have been used in many studies to study the interaction between structure and agency. The varied contexts in which they are used gives a deeper understanding of their usability in particular contexts.

2.7.1 Agency and Culture in the West and in Asia

People in collectivist and individualist cultures define themselves differently. According to Menon (1999), North Americans conceive of individual persons as free agents, whereas East Asians conceptualize them as constrained and less agentic. They conclude that cultures differ in implicit theories of individuals and groups, and in the importance given to agency. Similarly, a study of self construal involving five cultures (Australia, the United States, Hawaii, Japan and Korea) shows that differences between these cultures affect the extent to which people see themselves as independent agents. Gender differences are however differentiated by the extent to which people regard themselves as emotionally related to others (Kashima, 1995).

Cultural backgrounds influence the extent of self definitions in terms of the strength and elaboration. “Westerners are thought to have an independent self-construal, which is characterized by separateness from others, by attention to one’s abilities, traits, preferences and wishes, and by the primacy of one’s individual goals over those of in-groups. East Asians are thought to have an interdependent self-construal, which is characterized by a sense of fundamental connectedness with others, by attention to one’s role in in-groups, and by the primacy of group goals over individual goals” (Markus, 1991). The cultural differences in self definition were confirmed in a study on self-construal based
on national origin and gender. It was found that Americans scored higher on independent scales than Indians, and women scored higher than men on relational self-construal measures. Also Indian rural population showed greater independence and Indian urban population showed greater collective self-construal (Kanithi, 2007). Most studies find that structural reproduction is more common than structural reform (Tomlinson, 2013). M.A. Adler (1992), in their study of attitudes of West and East German women find that progressive attitudes among German women does not eliminate the gender gap in attitudes about work, family or gender. Cultural and national differences mediate the impact of work-life conflict and the agency of women executives. A comparative study among American and South Asian women professionals in IT careers reveals that American professionals quote organizational factors like gender stereotyping and discrimination more than their Asian counterparts, but both the groups agree that long term commitment to a career is hindered due to work-life pressures. Differences are observed in the perception of work, coping mechanisms and expectations from organizations(Adya, 2008). This is also endorsed in a study by Tang (2005), who say that culture and values form the basis of organization of family and work in each country, and so there are considerable differences in the way integration of work and family life is done. Agency is thus bounded by wider societal features and institutional environments (Evans, 2002).

2.8 The Gap This Study Seeks to Fill

While many studies have been done on work life balance and gender bias, this study differentiates itself on the following points-

- Studies on subtle gender biases experienced by Western women are replete. This study explores subtle gender biases experienced by Indian women executives. Given the fact that liberalization and globalization have seen an increase in the number of women in executive positions, and India has
2.8. THE GAP THIS STUDY SEEKS TO FILL

a cultural content which has an impact on this trend, this study makes valuable contribution.

- The successful coping strategies of women executives in the area of work life balance and gender bias and its dynamics is explored in detail by this study. Holistic studies in this area are few.

- There are very few studies on top women executives and the studies which are done at the top level usually do not include more than 30 to 50 women. This study covers more than 100 top women executives.

- This study is also one of the few studies in oriental (Indian), collectivist culture; bringing out differences which exist between oriental and western cultures in this field of work life balance and gender bias.

The literature survey and the gender construct helped in refining the objectives and informed the methodology of the study. This chapter is followed by a detailed description of the ontological, epistemological and methodological stance of the study, the research design and the steps taken to ensure rigour in the research process.