CHAPTER 6
ANALYSIS OF THE DATA – II
Why is there a Glass Ceiling?

There are no facts, only interpretations.

— Friedrich Nietzsche

Introduction

In any free society whenever there is inequitable allocation of reward in any social institution it almost always becomes apparent for all to see. Even heads of organisations have brought their opinions out of the closet and are expressly admitting to such. That there is a glass ceiling in the IT industry in India as elsewhere has been adequately established through the findings from the field contained in the preceding chapter. Not only are women underrepresented but also the fact that women earn less than men in the IT industry seems to have now become a foregone conclusion. What is more alarming however is that trends are showing increasing gender disparity over the years despite heightened awareness and organisational efforts to overcome the same. Catalyst, a non-profit organisation, reported in 2013 that women’s representation on boards has stalled compared to the previous year. In fact, year-over-year increases in women’s representation on boards have stagnated for the past eight years (Catalyst Blog, 2014). At the same time as we saw in the description of the field that the IT sector itself has grown tremendously and has generated employment in large measure. In spite of this development jobs for women at higher levels have not improved. This leads us to ponder over the reason for this progressive discrimination in the workplace.

The question then emerges is twofold: Why is this happening? And, who or what is to blame for this? This chapter is an attempt to answer that question through an analysis of the extensive primary data collected during field work. It is an effort to fathom the underlying cause for the presence of glass ceiling – Who is to shoulder the responsibility for this aberration?

The literature review contained in chapter 2 had pointed to several factors that are presumed to be the cause for the glass ceiling inequality for women. An attempt has been made to arrange the data in terms of categories of these supposed reasons that are likely generators for this glass ceiling inequality in order to ascertain the
validity of the prevailing explanations. In the following paragraphs the data has been analysed so as to understand with greater clarity the reasons for this overwhelming presence of the glass ceiling inequality.

Organisational Work Culture

Do IT organisations knowingly or unknowingly foster a culture of inequity? Effort has been made to gauge this aspect of the culture of organisations through employees’ perceptions on various indices such as fairness in their work conditions, the degree to which their work potential has been developed, their levels of job satisfaction, the organisation’s commitment to diversity, the importance of gender in work allocation and career growth, the nature of interaction among co-workers, and the sexual harassment strictures in place.

Fair Treatment at Workplace

Fairness in work conditions can be assessed by objective indices such as salary, working hours expected and to a certain extent promotion prospects. Even in some of these sharp gender disparities were detected that the analysis of data presented in the chapter 5 has showed. However here are presented the subjective opinions of the employees on their perceptions of their work conditions and organisational culture.

When asked a question whether employees felt they were treated fairly at work majority of the responses of both men and women showed a similar degree of assent. Employees were provided a range of responses to choose from. It can be seen from the data that 58% of the women hold that they are treated fairly at work and 31% somewhat agree about this. Only 11% disagree altogether that they are treated in a fair manner at work. In a similar fashion equally about 62.4% of the men agree and 29% somewhat agree that they receive a fair deal at work. Only about 8% deny this.

The responses of the employees show that the institutional norms governing the workplace are as such non-discriminatory in nature. Figure 6.1 shows the range of employees’ responses in this regard.
Adequately Developed as an Employee

An aspect of fair treatment in the workplace is also the quality of on job skill upgradation provided to the personnel so that they may be adequately developed as employees. This is essential to keep pace with new research and developments more so in the fast changing world of information technology. This has been represented in figure 6.2.

Do you agree that you are treated fairly by your superiors at work?

Do you feel you have been adequately developed as an employee? For example, have you ever been offered training courses (i.e., in computer science, customer service, supervisory skills etc.)?
As we can see from the figure, 83.1% of the women executives and 77.4% of the men do feel that they have been offered opportunities for skill enhancement to develop as employees. This shows that organisationally women are offered similar opportunities for development as men. This finding is consistent with industry surveys that show that men and women receive similar formal access to training and development. It is the subtle practices that reinforce inequality. In fact women are more appreciative of their work conditions than men. This is true in the case of relative job satisfaction levels also.

**Job Satisfaction**

The overall job satisfaction level in the study sample is depicted in figure 6.3. As it can be seen 66% of the employees have feelings of job satisfaction but the remaining 34% express feelings of dissatisfaction.

If we analyse the job satisfaction level in terms of gender, among the 34% who are dissatisfied the men outnumber the women. Women by and large appeared to be overall quite satisfied with their jobs as 71.1% expressed a fair degree of job satisfaction. However, only 60.3% of the men have feelings of job satisfaction showing a fairly sizable gap of about 11% between the perceptions of women and men on their job satisfaction levels. The fact is that the men appeared to be more
discontented about their work situations than women. Figure 6.4 shows the level of job satisfaction of female and male employees.

![Figure 6.4](image)

**Overall how satisfied are you with your job?**

Women by and large were more satisfied with what they had been receiving as workplace rewards. Women enter their careers with appreciably lower expectations than men and are quite easily satisfied with whatever recompenses the job offers. Most of the interviewed women reported feelings of being “fortunate” or “truly blessed” or plain “lucky” conveying an (erroneous) impression that they had received more than they rightly deserved. The men on the other hand make for more demanding employees and do not attribute their success mainly to good luck rather they attributed it to their own hard work and ability. Though in absolute terms and relative to the women the men are faring far better in the industry their satisfaction levels are noticeably lower. It is also possible that this quality of insatiableness among men drives them to strive more to attain better conditions to move ahead in their careers and unrelentingly pursue higher career goals. Psychologists have found that individuals with a strong internal ‘locus of control’ (their extent of belief that they have control over their own lives) tend to assume responsibility for their actions while others attribute their success (or failure) to factors outside of themselves such as the environment or extra-natural factors like luck or fate. This perceptible difference in the mindsets of men and women has been a consistent strand throughout the survey regardless of the sphere of question involved.
Organisational Efforts for Gender Inclusivity

Most IT organisations pride themselves on their efforts for gender inclusivity. “Gender mainstreaming” is a popular catch phrase in corporate India today. And for once an oft repeated cliché seems to have actually become an institutional paradigm. Companies have designated ‘cells’ variously named for achieving enhanced gender expressivity. In fact IBM as early as 1953 came out with an equal opportunities policy letter (Kaul and Singh, 2012: 35). IBM defined diversity as “recognizing, appreciating and utilizing the unique talent and contributions of all individuals, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious and political beliefs, and other ideologies” (ibid.). Often women are appointed heads of human resources and diversity related departments in organisations. The fact is that not only are these mechanisms in place but these are not just put up for show; in fact they function as constructive entities often taking proactive measures to provide a ‘women-friendly’ organisational culture. In fact all my interview respondents concurred unequivocally that their respective organisations were indeed serious about women related matters. There is zero tolerance towards sexual harassment; and that is only one component of the initiatives taken for women. Larger organisations have child care facility on campus; many provide dedicated transport, work from home options and flexible work times. Maternity leave, paternity leave, extended sabbatical like leave periods, work-life balance seminars – companies bring on the entire range of props supposed to woo and retain women employees. Organisations run ‘leadership development’ programmes especially for women where capable women are identified and trained to take on greater responsibilities. In her foreword to _Lean In_, a bestselling autobiographical account by Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, Naina Lal Kidwai, CEO of HSBC has written:

> When I was deputy CEO I was asked to head the diversity initiative. We set up task forces across the country – with groups of ten or fifteen people, both men and women – who met over three months and came up with ideas on how to make the workplace more diverse. This led to so many wonderful ideas such as flexi-hours, sabbaticals, paternity leave, extended maternity leave, after hours classes on yoga, parenting and even salsa dancing. In addition to benefitting individuals, these measures helped women in the organization come together.

— Sandberg, 2013: x
It is not just the organisations that have this plethora of initiatives even popular social media have initiated mechanisms for creation of opportunities for corporate women to come together and form networks to address their common concerns. The social networking website Facebook for instance has an official “Facebook Diversity Page”.

**Diversity Policies**

Most organisations have well formulated policy paradigms to manage diversity related issues including gender diversity. However, there are reports from monitoring agencies such as Catalyst as well as speculations in the media that efforts at embracing diversities in workforce are usually not seriously implemented. The survey asked of employees if their respective organisations were serious about this issue as evidenced through being pro-active in implementing their policies. The findings in this regard were pleasingly surprising. Both, 76.4% of the women and 78.6% of the men agreed that indeed IT organisations have proactive diversity policy. Figure 6.5 represents these data.

![Figure 6.5](image_url)

**Figure 6.5**

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<tr>
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*Does your organisation have pro-active diversity policies especially for gender equity to encourage women employees?*

Whenever I would approach a woman ‘network’ from the field for an interview and describe the Ph. D. study to her, without exception each and every one of them would surge with enthusiasm about the pro-women initiatives in their
organisations. Every single medium and large organisation surveyed had special women’s/diversity cells; invariably a woman headed these divisions and employees took pride in these pro-women and pro-diversity programmes. One lady narrated to me appreciatively about the time she was working in India’s pioneering software giant:

“Whenever we attended seminars our Chairman himself had made this policy that when it came to question-answer time, women should be encouraged. So speakers were directed that the first question taken should be from a woman … I had never seen such consideration before … women hesitate (to question)… so he made it a point to encourage them.”

Importance of Gender at Job Hierarchies

While conceding that at the level of policy the organisation is favourable to a woman when it comes to the question of practice when asked specifically if gender does become important in the long run in one’s job, only 38.5% of the men concurred with this. To this, 45% of the women employees felt that gender did become important after a certain level of hierarchy. Figure 6.6 shows the comparison of male and female overall opinion on the importance of gender in the job.

Figure 6.6

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<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>61.50</td>
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Do you think that one’s gender become important career-wise especially above a certain level of hierarchy?

This called for deeper investigation into the composition of the 45% women who believe that gender emerges as an important factor affecting their careers. When
the responses were analysed on the basis of the job level to which the employees belonged one could see that despite wanting to believe in the intrinsic fairness of the system women develop newer insights in the course of their careers due to the situation on the ground. Figure 6.7 shows gender wise comparison on the importance of gender by the level of job attained. It illustrates how perceptions on the importance of gender change as one ascends the organisational ladder.

**Figure 6.7**

As we can see from the data, among those in junior management only 36.8% of women junior managers regard the importance of gender as a variable in career growth. As they progress in their careers, of those in middle levels, 59% of the women opined that their gender does become a factor in career growth. When it comes to senior management positions each and every senior woman manager i.e. 100% of the women senior managers agree that gender is a significant variable and a crucial determinant of career growth. Men definitely come in with an advantage.

If we look at the same reactions for the men 36.9% junior managers say gender is an important consideration. Then again 38.2% of the middle managers feel that gender is important. At senior levels 47.6% of the men admit that gender is an important factor in career growth. Though more men at senior levels are willing to concede the importance of gender still there are 52.3% men who continue to believe that gender is not an important variable. This shows that perceptions on injustice vary depending upon which end of the situation one resides in. A woman especially a
senior manager understands all too well and regretfully the meaning of being a woman.

Women at the top appear to finally come to the realisation that they belonged to the wrong gender!

Gender as a Basis for Team Selection

Empirical literature on glass ceiling has mentioned that women do not get sufficient share of desirable assignments and competitive work experience.

When asked specifically whether gender is considered for team selection or for allocation of assignments employees were provided a range of responses to choose from. Figure 6.8 shows the specific range of agreement or otherwise in the opinions of the employees. Among the women 28% felt that gender sometimes becomes the basis for selection and 16% felt that gender considerations prevail often. 32% of the men agreed that gender was sometimes considered and 15% felt that it often forms the basis for team selection.

Figure 6.8

Do bosses/team leaders consider gender in delegating job assignment/picking members for a team/project?
Exigent Behaviours

These assertions and data were given greater meaning through the interview responses of the team leaders themselves. According to various interview subjects gendered selection is fairly rampant in the industry and that they themselves do practice it as occasion demands. Although one senior male manager in conversation denied the role of gender considerations insofar as assessment of personnel is concerned: “We follow the competence and skills perspective ... no blocks are there”, most senior level managers confessed in the course of interview that while picking a team for any assignment or project all else being more or less the same they prefer to select a man over a woman keeping in mind the larger context of continuity of the team. Women, they reasoned, were more likely to leave after getting married or to take time off for starting families. So, all else being roughly the same men have better chances of being picked for crucial tasks. As a result over time men gain a wealth of job related exposure that women lose out on.

This attitude seems widespread among bosses across genders. Such is the stranglehold of gender predispositions that even a woman boss will pick those persons (men) who she feels will lend stability to her team. She is reluctant to mentor a junior woman and help shape her career. Women despite being the victims themselves often unconsciously perpetrate the same discrimination driven by deleterious beliefs that shape their mindsets. A male high level manager and a close respondent elaborated:

“Frankly while picking my team if a male employee is available I just assign him even at the cost of a better female without making it look too obvious. This way we can work long hours and late shifts without worrying about anything. The man is also more likely to remain with a project from start to finish. One never knows when the woman will move with her husband, or to start a family, or if she is single she will again leave upon marriage. Then the project suffers – the whole team goes down ... we have stretch assignments and often aggressive deadlines. So sometimes we have to make hard decisions in the interest of the team.

The workplace is so competitive we have to see in the best interests of the team. So, there is no bias as such but just pragmatism. Even the female manager would do what I am saying…”

Obviously as that manager confidante had divulged any discriminatory selection is done with great subtlety and finesse. These findings are confirmed by
other independent surveys. In a report entitled “High Potentials under High Pressure in India’s Technology Sector”, brought out by Catalyst in January 2014 it was found that women and men in IT received similar amounts of development through formal programmes, but women received fewer of the on-the-job experiences, or “hot jobs,” that really matter, such as international assignments and mission-critical roles, than men (Catalyst, 2014).

**Glass Wall**

This job skill acquisition becomes the overriding factor in selections for promotions and pay raises later in the career and not so much absolute length of experience or meritorious educational degrees. The fallout of this gender biased selection is the erection of glass walls – occupational segregation on the basis of gender. Women get denied crucial work exposure due to various reasons pragmatic and prejudicial. Without necessary range of work exposure women cannot make the grade for top levels in their jobs. The women in senior management who formed part of the survey were all in human resource departments. Women somehow get concentrated in HR and related work portfolios. Without diverse experience they are unable to ascend the ladder beyond a point and these walls become the steps to the glass ceiling.

**Denial of Biases**

Another intriguing fact that came to light through the interviews was that women vehemently denied being discriminated against even though it was quite obvious for anyone to see. According to social psychologist Faye Crosby in what is called “denial of personal disadvantage” many women are reluctant to acknowledge that they personally are victims of discrimination. Crosby found that people typically imagine themselves to be exempt from the injustices that they can recognize as affecting others in their membership or reference groups. Most women are either unaware of having personally been victims of gender discrimination or deny it “even when it is objectively true and they see that women in general experience it” (Crosby et al., 2007).
It was found amongst the interviewed women that there is in them indeed a disjunction between the objective reality of discrimination and the subjective reality of admitting to that discrimination and recognising it as one’s own state of being. The sociology of revolutionary action teaches us that the very first step in any revolutionary praxis is to recognise being in state of relative deprivation and disadvantage. It is this consciousness of one’s condition that sets the dialectic of transformation into motion. Corporate women are reluctant to acknowledge that they personally suffer any discrimination. During the course of field interviews among the women, the inevitable answer to the questions would be, “I have been fortunate … but (you are right) I have seen it (discrimination) happen (to other women) sometimes”.

There seems to be some deep seated sense of mortification associated with being discriminated against that compels educated women to a subconsciously lingering state of denial. Women often assume a stance of penitent self-reproach even as they are being wronged, feeling as though they deserved their situation. It appears that the organisational fair play initiatives are so well projected as to effectively cloud any suspicion of wrongdoing or ‘second-generation biases’ in operation to the extent that women themselves are unable to discern these biases and thereby, tend to stoically blame their relative lack of success to their own lack of worth.

**Peer Group Hostility**

Much literature has focused on how successful women bear the brunt of hostility from their peers men and women alike. In this study 41.2% of the women felt that sometimes colleagues do show hostile behaviours towards them but 40.8% of the men also responded in a similar fashion. The response is not one of hostility as such so much as professional rivalry often amounting to cut throat competition. Very few, and significantly equally for men and women - 14.6% of women and 14% of the men actually felt that they are often at the receiving end of hostile peer behaviour. In a highly competitive work sphere antagonisms and resentments among peers can happen but these are not specifically gender centric. Co-workers are not hostile to women because they are women. Success inspires awe, envy and certain veiled animosity and this is common across genders. Figure 6.9 shows the degree of hostility towards fellow employees’ successes at work.
Do you face hostility from your colleagues when you receive professional success?

Inter Gender Social Interaction

How well do peers communicate in the workplace? A lot of the reviewed literature had suggested lack of meaningful communication among men and women colleagues to be an important impediment to the advancement of women in their careers. Admittedly the two genders do not socialise much within the workplace. This could be also due to work pressures and lack of extended leisure time. The lady employees shared that during tea/coffee breaks at work the women went together in their own subgroups regardless of rank or team and the men did likewise. On this aspect the popular refrain of women interview respondents was:

“We don’t hang out together … We rarely meet socially except if our husbands are friends.”

This view on gender avoidance was however statistically not totally validated through their survey responses. As per the responses of the employees over 50% of both men and women claim to often interact with co-workers across genders. Only 9.8% of the female employees said that they seldom socialise at work with their male counterparts and 12.8% of the males also maintained the same. Figure 6.10 shows the frequency of inter gender social interaction among employees.
Do men and women socialise with each other at the workplace such as during lunch/tea breaks etc.?

In Mysore and Bangalore many employees who are from out of town often frequent common eating places. Many are also from the same educational institutions. Some share their home towns and mother tongues in common. This has resulted in a lot of bonhomie that belies perceptions generated in popular glass ceiling literature emanating from the west. Unlike in the west here the level of employee intermingling becomes quite good due to these circumstances. The intermixing is more or less along similar patterns among various age groups and marital statuses. The job position of the men and women employees also has bearing on their level of social mingling.

When data were viewed in relation to the job level of employees it was found that this interaction is more among those in junior management and decreases in frequency and intensity as one moves up the organisational ladder. In higher job levels there is less leisure time, the hangover from common backgrounds and alma maters is more or less over and careers take on a competitive edge. Office meetings take the place of what used to be social spaces. Some of the men on the other hand continue in their own internal informal networks as beer buddies or weekend golfers and are able to retain their access to informal sources of information that others including many women start to lose out on. Figures 6.11 and 6.12 show the opinions of the female and male employees respectively on the frequency of their inter-gender social interaction at the three managerial positions.
Do men and women socialise with each other at the workplace such as during lunch/tea breaks etc.?

It is seen from the data that of women junior managers about 53% have good interaction among colleagues of both genders and about 30% of middle managers have a regular interaction with co-workers. Only in the senior management this interaction seems to be absent. Among the men though, even at junior manager level only about 37% have sustained interactions and this percentage more or less remains constant through the middle management as well. Likewise when they attain seniority at work the interaction becomes very low at only 9% but is still much better than that of women in senior management.
A senior Human Resources Manager and Head of the Department confirmed these findings. She asserted that as male and female managers rarely mix socially within the office sometimes efforts are made institutionally to ensure that there is a certain amount of open mingling to generate a healthy work atmosphere. “People have to be literally coaxed to mix with one another”, she added. She pointed out for instance, even while posing for a group photograph of a team or a staff picture the men and women diverge on either side. Women especially are reluctant to be found standing alongside a male co-worker while posing for photographs. She herself admitted that she hardly ever socialised with anyone from work. Her view however was that this lack of intimacy was not to the detriment of career growth. She upheld that she herself had been successful following the same paradigm.

**Communication on the Job**

When it comes to explicit career oriented communication both the men and women readily agreed that they had established an ease of communication and information sharing. In fact most of the inter-gender communication would be shop talk and little else. While much has been written about in the west about lack of effective communication in the workplace, men and women managers explained to me that work related communication was not conducted in the conventional paradigm. In many organisations the universe of communication is a rather impersonal one and co-workers interact through cyber tools such as instant messaging (IM), email, text messages etc. It is not as if there is some great camaraderie or back-slapping communication happening around even within their respective genders. People have also become adapted to these newer mechanisms of communication. Since most are pressed for time, bound by strict deadlines and the pressures of hourly billing there is little conversation happening in work hours. Offices have pin drop silence each employee glued to his desk eyes firmly planted on the computers. Even my own interview respondents would ask me to email them as the preferred mode of interaction for any clarifications since they would always be viewing their emails in the course of their work day. In that sense except in higher influential job positions verbal conventional mode of communication at work does not appear to be a factor of consequence. The access of opportunities to women at least cannot be said to be contingent in any measure upon their level of dialogic communication with colleagues.
Where non-formal on job communication is concerned women also admitted to being quite astute in finding out office grapevine as men. Women also gathered lot of industry buzz from their spouses as many have spouses/family members in different IT companies. Thus even without having official mentors or belonging to any old boys club those who take interest in news and rumours do manage to get informational support and sponsorship through these informal arrangements.

Overall 87% of the women acknowledged that they had a good level of work related communication and information sharing and only 13% thought to the contrary. Among the men 91% stated that they had a good work related communication. Figure 6.13 shows employees’ responses about level of job related communication among peers.

Figure 6.13

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<tr>
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</table>

Do peers communicate well with one another in accomplishing tasks irrespective of their gender? (Such as team work, information sharing and achieving common goals.)

Sexual Harassment Regime

The government’s “The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace: (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013” which came into force through the Gazette of India notification of April 2013, makes it mandatory for every organisation, private or public to constitute a committee to address all issues covered under the purview of the act and presided over by a woman employed in the workplace at a senior level. The act defines sexual harassment through a range of
unwelcome behaviours such as implied or explicit promises or threats, interference in work, intimidation, humiliation, creation of hostile work environment, physical overtures, demanding of sexual favours, making obscene remarks or sexual innuendos, use of pornography, or any verbal or nonverbal conduct of sexual nature (Government of India, Ministry of Law and Justice, 2013).

The law against sexually undesirable behaviours is strict. There however also appears to be an inbuilt code of conduct among employees themselves regarding what constitutes discreet workplace behaviour. Though personnel admitted to having good social relationships with co-workers this is not made apparently manifest in the workplace scenario. A male project manager of a top-of-the-line IT major attributed this conscious gender avoidance to the strict sexual harassment regime:

“We men are afraid of getting ensnared in any sexual harassment allegation so we avoid getting friendly with women.”

It is true that organisations have zero tolerance policy towards sexual harassment. Figure 6.14 shows employees perception on zero tolerance for sexual harassment in their organisations.

![Figure 6.14: Zero Tolerance Policy for Sexual Harassment](chart)

In fact as can be seen from the data more women than men endorsed that their organisations have strict policy against sexual harassment behaviours. 89.6% of the women agreed that this was so as did 85.4% of the men. In other words 88% of the
survey respondents overall vouch for their organisations’ bona fides as employers. Even so there are occasional whiffs in the media from time to time about alleged incidents involving sexual indiscretions. That organisations are serious towards this problem is also getting evident. Infosys for example has instituted ‘ASHI’, acronym for its ‘anti sexual harassment initiative’, to maintain a proactive zero tolerance for sexual harassment regime. These mechanisms are not mere formalism as media reports of action against offenders illustrate.

**Photograph 6.1**

Similarly, when it comes to the question of actual incidence of having witnessed or experienced sexually undesirable behaviours it is noteworthy that 89% of the women categorically deny having observed or undergone any experience of any kind of sexual harassment. However, 11% of the women do allege that they have seen such cases happen (to other women) in their careers. Similarly 12% of the men alleged that they had also seen such incidents happen or observed cases of sexual harassment in their offices. Figure 6.15 shows the responses of employees with regard to their actual alleged experiences or observations on workplace related undesirable sexual behaviours.
Have you ever observed or experienced any form of sexual harassment at your workplace?

If we analyse these findings in relation to the age groups of the employees among those allege to have been witness to or victims of sexual harassment related behaviours the majority i.e. 77.8% of the women belong to the under 29 years age group as against 42% of the men who say so. Younger women are more vulnerable as targets for unwelcome advances and this is revealed through their responses. Figure 6.16 shows age-grouped responses of men and women towards their observations on sexual harassment in the workplace.

Figure 6.16

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Safety and Security Concerns

Forms of sexual misconduct however are not the only aspects of concern. As the employee strength in the sector is growing there is an increasing number of women and men commuter employees who are exposed to the perils of an unsafe urban environment. Increasing incidents of street crime and violence against women have considerably brought down the morale of the workforce. The government has also established norms for these organisations with regard to women commuter employees working odd hour shifts. At the same time the state also has to take responsibility for providing safe living for citizens and that responsibility extends beyond monitoring and censuring of private organisations.

Organisations are taking steps to resolve these contentions such as by providing dedicated transport with escort, wherever feasible housing as close to campus as possible and using other available security measures.

Photograph 6.2

Source: Deccan Chronicle, Mysore, December 29, 2014.
By and large however the employees agree that the workplace itself is quite a safe arena. As far as within the organisation is concerned 87% of the women agreed that they felt safe while putting in late hours and an equivalent 86% men admitted to the same. For the 13% women who feel generally unsafe and vulnerable at the workplace there are also some 15% men who claim to feel unsafe. This aspect was further explored by specific age groups to ascertain the cause of vulnerability. Of the women who reported feeling unsafe the majority 82% belong to the younger age groups. This can be attributed to factors such as their own sense of vulnerability owing to their youth. 53% of the men who reported feeling unsafe belonged to the younger age categories. Figure 6.17 shows employees’ responses on feeling safe or otherwise in the workplace.

**Figure 6.17**

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As per existing labour legislation organisations have to comply with special stipulations if women have to work late such as providing vehicle with escort etc. Therefore more men than women are expected to put in late hours. It naturally follows that men are also quite more likely to worry about their safety than women especially while commuting for the third shift. Due to security concerns the Karnataka labour department has to be notified when women are required to work after 8 P.M. Special permission known as *exception approval* is required for engaging employees on late shifts and these permissions are easier to obtain for male employees. So as a rule companies avoid recruiting women on such teams that involve late hours.
These safety considerations are important not merely as a matter of governance or as a matter of principle as the right of every citizen to enjoy a safe life in a civil society; they also become important in the context of gender mobility in the workplace. Women by virtue of legitimate security requirements get denied certain work projects that may require odd hour duties. This qualitatively reduces an element of work exposure for the women and diminishes the window of opportunity that exists for career growth. Many times shift duties become necessary even in non-BPO companies due to the protectionist immigration policies of client countries. So the host countries like India have to arrange for work shifts in relevant time zones to execute production support\(^1\) projects for the clients. These projects often involve interaction with overseas clients and are allocated for late hours to compensate for time zone differentials. As a consequence men who are associated with such work gain specific skills as well as enhanced opportunities for overseas travel and assignments.

**Office Ambience**

Work culture within the organisation not only means the working environment and discriminatory thinking, it also includes even the physical ambience of the place. Sometimes an office space may just not be woman friendly. Sheryl Sandberg COO of Facebook recalls an incident when in one meeting she attended they took a few minutes break, she asked for the women’s restroom, only to discover to her astonishment and that of those around her, there was no woman’s room in the venue (Sandberg, 2013). This is an incident from well into the first decade of the 21st century. Offices have to provide physical structures like women’s rooms, child care area, even something so much as the décor of the interior could be perceived as masculine or feminine. These visible structures are ultimately an extension of the organisational mind and go to show how much an organisation really cares. In the ultimate analysis women do not have to be patronised or humoured they need to be treated with respect and dignity. Career itself needs to be conceptualised in the

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\(^1\) Production support is to do with providing IT support for the end users for their IT systems and applications, attending to complaints and providing service and support backups. The end user could be located in any part of the globe. India is an important destination for sourcing production support teams due to the lower cost advantages and the availability of trained personnel.
feminine mode providing for, in its fold those situations in the life of a woman which Career itself needs to be reconceptualised in the feminine mode providing for, in its fold those situations in the life of a woman which impact her very life and may cause interruptions in her career. Ultimately all this calls for the need for a paradigm shift.

**Career Orientation among Men and Women: How Much do Women Care for their Careers?**

Sometimes when organisation policy cannot simply be faulted the women get to be blamed for their own lack of sufficient career mindedness. In the analysis of the reasons for the glass ceiling inequality another aspect worth exploring apart from organisational culture and safety and security considerations is the question of career orientation among the women themselves. A lot of glass ceiling literature and indeed gender literature suggests that while women are content to have jobs they do not necessarily have well defined career goals that they are prepared to work for. Even within the IT industry managers hold that junior women are not as serious minded about their long run career needs. Is it true that women short-change their careers as their bosses allege? Questions were posed to the employees with a view to ascertaining the seriousness of their intent towards their careers. If one were to simply ask a direct question say for instance “are you sincere about your career?” it would not have amounted to much as it is in the nature of human beings to profess what they know to be desirable even if they do not practice the same. Therefore several questions were posed some of them pertaining to matters of fact from which rational inferences could be drawn about the degree of commitment that men and women have towards their jobs. Career orientation has been appraised through diverse parameters like hours put in at work, job security related apprehensions, the inclination to continue in their jobs long term, the desire to quit and the reasons thereof. Responses to these have been analysed in the following paragraphs.

**Working Hours**

When it comes to putting in hours at work both men and women put in a fair amount of time at work. Overall on an average a woman manager works 44.6 hours a week and the male manager works 46.7 hours in a week, a difference of 2.1 hours or a very nominal difference of 4.7%. This difference in work times by itself would not justify the widening gulf in the progress made by women and men.
Figure 6.18 shows the number of average weekly working hours of male and female employees.

On an average, how many hours do you work in a week?

However when one compares the work put in by women and men managers at different job levels one is able to discern the subtle advantages that men take with them to their work. Figure 6.19 shows the comparative working hours of male and female employees by job level.
The average woman junior manager works 44.1 hours a week whereas her counterpart male manager works 46.7 hours a difference of 2.6 hours weekly which is about half an hour extra per day in a five-day working week. It is this extra half hour a day put in early on in the career that gives the vital head start to the male manager. At the start of their careers when employees ought to give their utmost to their professional lives women’s time and preoccupations unfortunately get diversified between spouse hunting, settling down in marriage, and then starting a family and the household responsibilities that follow. The little extra that men are able to put in at the onset gives them continued leverage. By the time the two reach middle levels at their jobs this gap is somewhat levelled as the average woman middle manager works 45.4 hours and the man 46.2 hours weekly. Finally by the time a woman does actually reach a senior management position she in fact works on average a gruelling 50 hours a week and the male manager continues in his trend working 49 hours a week. The woman has to in fact work harder to prove herself and to retain her high level position. This is in effect the ‘glass cliff’ hypothesis that behavioural scientists have argued about. A senior woman manager works 13.4% more than she did as a junior manager whereas if we were to compare the same statistic for a male manager a senior male manager works only 4.9% more than he did as a junior manager. Figure 6.20 graphically depicts this sharp increase in working hours for women managers when compared with men from junior to senior levels.

Figure 6.20
This is by no means to say that employees are rewarded for ‘late sitting’ at work. Quite the contrary my interview respondents revealed that working more than 11 hours in a day is usually frowned upon institutionally. The emphasis in the industry is on results and output and not so much on the time dedicated to the task. This is the premise on which the concept of flexible work schedules has evolved. But the relative freedom to consistently give that little extra by way of time devoted to their work translates for male executives into desirable results in terms of achieving their career goals. What effort the women belatedly start putting in becomes an absolute much but sadly too little too late. It is only after many of her life impacting decisions have been taken, the children are older, and she is more or less settled into a pattern, that the woman is able to finally give some time to herself and her career. If a woman would be given the freedom to pursue her career with single mindedness and focus at the very start not only would she be less likely to encounter the glass cliff but also that more women would be able to occupy senior positions.

**Job Security Concerns**

Concerns about job security constitute an important element of career orientation. In the survey we find that 46% women are concerned about aspects of securing their jobs to a lesser or greater degree. In relation to this 43% of men have apprehensions about job security. Figure 6.21 shows overall grouped job security concerns of both genders.

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**Figure 6.21**

*Do you worry about your job security?*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Seldom/Never</th>
<th>Sometimes/Often</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The men’s social roles as primary bread winner have conventionally had a bearing on their need for job security. But the increasing desire in the women to secure their jobs illustrates that women have also started assuming crucial provider roles within the family and are also committed at least to their jobs (if not the career) and somewhere there nestles a fear in them of losing out on their job incomes and careers possibly due to the multiple roles that they need to balance in their lifetimes. A male senior manager at a well-known IT concern made the following rather insightful observation about his lady colleagues:

“Women appear to be much more keen to retain their employment today compared to even five years ago. This is stemming from a feeling of insecurity on their personal front also.”

This leads one to speculate - Does a woman’s marital status have any bearing on her job related concerns? Conventional thinking would entail a married woman to seem more secure due to the provider-husband in her life. This is also belied in the responses of the women. 43.7% (29.9+13.8) of married women show varying degrees of concern for their jobs as against 47.8% of single women. In fact of those who ‘often’ worry about losing their jobs 14% are married women and only 6% happen to be single women having similar fears. This makes sense on two counts – a) that married women have a greater burden of family responsibility and have to maintain a steady stream of financial contribution towards upkeep of the households, child rearing, leisure and other expenses and b) that due to the same burden of family responsibility married women perhaps find it more difficult to deliver on the job front and this perception of sub-optimal work output generates apprehensions among them on their ability to retain their jobs in a highly competitive work sphere.

If we compare the same concerns for men 40.6% (31.1+9.5) of the married men and 44.2% single men worry about their jobs. Among those who ‘often’ worry there is no difference in the men by marital status. Clearly this shows that married women in particular have deeper job related worries that perhaps even they are neither explicitly conscious of or are willing to admit per se. It also shows that the conventional male bread winner paradigm is undergoing a shift in middle class corporate India. Figure 6.22 and 6.23 show job security concerns of women and men managers by marital status.
Do you worry about your job security?

As we can see from the data both men and women have a similar pattern of responses on the scale of apprehensions regarding the secureness of their jobs. If anything women as aforementioned are a shade more concerned than male counterparts about retaining their jobs.

Opting Out: What ‘Choice’ to Make?

With advancing age and greater familial responsibility there are indeed increasing concerns for job security in both men and women. Perhaps it is due to this heightened sense of job related insecurity that more and more women who are unable to meet demanding requirements of their multiple roles are choosing to opt out of
their jobs and careers. While conjugal and family roles are non-negotiable the career automatically becomes the casualty. Women increasingly are ‘opting’ out – to have children, to rear children, to tend their households. At a point in their careers when a decision has to be taken invariably the woman decides in favour of the family. As a respondent with a school going son and daughter wistfully narrated to me perhaps summing up the predicament of all in similar situations:

“I (also) have an M.Tech. with distinction. I had an excellent job, by now I would be in a really top position. My husband never forced me (to leave my job), it was a mutual decision. One of us had to leave (the job) … the children were getting neglected … I am glad I gave it up. I am able to watch my children grow. This time will never come back. I did not know my daughter had so many qualities. I now know their individual personalities. It was a good decision. Money is not everything. My husband earns enough for us all.”

She spoke with a resolute remorselessness. One could sense that she was trying to convince herself as much as she was trying to convince me. Seeing me a Ph.D. researcher another woman respondent had commented:

“You are lucky you (are not married) you can do whatever you feel like. I have to always think about my husband, children and in-laws. Even I could have easily done my Ph.D. My professor in engineering had high hopes for me…”

The men do not have to ‘choose’. In what is labelled as a choice women especially married women are increasingly confronted by the classic patriarchal compulsion – they may have to abdicate their careers in favour of that which is socially regarded as the more cherished goal in the life of a woman. Having a successful career often instils feelings of guilt in a woman. Women therefore sometimes opt out, through that sense of guilt – usually through motherly guilt or conjugal guilt. In a racy first person narrative, Apurva Purohit, CEO of a media organisation has asked this question of women - “Which guilt are you more comfortable with?” alluding to the women’s responsibility towards themselves as individuals (Purohit, 2013: 14). This is the dilemma that every woman must address for herself.

**Intention to Continue in Employment**

However where intent is concerned when surveyed women and men were asked about their future career intentions both women and men expressed their intent
to remain in employment along similar patterns. Figure 6.24 shows comparison of men and women executives in their intention to remain in employment.

**Figure 6.24**

*How long do you intend to remain in employment?*

As we see from the data that 24% (10.3+13.6) of the women wish to serve in their jobs for fairly long term while 22.3% appear uncertain about their futures. Among the women, 54% are only able to think short term about their intention to continue in their careers. Of the men 23.6% expressed a desire to continue long term in their jobs. 44% are sure that they will quit in a few years’ time while more than 32% are uncertain about their future jobs.

If we view the same age wise those below 30 years of age show the greatest flux and along predictable lines. 76% (53.8+22.3) of the women have intention to continue in their jobs only short term or are uncertain about their career futures and an equal number of men also say the same. This again shows that women are not lacking in the intent but are unable to muster the drive necessary to translate that intent into action. Once again this is the crucial age for women in the social context as this is when they get married or start their families and for the men this is the gestational period of their careers when they diagnose ways of improving their success before they are tied down by family responsibilities that act as brakes on risk taking career behaviour. Figure 6.25 shows intention to remain in employment among male and female workforce under 29 years of age.
If we compare married women with single women the married women show a better trend of continuity in jobs and career with 22% hoping to continue in their jobs long term. Only 15.5% of the single women are able speak about their long term career plans with any degree of certainty. The lives of married women tend to get sorted out in line with socially approved life choices and once they settle into matrimony usually they do not foresee any major or significant future overhauls. Many continue to remain stationed at set locations in the interest of their children’s education. Therefore they are able to speak with a greater degree of certainty if not about their careers then at least about their jobs. For single women these critical issues are considered still unresolved leading to lesser stability of orientation for their futures. In that sense being married per se is not an impediment to one’s career at least in the context of the Indian middle class. Figure 6.26 shows comparison between married and single women’s trends of intending to continue in service.

### Figure 6.25

**Intention to Continue in Career among Age Group under 29 Years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Term</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>44.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 6.26

**Comparison of Married versus Single women Showing trends of continuing in service**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Married</th>
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<tr>
<td>&lt;2 Years</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-5 Years</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Until Retirement</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Desire to Quit

The obverse of the intention to continue in employment and pursue one’s career goals would be the desire to quit. It was decided to examine the career commitment of men and women by posing questions on their opinions reflecting both sides of the coin as it were. When opinion was solicited on their wish to quit their jobs, 44.7% of the women admitted to sometimes or often having a desire to quit and opt out at some point in their careers as against 52.1% of the men who had similar urge. While the survey statistics show that about 17% more men wish to quit their jobs than women, what these statistics cannot reveal is that in fact more women do actually act upon that inclination and quit their jobs than the men. The narratives reveal that they do so for an entirely different set of reasons. The women hesitate because their careers are tied to those of their spouses and the needs of their families. The men on the other hand seek to strategically change jobs to better their career prospects seeking positional jumps and salary hikes. Some respondents evinced the desire to venture into entrepreneurship, planning to have start-up companies of their own. The woman’s career still remains a function of her familial and conjugal situation. Figure 6.27 shows men’s and women’s inclination to quit jobs.

Figure 6.27

Have you ever felt like quitting your job?

Women usually do not have that yearning to quit and change jobs out of restlessness, ennui or shrewd market sense of leaving at the right time to improve
their career prospects. They tend to leave their jobs when their backs are to the wall forced by circumstances more than anything else. The men especially those in the IT sector typically have this adventurous streak to quit and move on to something bigger and better including relocating or to start their own firms. This element of reckless adventure is the spirit that Silicon Valley was symbolic of. Not all give in to this inclination however the bonds of family and familial obligation being as manifestly strong for the men too. According to a recent survey the results of which were released to the media women in ‘dual-career’ marriages (19%) were four times more likely than men (5%) to report that they had assumed the role of “stay-at-home-partner” at some point in their career (Catalyst, 2014). Women’s compliance with social expectations that leads to their aborted careers thus cannot be considered the offshoot of their own latent wishes to do so or as a matter of exercise of ‘choice’.

Reasons for Quitting

When the actual reasons for quitting were ascertained in terms of tangible reasons for wishing to quit 23.8% of women admit that they want to quit for better prospects, 13.3% for fulfilling family responsibilities, 15.2% on account of health reasons and a major 47.6% due to work pressures. Figure 6.28 depicts the commonly stated reasons for quitting among men and women.

If so, then what are the reasons you feel like quitting your job? (You may select more than one option)

It can be seen from the data that when it comes to quitting for bettering their career prospects, at nearly 41% the number of men is almost twice that of
women. Women are 34.3% more likely than men to quit their jobs on account of family responsibilities. Health becomes an important reason for the women to quit. Women are up to three times (2.6 times or 258%) more likely to quit for health reasons than men.

**Sticky Floor**

Interview respondents who had left their jobs because they had enough money and that “money is not everything” were correct in at least one assessment of theirs – money is certainly not the terminal goal of a fulfilling career. A woman and her significant others have to learn to appreciate the intrinsic worth of a meaningful vocation as a source of profound personal gratification. The first step to attaining that would be to distinguish between a job and a career. Financial gain is not all that constitutes a rewarding career. Professional success is also central to a person’s sense of wellbeing. We know from Maslow’s theory of hierarchy of needs that the needs of the temporal body reside at the very base of the human need system. There exists in every human individual a nascent need for buttressing self-esteem and for self-actualisation that a meaningful and fulfilling vocation can undoubtedly contribute towards. Women taking the male-centric view of the world try to actualise themselves through their motherhood roles rather than as individuals. Their sense of self-worth is to a great extent shaped by their score card in their feminine roles. It is these self-effacing tendencies that manifest into the ‘sticky floor’ for women at work.

According to a three year study conducted by the National Science Foundation in the U.S.A. findings of the first phase of which were released in August 2014, 40% of women engineering students never enter the profession or quit. The main reasons stated for quitting are poor workplace climate and ill-treatment by managers and co-workers. While women accounted for more than 20% of engineering school graduates over the past two decades only 11% of the practicing engineers are women of which only 9% are electronic engineers. The study covered 5,300 engineering alumni spanning 6 decades from 200 universities. Among the women who had quit in the recent five years two thirds left in the search of better opportunities in other fields while one third said they had left to care of home and children because companies did not “accommodate work-life concerns”. According to the study these women are more vulnerable to being pushed out because they do not belong to the (informal)
“internal “good old boys” network”. Of the women who quit 17% said their decision was due to care giving responsibilities, 12% felt there were no opportunities for women for career advancement, 12% quit as they had lost interest in engineering (Deccan Herald, Mysore, August12, 2014).

Overall if we look at the data pertaining to career orientation it is not as though the women are any less determined to pursue their careers. And yet when women weigh the net balance of consequences it appears to them only ‘fair’ that they ‘sacrifice’ their careers.

**Priority Accorded to Career**

An offshoot of career orientation is the relative priority that is accorded to career in the lives of men and women. If women are the ones more often than not expected to relinquish their careers to be able to do justice to their other roles it naturally follows that those women who have a multiplicity of roles would be able to accord lesser priority to their careers. Apart from difference between men and women there is also the difference between the married and the single with regard to their capacity to give primacy to their careers.

**Being Married**

The responses of the married and single were analysed on this aspect. Figure 6.29 shows the relative priority accorded to career by married men and women.

**Figure 6.29**

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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>96.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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</table>
Data show that of the married women 72.9% feel that they are able to give the same priority to their careers as do their spouses. This figure does not look so impressive when we compare it with men where 96.1% are able to optimally prioritise their careers. Married men are 32% more able to give priority to their careers than their working spouses.

In a lot of cases women have attributed their career successes to the support received from their husbands. When asked whether their spouses supported them in the pursuit of their careers in fact about 97% of the married women professed that their spouses supported them in pursuing their careers. 92% of the married men affirmed to the same. For many men it seemed but a perfunctory question as they did not really anticipate any spousal impediments to their careers nor see any need for support as such. Figure 6.30 shows support received from spouses for pursuing career.

![Figure 6.30](image)

For the married: Does your spouse support you in your career?

Even so 55% of the married women admitted that being married as such has limited their career options. In the case of married men 44% of the male managers feel that marriage also puts a limit on their career options. Men also acknowledged that marriage made them “think twice” whenever they planned a career move but as we can see from the data that it is a majority of the women who feel that matrimony exerts a limiting influence on their career mindedness and career course. Figure 6.31 shows perceptions of married persons on whether being married has pulled them down in their careers.
Have you ever felt that being married and/or having children has limited/ will limit your career prospects?

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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</table>

**Being Single**

When it comes to single persons, on the similar query on their single status as having a bearing on the career 66% of single women and 58.5% single men feel that their singlehood has no impact on their careers. Married persons were asked to comment on this aspect as they would have experienced first-hand this transition from being single to being married and would know whether and how this shift in marital status impacted their careers.

A similar trend is observed in the responses of married persons. 69% of the married women and 50% married men opine that their transition from singlehood to being married has not had any impact as such on their careers.

Figure 6.32 depicts the views of unmarried women and men employees on this aspect. Figure 6.33 shows the perceptions of married persons on the career impact of being single.
Further, being single especially for an adult woman in most societies is considered a temporary state, marriage being the desired goal of that transition. In that sense being married is meant to provide a stabilising influence on one’s life. Does being single create for a sense of vulnerability in the workplace? Men and women in the survey were posed this question. It was found that 63.6% of the women rarely or never report to feel vulnerable on account of being single. For the men, 67.9% report likewise. It can thus be inferred that women do not experience (or at least admit to having felt) any sense of insecurity or vulnerability at the workplace on account of being single. Figure 6.34 shows perceptions of vulnerability due to an employee’s single status.
Throughout this analysis of data wherever it was considered a probable variable marital status has been taken into account as a factor in affecting a particular situation whether it has been on aspects of organisational culture, career orientation or issues of self-worth, and also most significantly in the domain of the family. These responses of men and women and their variations due to marital status help in discerning those processes that contribute to men and women giving or being compelled to give differential treatment to their careers. Ultimately any analysis of an inequality that is not supported or condoned by institutional structures has to be in some ways understood through these and other such imperceptible differences in the sociopsychological states of the participants themselves.

**Family Considerations**

The other social sphere that needs to be investigated in detail in the context of the glass ceiling inequality is the family and its set of expectations. An individual’s time is apportioned between two main domains – work and home. Marital status that was studied in the previous section is only one aspect of the totality of family obligations in the life of an individual. A woman and man have multiple roles in the context of a family situation. To what extent do these multiple roles and social obligations spill over into the world of work? And how differently do these affect men
and women, and among them the married and the single? These then form the content of the primary data that feeds the following discussion.

**Family Values**

What is subsumed under the phrase ‘family values’ is perhaps more easily understood than defined. Terms like conventional, conservative or modern have a set of commonly understood relativistic meanings associated with them. This exploration of the family values has relied on these commonly held notions within the larger context of the Indian middle class, since majority of the respondents answered to being from middle class background. Family values create an overall environment within which women (and men) can be expected to flourish. In terms of family values 18.2% of the respondents stated that they came from conservative family backgrounds, 23.9% from liberal and the rest believed their families to be moderate in their value orientations. Figure 6.35 shows the family values of the respondents.

**Figure 6.35**

![Family Values of Employees - %](image)

Among the genders 13.5% of the women are from conservative backgrounds, 29.5% from liberal and the majority 57% profess to be from families with moderate values. Likewise for the men 25.6% are from conservative families, 15.2% liberal and 59.2% moderate. It bears reiterating that these ascriptions of value identity are entirely based on the employees’ own perceptions on what constitutes conservative, moderate and liberal. Figure 6.38 shows comparatively the family values of men and women employees.
Patriarchy

One would presume that family values have a bearing on the personal and career aspirations of a woman. In terms of authority structure within the family, many interviewed married men confessed that their household was male dominated and that they would not favour their wives to work as, “I am already earning well; where is the need?” Such statements come implicitly laden with the patriarchal presumptive doctrine that these men’s wives could hold jobs only with their consent. These core beliefs internalised by both men and women at times even without conscious thought gnaw at the root of the careers of women. That and accompanied by the fact that a woman’s work is supposed only for the benefit of extra income and little else creates the necessary cultural ambience that sustains inequalities in the workplace.

Surprisingly few women actually considered their households male dominated. Whether this means that women are in a state of denial or it is yet another manifestation of male *hubris* – the desire to project that the man is in control – it would be hard to tell through the present research.

The extent to which patriarchal norms operate in the household is not evidenced by the individuals’ responses on the authority structures within the households. A majority 69.4% of the women married as well as single felt that gender relations in their family are egalitarian. 71.5% of the men also said so. 24.3% of women said their homes were male dominated and 24.9% men also said the same.
The fact that men and women return almost identical responses somehow reinforces the content of the replies and provides in a sense an acknowledgement of the prevailing values. The terms male or female dominated are used here as day-to-day expressions intelligible to the interviewees in an attempt to ascertain their own impressions about the gender power relations in their families. The category female dominated was included at the instance of the pilot survey group who being not from the domain of sociology insisted that if my question had to be free from its biases it should entail a category for the possibility of female domination, a suggestion to which the researcher in me in the sight of the larger goal of analysing workplace inequalities, complied. These usages are not meant to engender the debate whether or not the concept of ‘female domination’ is a valid empirical principle. Figure 6.37 shows the extent of patriarchy in the households as determined by individual responses on gender power relations within their families.

Figure 6.37

On further analysis it was found that a majority of people who said they came from female dominated households are singles. In conversation some revealed that their homes were female dominated as it were, since they were female headed households with no adult male of the parental generation being present. Few married people said their households are female dominated. A sizeable 72% of married women perceive their households as egalitarian and 67% of the single women also say so. For the men, equally about 72% both married and single view their households as being built on gender equality. Figures 6.40 and 6.41 show comparative opinions of married and single among the genders on the nature of gender relations in the family.
Decision Making

While most employees claim to enjoy a degree of independence 41.8% of the women and 47.6% of the men claim to have high freedom to take decisions. Overall 92.2% of the women enjoy a fair degree freedom regarding their career choices and likewise 94.3% of the men do so. In terms of their stated responses there seems to be no prohibitions on women taking their decisions. Figure 6.40 shows freedom to take decisions.
To what extent do you have the freedom to take decisions concerning your life and career?

While considering these responses on the basis of marital status of the executives 40.2% married women claim to experience the freedom to take their own decisions as compared to 59.8% of the single. A single woman when it comes to decisions about her career has 32.8% more freedom than her married counterpart. While this can be understood in the context of the demands of the household of which the woman is the most important cog, men also confess to a similar lack of freedom upon marriage. Only 36.5% of the married men as against 63.5% of the single men say that they have the freedom to take decisions. As a matter of fact single men have 42.3% more freedom than their married counterparts.

Figure 6.41 shows responses of married and single on the degree of freedom they profess to enjoy.
Housework

It is an accepted premise that it is the women who have to invest time into the home even though they may be having profitable jobs in the labour market. Among Indian middle class in particular, a woman is expected to look after the home and family even if she takes up a job. Even though household help is engaged the primary responsibility of supervision and running the household rests on the woman. This increases the average time devoted to housework for the woman.

From the survey it was found that on an average a married woman manager devotes about 12 hours a week to housework and a single woman 9.5 hours. In contrast a married man spends an average of 10 hours on household chores and his single counterpart 8 hours. A married woman thus devotes 13% more time to housework than her married male colleague. A single woman works 20.3% more on household work than her single male colleague.

Figures 6.42 and 6.43 show comparative average time spent on housework for female and male managers.
If we were to elaborate this further, we find that about 49% or nearly half the women managers are required to work at home over 10 hours a week as against only 34% or about one third of the men. This also signifies that 43% more women than men are required to work more than 10 hours a week for housework duties.

Figure 6.44 depicts the male-female comparison of time devoted to housework.
On an average how many hours in a week do you spend on family matters? (Such as housework, care of children, running errands etc.)

Analysis shows that further, married women with children spend an average of 13 hours a week on household affairs. This is 20.5% more time than the similarly placed male co-worker. Figure 6.45 shows average weekly hours spent on housework for those with children.

Given the fact that both women and men work on an average 45 hours in a week (Figure 6.18) on full time jobs, the woman ends up working a backbreaking nearly 58 hours in a week housework included. And, she has to deliver on both fronts.
To this if we add time spent on commuting to work, on eating, and personal care such as bath and daily routine activities, the woman is active for a large part of a 24 hour day leaving her little leeway for rest or leisure. Any woman who accomplishes so much in the course of her life is truly nothing short of a superwoman.

**Household Division of Labour**

In the west the marital division of labour becomes an issue of prime importance. The need for parental presence for child rearing becomes a deciding factor in one parent opting out. High cost of labour, sharply nucleated families and intense individuation put pressure on the couples to make difficult choices. This coupled with the overall economic recession has had disturbing consequences for the family.

After the birth of our son, Dave began flying back and forth several times a week. … since I was with the baby full-time, the great majority of child care fell on me. The division of labour felt uneven and strained our marriage…. After a few short months of parenthood, we had already fallen into traditional, lopsided gender roles.

— Sandberg, 2013: 106

In the west having a family calls for difficult choices and indeed compromises. This sort of situation is not as starkly so in urban India. The Indian middle class is spared from these extremities of condition. Nuclear households are not necessarily founded on the ‘nuclear family ideology’, most married couples are able to enlist the help of one or both set of parents and/or other kin for assistance in child rearing. As sociologist Dipankar Gupta points out that the Indian middle class can pursue a rich lifestyle primarily because labour is cheap in India (Gupta, 2000). True, labour is cheap and easily available – you can hire cooks, chauffeurs, and household help on full or part time basis for an affordable price at relatively little cost to the quality of parenting. The Indian corporate woman, and man in that sense can have their cake and eat it too. They need not compromise greatly in their careers for the sake of family as in the west. Even when people engage nannies or send children to day care, they are able to mobilise family support and assistance for child rearing.

Most couples forego the over emphasis on freedom that is the hallmark of western society. In the west people quit their jobs because they are burnt out. The
Indian social ethos acts as a protective shield against this burn out. Yet in India also women are increasingly ‘opting out’.

**Child Care**

In the US working mothers spend an average eleven hours a week on child care. The trend of ‘intensive mothering’ is catching on. A good mother is one who is always there for her children. According to sociologists mothers who do not give for various reasons that kind of time to their growing children suffer from guilt (Sandberg, 2013: 135-38).

In India including urban India and especially the middle class child care requirements are well met by families. There is a bilateral tendency to the kinship network in the urban families incorporating kin from both sides of the marriage. The intensity of kinship interaction is dependent both on the order of kinship relation, as on spatial proximity and sometimes occupational likeness. This extended network, along with parents and in-laws surrogate for child rearing in most cases. Figure 6.46 shows the patterns of child care. In more than 50% of the cases the child care work is rendered by family and domestic help support.

**Figure 6.46**

What is the mode of child care when you are at work?

To conclude, as such the financial wellness of the IT employees, the ready availability of household labour at nominal costs and the presence of bilateral kindred
can all be availed of to share the onerous household burden from the women employees leaving them at least in theory more or less free to continue with their jobs.

**Work-Life Balance (Career–Family Conflict)**

The phrase career-family conflict that constituted the subject matter of much discussion in the last quarter of the twentieth century has now been replaced by the more circuitous ‘work-life balance’ indicating the implied goal of equilibrium and an ideological preference for consensus over conflict. Much has been spoken about the concept of work-life balance especially in IT circles. Surveyed employees routinely use these words and organisations value the initiatives they take in this area.

The phrase work-life balance is itself a misnomer. There are no clear parameters for defining the boundaries between work and life. With the internet available in the palm of one’s hand on a cell phone or a tablet it would be near impossible for the IT employee to confine to one and refrain from the other at any point in time. Further, when we talk of this balance between work and life – for some their work would be their very life while for others work could be only one aspect of their lives. Even in the latter case the phenomenological membrane that separates life and work cannot be kept impervious except in the case of the hypothetical actor in a hypothetical situation. Work and life at their very best are fluid structures. At a higher level of abstraction when work and life are thus dichotomised they could be seen as so juxtaposed that one contributes to the other or alternately as representing two antipodal entities one of them necessarily gaining at the cost of the other. In some senses both these interpretations have a grain of truth. The best mechanism for visualising this balance would be to view the two as on a continuum, sociology’s solution for all complexities of human phenomena especially since the times of Max Weber.

**Family Expectations**

When it comes to the expectations of one’s family coming in the way of work, 39.2% women admitted that their family members sometimes expected them to compromise with their work in order to meet family needs. Even 40.2% of the men felt that their families also expected them to sometimes compromise on work related requirements to balance the needs of the family. 10.8% of the women reported to
being often called upon to compromise on work for family requirements. But 9.1% of
the men also admitted to the same. Figure 6.47 shows the female - male comparison
of family expectations to compromise with one’s work.

Figure 6.47

Do your family members expect you to compromise with your work in order to attend
to family matters? (Such as health needs of family members, education of children,
visitors, holiday plans etc.)

This survey data shows (Figure 6.28) that women are 34.3% more likely than
men to quit their jobs on account of family responsibilities. When married women and
men were specifically questioned about whether they are able to give priority to their
careers (Figure 6.29) and as such the same priority as their spouses would to their
careers while 72.9% of the women stated that they are able to and desire to give
priority to their careers over other personal domains an overwhelming 96.1% men are
able to optimally prioritise their careers. Married men are 32% more able to give
priority to their careers than their working spouses. The family – career dilemma is
clearly never question with the men.

Tensions at Home

The data thus reveal conflicting findings. Though women claim in as many
numbers as the men that their families do not expect work related compromises from
them data collected on other counts revealed that more women are in fact likely to
leave their jobs due to family reasons, and lesser women than men are able to
prioritise their careers over family. In conjunction with this, data were also collected as to whether male and female managers actually face any tensions at home when they set out to pursue their careers with due diligence. Of the women, 39.2% admitted to sometimes facing tensions at home, 10.8% often faced tensions that came in the way of discharging work related obligations. In other words, half the surveyed women face some pulls from their family life. Of the men, 40.2% and 9.1% sometimes and often face tensions. This shows that both men and women claim that they are equally subject to centripetal family pulls. Although women are not unique from men in facing tensions at home with regard to work needs when these figures are viewed in relation to the other statistics gathered for this research described, above it can be surmised that more women than men are subject to familial control on their careers. One cannot therefore generalise strictly from this data that women’s familial roles come in the way of them executing their jobs to satisfaction. Figure 6.48 shows employees’ perception on how much they face tensions at home regarding work requirements/shifts/travel etc.

### Figure 6.48

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tensions at Home due to Work Requirements - Female-Male Comparison</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometime s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Do you ever face tensions at home regarding work requirements/shifts/travel etc.?

Continuing in the same vein to deduce the difference between married and single persons, in terms of marital status, 54.3% of the married women reported facing family impositions that come in the way of work as compared to 47.6% in case of single women. For married men, 56.4% face tensions at home that come in the way of meeting work requirements while for single men, the number is 45.5%. Since there is not
much difference in the family obligatory expectations from men and women one can conclude that being married places greater burden family responsibility on both men and women. Figure 6.49 and 6.50 show tensions at home due to work in terms of marital status of the respondents for women and men respectively.

**Figure 6.49**

<table>
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<td>Single</td>
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**Figure 6.50**

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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>56.4</td>
<td>43.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>54.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Job Stress**

In addition to tensions at home there is also the aspect of job stress in a demanding work sector. IT companies often bill their clients by the hour. Many have to work with different time zone locations. Added to this, are the intense competition
and the need to be first in the technology race. All these lead to rather tight work schedules and ‘aggressive deadlines’. People are routinely expected to meet stretch goals, i.e. tasks that one has to stretch oneself to meet so to speak. All these contribute in no mean measure to job stress. 67.2% expressed feeling stressed due to job related problems, and 45.8% felt they were only sometimes stressed. Of the men, 22.7% were often stressed and 38.9% sometimes so. For the women 20.3% are often stressed and 51.6% are reporting to be sometimes so. Figure 6.51 shows comparative job stress levels of male and female employees.

**Figure 6.51**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Never</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>38.9</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In a typical week how often do you feel stressed at work particularly trying to achieve aggressive deadlines and coping with stretch goals?*

Overall, 72% of the women report significant stress levels as against 61.6% of the men, a difference of 10.3%. Women are 110% more stressed than the men in the workplace despite all their claim of supportive families and spouses. Therefore although women claim not to face any tensions at home the cumulative effect of pressures on the home front is witnessed in their increased levels of job stress. Women so strongly internalise their gender roles from the very start that they do not perceive of those pulls as causing tensions. This is another aspect of denial of personal disadvantage that women persist in engaging in. Even when the objective reality illustrates to a certain fact women are reluctant to perceive it as such. Figure 6.52 shows the comparison of overall stress levels of women and men.
The concept of stretch goals is not new to the IT world. Interviewees averred that deadlines were often extremely aggressive involving high expectations to deliver, the pressure to perform for both men and women being intense as it were. In the course of the survey a male middle level manager had commented matter-of-factly, “you need to give your 120%.” Overall the sector indeed makes for a demanding workplace.

Health Concerns

Whether job stress is affecting employee health is an important component of the decision taken by women to quit their jobs at some point. Among the women, 56.1% felt that their job related stress, the work hours and the deadlines were taking a toll on their health. This view was shared by 57% of the men. In fact the survey showed as pointed out earlier that 15.2% of the women named health to be the most probable cause should they decide to leave their jobs, and 13.3% wanted to quit due to family responsibilities. When women quit jobs one of the reasons is the increasing work demands leading to stress and causing health concerns. Women are thrice more likely than men to quit jobs on account of health reasons. Their opting out in the interest of the larger good is not be construed as a sign of lack of career orientation. Figure 6.53 shows the perceived health impact of job stress.
Do you feel your job is taking a toll on your health?

Health concerns are not to be trifled with. Most lifestyle diseases such as hypertension and diabetes have been traced to increased levels of stress compounded by job stress. IT organisations too are exhibiting awareness of this factor. Infosys for instance has launched a programme called HALE – health assessment and lifestyle enrichment – which focuses on optimising the wellbeing and stress reduction of the employees (Infosys Annual Report, 2014).

The fact that it is difficult to dissociate work from leisure also contributes to the tremendous stress that accompanies an IT job. Time is crucial while implementing projects, clients are billed hourly, work is carried round the clock in shifts and truly as nowhere else it is success that speaks.

The inter-generational gap in the workforce is more strongly perceived in the IT sector than in any other. At least two distinct generations with distinctive traits can be identified in the workforce - Generation X are (practically) all those born before 1980 and Generation Y (those under thirty) who are in their twenties and on the right side of thirty. A more dynamic and indefatigable youngster can easily overshadow a reliable long term employee. All these create feelings of stress and unease physically and psychologically among both men and women. All is not well for the generation Y...
employee also. They are more exposed to a posh lifestyle and are driven to acquire expensive commodities both for pleasure and as status indicators.

Studies have shown that workaholism leads to reduced mental and physical well-being. People who work more than 50 hours a week are more prone to skip meals leading to reduced physical, mental and emotional well-being. People knowingly work more even though it takes a toll on their health and erodes their leisure. According to Nobel laureate Gary S. Becker’s theory of allocation of time, while working more creates wealth it also reduces the leisure required to spend it. Other than the work-labour dichotomy there is also requirement of time for tasks that cannot be categorised as either work – household or market, or leisure. For instance the time spent on commuting to work. Time (and energy) expended on commuting may reduce the productive potential of an individual. Urban planning has also evolved the concept of ‘smart cities’ which shall be infrastructurally developed into compact self-sufficient functional units.

**Commuting to Work**

Organisations seem to be aware of this and larger organisations have taken measures to reduce commuting time. Sprawling campuses have come up in satellite townships, office transport is provided along with work from home option and flexible time options. The emphasis is on delivering the results and not so much on being punctual and ‘on time’ to work. In Bangalore a majority 49.2% women prefer to commute by personal vehicle and this is the case with 42.2% in Mysore too. Among men, 62.1% in Bangalore and 63.8% in Mysore prefer commuting by personal transport. Overall in Bangalore 55.5% of the employees prefer to commute to work by their own vehicles and in Mysore 52.8%. Figure 6.54 shows the various modes of transport availed by employees to commute to work.

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2 Gary Becker’s classic study, “A Theory of the Allocation of Time”, (1965) laid the analytical foundations for the study of household production and the allocation of time within the household. In this Becker provides an analysis of choice that includes the cost of time on the same footing as the cost of market goods. He drew attention to the other “non-working” uses of time i.e. time spent on education, housework, consumption of food, child-rearing, leisure or any other activity apart from paid work.
How do you usually commute to your place of work?

The average distance to work in Bangalore is about 15 kms. And that in Mysore is 9 kms. Without accounting for traffic jams and other hazards and construction hold ups (metro line is being laid extensively across Bangalore city causing traffic snarls with excruciatingly slow movement of vehicles) and taking all road conditions to be the same, the average time taken to commute to work in Mysore is about 30 minutes. This average increases considerably to 1.5 hours in Bangalore going strictly by the miles travelled to work. If road conditions were to be accounted for, this timing especially in peak hours is expected to escalate by at least one hour more each way. Figure 6.55 shows the comparison of average distance to workplace with commuting time for Bangalore and Mysore.

Figure 6.55
Although offices provide transport, respondents from Bangalore admitted that they prefer not use the office vehicles. The popular refrain from junior managers was:

“If we take the office vehicle we have to get ready according to the trip. We will have to leave very early for that. We prefer to go on our own so we can start late.”

With increased distances and road rush and enhanced work and leisure expectations time is at a premium in big city India. In Mysore where distances still do not count for much the younger managers were all happy to avail of office transport.

Flexible Work Hours

Organisations however do give flexible work hours especially for certain categories of assignments and many employees also avail of the option to work from home. 46% women say they have availed of flexible work options and 51% of the men also say so. There is an almost equal number of people confirming or refuting availability or desirability of flexible timings. Figure 6.56 shows the availability of flexible timings and work-from-home options provided to employees.

![Figure 6.56](image)

It was also decided to analyse this by level of job. Figure 6.57 clearly shows that women managers at higher job levels in fact do not like to exercise work from home options. Taking work home also leads to an invasion of home spaces and though tempting, may not be the most viable option to optimise achieving tasks. Interview respondents revealed that as with advancing age their household responsibilities also increase alongside with their job commitments staying at home is
tantamount to getting submerged in housework. They need to be able to draw clearly defined boundaries between the two spaces, home and work. A woman manager revealed that younger women with small or infant children sometimes prefer working from home as it helps them in their maternity roles and to satisfactorily watch the children.

**Figure 6.57**

<table>
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<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Does your organisation give you flexible work times including work from home option?*

**Work-Life Balance**

In spite of all this, straddling work and private life is a difficult balancing act at least for some. However, when people were asked specifically about whether they were able to meet competing and at times conflicting demands from the workplace 64% of the women and 63% of the men answered in the affirmative. Figure 6.58 shows comparison between genders in attaining a measure of work-life balance.

**Figure 6.58**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
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<td>33.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td>62.6</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Are you able to balance your work life and personal life?*
Viewed by marital status of employees, only 18% of the married women are able to easily manage work life balance as against 46% of the single women, a difference of 28%. Single women are 2.6 times more likely to find it easy to attain balance between home and work than their married counterparts. Among men the difference due to marital status is that 18.2% and 44.4% of married and single respectively find it easy to balance work with family, a difference of 26.2%. Single men are also 2.4 times more easily able to balance work and family than married men. Figure 6.59 shows this comparison between married and single persons in their ability to attain balance between work and life.

**Figure 6.59**

Companies organise de-stressing routines like yoga, meditation, spiritual sessions and the like. Significantly the extra time in commuting not to mention the pollution and city traffic do add to the wear and tear and employee stress levels. Smaller centres like Mysore compensate on that count but opportunities for career growth tend to be limited. If an average woman manager spends 5 hours each day travelling to work i.e. 25 hours in a working week, that coupled with the lead role she has to take in the home sphere certainly would be putting a drain on her reserves. The cumulative effect of this then would be increased stress and declining health. Over a period of time when there comes a juncture laden with self-evaluation it is likely that the woman without even realising it as such, may choose to quit her career given the multiplicity of roles that she is called upon to do justice to.
Organisations especially the larger ones give a lot of privileges such as sabbaticals, extended maternity leave, part time work, working through teleconferencing, and various other innovations designed to sustain the fragile balance with work and a person’s other life commitments. The reason organisations strive towards chasing this fickle balance for their employees is not so much perhaps for the employees’ personal gain as for maintaining optimum work performance, effective problem solving and thereby sustained productivity to remain in the reckoning in an intensely competitive market. Larger firms invest in research projects that can study behavioural areas to understand perceptions of employee morale and requirements. The internet giant Google for example has initiated a research project named ‘gDNA’ that is meant as a long term study aimed at understanding the nuances of work and work related behaviours. The residual consequence of this generosity though is that women tend to be benefitted in that their career concerns could also get addressed.

Role Conflict

The problem of work-life balance is essentially the problem of role strain or of role conflict. Textbooks of sociology teach us that in the course of their social lives individuals have role sets as a part of their various statuses and these roles are governed by norms and expectations. When mutually contradictory or conflicting roles need to be simultaneously enacted this creates conditions of role strain. Individuals with multiple complex social roles attempt to organise their behaviour in terms of the structurally defined expectations assigned to each role. In their performance of these roles people give prominence to those social roles towards which they (and their significant others) perceive a greater degree of integration. When multiselved individuals have to deliver on multiple demanding and often conflicting social roles they experience role strain. This is especially so when the two (or more) sets of roles are supported by a different set of underlying values. For instance, a woman may experience role strain in her role as mother and wife but both these roles are affective in nature and derive from the same set of social values. Whereas between her role as mother or wife and her role as office manager both of which type of roles belong to divergent value dimensions, the likelihood of role strain and indeed role conflict is far greater. To select then as to which set of value orientations to give primacy to becomes the real axis of dissention. Working men on
the other hand do not have to face this role conflict to as great a degree since men’s work has traditionally received the consent of the prevailing set of values and resides in the heart of the value consensus or *conscience collective* of the collectivity.

The degree to which women are able to internalise the values pertaining to career goals determines their desire and ability to accord primacy to their careers and thereby to succeed in their careers. The essential incompatibility between the women’s various social roles is due to the inconsonance in the values governing those roles. This is the reason for the conflicts that women’s multiple roles across domains are accompanied with. Further, the more integrated the society in terms of its value consensus the less will be the likelihood of individuals being subject to the strain of incompatible social roles. This requires a transformation in the value consensus to take into its fold the value components of women’s roles in the achieved, affectively neutral and universalistic domains. These changes are structural in nature and cannot be effected by mere legislative or executional measures at the workplace or in the wider society.

**Self Evaluation**

Self-esteem is difficult to evaluate through objective criteria. It varies due to differences in individual personalities, cultural capital, family background and encouragement received from family and significant others, one’s own history of successes and failures, social conditioning, environment and also varies through time, place and situation. Core self evaluations are the fundamental premises that individuals hold about themselves (Judge et al, 1997). A positive core self evaluation is said to be associated with increased levels of self worth and belief in ‘self efficacy’ for actualising cherished goals in individuals. Therefore questions were devised that would help draw reasonable inferences about male and female employees’ evaluations of themselves, their level of self-esteem and perceptions of self-worth within the context of the organisation, as well as to assess the role of latent valuations imperceptible even to the subjects themselves.
Self-Assessment of Ability

When asked if they have the ability to reach the highest career level in their organisation 80% of the women expressed confidence in their ability to reach the very top. In the same way 89% of the men expressed the same faith in their abilities. On an average, men have 11.4% greater belief in themselves as potential leaders. This is one of the offshoots of male hubris that behavioural scientists have repeatedly cautioned about. That notwithstanding, women do exhibit a good degree of confidence in themselves belying the popular premise of low self-esteem among the female gender. Figure 6.60 provides a comparative view of the self-assessment of men and women of their abilities.

![Figure 6.60](image)

**Do you have the ability to reach the highest career level in your or some other organisation?**

<table>
<thead>
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</table>

Promotions

However in terms of actual preparedness for promotions as in for regular job advancement 78.5% of the women expressed confidence in going for promotion. Of the men 82.6% expressed confidence. Figure 6.61 shows comparative confidence levels of male and female employees with regard to meeting promotion criteria.

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3 This percentage has been calculated after bringing men and women in the sample to be numerically at par for the purpose of objective comparison.
In the context of the application of the fairness principle in promotions, when managers were asked if in their private assessment promotions to higher levels are determined on merit alone or other considerations may prevail, 30% of the men felt that merit alone prevailed in matters of promotions while the majority 53% felt that there were other factors necessary along with the basic merit while a few, 17% sceptically commented that it was other criteria not necessarily job relevant that constituted the basis for promotions. In comparison only 23% of the women endorsed the existence of the merit principle while a sizable 62% believe in the interplay between merit and other factors, and only a marginal 15% felt that other factors predominate in the selection process to higher levels. More women than men believe that other factors come to play in the context of promotions especially at higher levels.

An interviewed manager pointed out that “gaps (in salary and position) arise due to lateral recruitment”. Further, there is no uniform one rank - one salary and one promotion level regime in operation. How one progresses in one’s career eventually is the result of an interplay between several factors.

Figure 6.62 shows employees’ responses about promotions as primarily a matter of the merit principle or otherwise.
A report by McKinsey & Company published in 2011 noted that men are promoted based on their potential while women are promoted based on past performance. Women are judged on what they have actually achieved. Women themselves weigh their career goals in relation to future events that may not yet have taken place - such as the possibility of marriage or the birth of a child (Sandberg, 2013). Sometimes these behaviours could be unconscious acts – a woman may be oblivious of the fact that she is blocking out new opportunities. In the banking sector in India for instance women working for nationalised banks sometimes deny themselves promotions because promotions invariably are accompanied by locational transfers often mandatory. This brings us back to the job-career dualism. Within the family and socially the woman’s work is viewed as subsidiary to that of the man its predominant objective being as a source of supplementary income, her career path is not necessarily accorded sufficient primacy even by her.

So in addition to any external obstacles that women face they have to deal with a host of internal obstacles in the form of self-doubt and unrealistic expectations from themselves in their roles as wife, mother or daughter. Sometimes these self-imposed internal barriers manifest in the form of career damaging behaviours – like sitting in the back row at meetings, not speaking until addressed, not asking questions in public fora, not giving suggestions until those are explicitly solicited. Men on the other hand do not need special encouragement to sit in the foreground, talk vociferously, ask questions or give suggestions. Women often judge themselves more
critically – they tend to rate their performance worse than it actually is while the men tend to revel in their achievements judging themselves to be superior to they actually may be (ibid.). A direct upshot of this is that women are more cautious in accepting new job challenges especially stretch assignments. This creates a double bind - they lose out on the fullness and diversity of experience that ultimately leads to their diminishing career prospects and promotional avenues. Consequently women often become reluctant to try for promotions, lending credence to the sticky floor hypothesis. Also women want to be noticed rather than “shaking people up” to notice them. This has been described as the “tiara syndrome”, that somebody will appreciate the good work they are doing and place the tiara of recognition and credit on their head. This does not always happen. According to Sandberg it is important to do good work, it is also important to let it be known (ibid.). Sometimes when someone asks for a promotion bosses take it as a display of eagerness and ability. Women tend to shy away from asking and by their very passivity create just that element of doubt about their competence.

We live in democratic times. Democracy as Tocqueville said extends to the sphere of individual freedom. Democracy unlike socialism attaches all possible value to each individual; to extend Tocqueville’s analogy to gender, while democracy seeks equality in liberty which is what the men in the workplace attempt; women follow the path of restraint and conformity. This is the same hesitation that prevents women from making personal connections with influential people at work. Women do not usually mingle extrovertly because social mores ingrain in them what is considered ‘proper’ conduct for a woman. These mores make women ever conscious of the fact that they cannot engage in any behaviour that would get them described as ‘loose’. The corporate world operates on connectedness especially at higher levels. Here is where the men gain over the women.

Of course some women do no really aspire for careers. And to that extant a patriarchal dispensation gives them room to forsake their careers in favour of the household. But those who do want careers need to come out of their shells as also their martyr mindsets of sacrificing themselves at the altar of their families. We tend to associate men with leadership qualities and women with nurturing qualities. In the pattern variables described by Talcott Parsons there are binaries of behaviours – women are identified with the more expressive, affective and diffuse social roles.
Such is the internalisation of these values in the psyche of the women that the women assume a posture of acceptance of this ‘value consensus’ submerging their individual wills in the face of the of the stronger social will.

**Inclination for taking New Job Challenges**

When asked whether they relish taking on new job challenges and assignments outside their comfort zone a trait associated with the predominantly ‘alpha’ male managers were asked to grade their responses in terms of, ‘strongly liking’, ‘liking’, being neutral or altogether being averse to the idea of job related surprises. With 27.4% of the women managers responding to strongly like and 48.2% saying that they did in fact like their job challenges the women it shows are not behind in this aspect. In fact, while 33.5% of the men strongly appreciate new challenging assignments, only 42.5% of the men liked such work as compared to the 48% women who did so. Figure 6.63 shows graded responses on gender wise receptivity for new job tasks.

**Figure 6.63**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Inclination for taking New Job Challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
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<td>Strongly Like</td>
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<td>27.4</td>
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<td>48.2</td>
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<td>33.5</td>
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<td>42.5</td>
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In totality however, both 76% of the men and about 76% of the women replied in the affirmative showing similar readiness to take on challenging assignments among both genders. This means that in terms of readiness to accept new job challenges women are not falling short. Figure 6.64 shows overall total of those who like and strongly like job related challenges.
Do you like taking on new job challenges and assignments outside your comfort zone?

Do women hold themselves back?

It follows that if women are equally receptive to challenging assignments then why does it get often presumed that women hold themselves back in their careers? On being expressly questioned about this 67.6% of the women confessed that they indeed have to curtail themselves in their careers due to family and societal pulls and others expectations of them. 52% of the men also conceded that women have to pull themselves back from career demands due their other social roles. This brings us back to the job-career divide. For a woman a career usually implies having a job. For married women in particular in middle class India in many cases a job is taken to be an extension of dowry, and “even if there are no constant demands of ostensible dowry, what the woman brings home every month is another kind of dowry by instalment” (Gupta, 2000: 60). Therefore women socially are not expected to give their one hundred percent to the career element of their jobs. Figure 6.65 depicts employees’ response to the perception whether women executives hold themselves back.
Do you think women hold themselves back in their careers particularly due to social pressures?

Self-Esteem

This then brings us to the question of self-esteem in women. Giving in to conflicting social requirements, having to subordinate their own goals in the larger interest, being somehow considered less efficient at work, having to repeatedly prove themselves, being at times unable to give their 100% to their careers, all these and more would presumably cause a dent in the self-esteem of women. When male and female managers were asked whether they thought that women have lower self-esteem and tend to be more self-effacing than men in the same career rung their overall replies however did not reveal that women carry with them the crucifix of lowered self-esteem. In fact only 33% of the women felt that women employees have lower self-esteem and tend to be more self-effacing than men in the same career rung. Likewise only 32% of the men folk felt that the women have lower self-esteem.

Figure 6.66 shows employees’ overall perceptions about self esteem of women.
Do you think women have lower self-esteem and tend to be more self-effacing than men in the same career rung?

Clearly women seem to externalise their lack of success attributing it to factors outside of themselves such as family, workplace or the society at large do not let it affect their self-esteem levels. In the same manner that women are unable to sufficiently internalise their achievements and attribute these to their environment or the part played by their significant others and extra natural factors such as luck or fate, they also rationalise their failures as being generated by the environment - social, natural and para-natural. Issues of self-worth are thus not the moot point when it comes to the career advancement of women.

But when we view these responses in terms of the career rung of employees among women managers when women come to senior positions the self-esteem levels of women appear to plummet. Of those in junior management, 29% of the women feel that women have lowered levels of self-esteem than men. Of women middle managers 38% feel so, an increase of 31% over those in junior management. This progressive increase in the women’s lack of belief in themselves is markedly steep as they reach senior management level. All the women in senior management felt i.e. 100% of them felt that they had lower self-esteem than the men. One may recall that 67% of the woman senior managers had expressed that they tended to hold themselves back (Figure 6.65) in their careers due to various extraneous factors. Figure 6.67 depicts
men and women managers perceptions by job level on the self-esteem of women employees.

**Figure 6.67**

![Bar chart showing the percentage of women and men who believe women have lower self-esteem by job level.](image)

Do you think women have lower self-esteem and tend to be more self-effacing than men in the same career rung?

One possible explanation is that there are so few women at the top that all the actions of women senior managers tend to be subject to sharper scrutiny thereby putting them on the back foot.

**Self Confidence as Hubris**

Overall also in the course of interview conversations the men came across as somewhat pompous while talking about their achievements and career goals. Women seemed more at ease in sharing the credit for their success with those around them recognising the contributions of others including that of an element of good fortune. The men on the other hand routinely ascribed their success to their own competence and hard work. When asked a conversation starting question such as “what do you do? or describe your job?”, men would respond literally to the content of the query and actually describe the nature of their work, any plaudits that they may have received along the way, their victory in arguments with bosses, how valuable they were to their teams and organisations etc. Some would describe how they were instrumental in designing key software and applications in what seemed like grossly exaggerated accounts prompted by a mix of *hubris* and the desire to impress a stranger (me), but
may well have been true perhaps minus the lush embellishments. My interview perceptions on the overstatements men indulge in while describing themselves and their work is corroborated by studies of management scientists. Three business school professors Ernesto Reuben, Paula Sapienza and Luigi Zingales conducted an unusual experiment that they called “cheap talk”, the findings of which were made public, in which candidates were asked to speak about their performance and found that the men tended to exaggerate and managers including women managers tended to believe these exaggerated accounts (*The Hindu Business Line*, March 12, 2014).

Women on the other hand were restrained in their descriptions of work achievements, modest, and showing a willingness to share success with fathers, mothers, husbands and children, with co-workers and bosses and in fact anybody that resided in their universe of primary interaction - all actions that can be construed as the result of a lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. This is not necessarily true. Rather the differing styles of expression illustrate the different ways in which men and women internalise language as a means of establishing a dialogic relationship with themselves and their social others. The language of the women as indeed their voices reflect their subordination, self-denial, acceptance of and conformity to situations – language becomes the extension of the patriarchal principle in operation. The sociolinguistic perspective provides a useful vantage point for the analysis of the difference in male and female styles of expression and workplace behaviour.

**Perception of Leadership Qualities**

According to behaviour scientist Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic in an article that appeared in the *Harvard Business Review*, “the main reason for the uneven management sex ratio is our inability to discern between confidence and competence. That is, because we (people in general) commonly misinterpret displays of confidence as a sign of competence, we are fooled into believing that men are better leaders than women” (cited in *The Economic Times*, Bangalore, March 14, 2014). According to the author, when it comes to leadership, the only advantage that men have over women from one end of the globe to the other is the fact that manifestations of overconfidence generated by *hubris* tend to get mistaken for leadership potential, and that these occur much more frequently in men than in women.
This aspect of the personality of men and women was borne out in this research in the conversational paradigms adopted by the interviewees of both genders. It is true that successful male managers who were interviewed by me displayed a testosterone driven *hubris* born out of their successes attained in the realm of technology - this *hubris*, the extreme pride or self-confidence, that the men effortlessly exuded was something truly that women seemed to lack. The woman manager would talk about her success at balancing multiple roles and not so much the actual landmarks scaled at work. Her success story would inevitably include the generous part played by her family, spouse and children helpful peers, seniors and mentors.

Though this is not the subject matter of the present investigation I did find that women take greater joy at the successes of their spouses and significant others than do the men. A study by psychologist Kate Ratliff published by the American Psychological Association found that men feel subconsciously worse about themselves when their female partners succeed when they fail. Women’s self-esteem however was not affected adversely by their male partner’s success (cited in *The Hindu Business Line*, August 30, 2013).

Experiments conducted with no information about the job applicants other than their experience show that managers of both sexes were twice as likely to hire a male candidate over a woman. In the industry as in social life displays of confidence is often mistaken for real competence. Those who are socially more articulate are considered better at their jobs too. This definitely is another area where the men score over the women.

Accepting that men and women display different responses to work stimuli it is submitted that these responses should not form the basis for evaluating their relative competence in actual work performance.

**The CEO Race**

Interview responses however had also revealed that most people are sceptical about purely merit based recruitment at the very top. One gentleman had quipped in the course of an interview that if he wanted to be CEO he would have to start his own company! This view is not entirely unjustified in the Indian context. We often deride
the operation of the dynastic principle in India’s body politic. This is however an integral part of the Indian psyche, a carryover from the jati order of occupational castes. We have first families in all walks of life be it filmdom or politics. In the early years of democracy in the country popular opposition rallied around dynastic succession in the ruling party. Today as the opposition groupings evolved and turned in the second generation of members the leadership automatically passed on the hands of children and kin. Such is the case with the bulk of the proprietary companies too. According to statistics provided by the centre for monitoring Indian economy, one finds that many companies among the top 500 “corporate giants” are family oriented companies. The Geneva based World Economic Forum in its “The Global Competitiveness Report” 2011-2012 placed India 56th out of 142 economies, among countries in terms of competiveness assessed from over 100 indicators a small decline from its earlier ranking. Switzerland tops the overall rankings in The Global Competitiveness Report 2011-2012. Singapore overtakes Sweden for second position. Northern and Western European countries dominate the top 10 with Sweden (3rd), Finland (4th), Germany (6th), and The Netherlands (7th), Denmark (8th) and the United Kingdom (10th). Japan remains the second-ranked Asian economy at 9th place, despite falling three places since last year. The United States continues its decline for the third year in a row, falling one more place to fifth position (WEF, 2011-12).

The trend of family firms pulls down Indian companies including IT in terms of competiveness indicators. That being the overall situation the position of CEO may not be an opening to be filled on merit alone through upward or lateral mobility. When it comes to accommodating family, gender, as the Indian political firmament has amply demonstrated, is usually not the question. So we cannot evaluate the presence of glass ceiling by looking at the gender profile of the heads of IT or other corporations in India. But even in the larger corporations with shareholding public a woman’s name would seldom come up for chief executive officer. This is also because women are so few in that high level of management. Therefore first of all we need to look at and as we have done to look for how many women are actually there in top management.

Those individuals, men or women, who are driven to become chief executives often seek the path of entrepreneurship. The government and other agencies such as
NASSCOM provide a number of benefits to facilitate start-ups and small and medium IT companies. It may be recalled that our digital pioneers too tread a similar path.

**Other Aspects of Personality**

There are also some currents of opinion that outward personality traits such as looks and personal charisma too influence career mobility. The popularity of personal grooming products and the nature of advertising campaigns that run indicate that these products are not just a means to preen to one’s vanity they also bolster self-esteem.

When a question was asked to survey employees on their perceptions about the hidden advantages of being good looking actually more men than women expressed that being good looking and attractive helped in careers. Figure 6.68 shows the pattern of responses on the topic.

**Figure 6.68**

Nearly 55% of the men endorsed that good looks are important in one’s career advancement as against 44% of the women who felt so. When I interviewed some male managers about this I gathered that this was not a dismissive reference attributing the success of women (who have culturally been referred to as the fair sex) to their feminine charms but rather their perceptions about the men themselves. Suave urban men exude greater confidence – those men whose physiognomy matches the
conventional concept of male hood stood a better chance of making the grade especially at higher levels where marketability is the key - both the product and the persona need to be strikingly marketable. According to sociologist David Lyon, technology has a sense of masculinity associated with it. In fact it is “This aspect of it symbolism also connects closely with actual social relations; women are under-represented in the industry, particularly in research and design” (Lyon, 1988: 139).

**Some Other Factors**

**Alienation**

The degree of estrangement that employees experience with respect to their organisations became unambiguously manifest when personnel floundered while answering even simple questions regarding their workplace in general. Many, especially the younger ones did not even know common facts about their organisation that are routinely available on company websites. Even trivia like approximate employee strength of their company would generate a range of inaccurate summations from “*about 500*” to “*must be around 1000*”, to “*oh! more than 1000 for sure!*” – all for the same building. Personnel have digital cards for entering their work areas. Only authorised personnel have the digital signatures to enter a room. Therefore teams are literally out of bounds for one another. Only really senior personnel can move freely in the building. Even during fieldwork I found that when I was given access to enter an organisation I could visit only the specific office location for which I had been given permission and not roam freely around the building. These intensive security safeguards even at the level of employees add another dimension to the alienation that an employee could be expected to feel.

While this feeling of estrangement equally applies to men and women the men however have through years of socialisation effectively internalised their career selves and thus can continue in their jobs their lack of emotional engagement notwithstanding. The women on the other hand are not raised to internalise career goals. Therefore this dissociation with the work environment and under-identification with work goals serves to make women quit their jobs with relative ease and lack of any sense of loss.
Lack of Mentor Support

Mentoring of promising juniors is considered important in corporate talent building. According to Sandberg (2013) in the west in particular people need mentors at different stages in their careers. Those people who find right mentors at key junctures in their careers to help them grow and develop usually have better long run career prospects. It is found that while men find it easy to relate to mentors, women due to social constraints find it difficult to relate to male mentors or spend ‘quality time’ with them. Women mentors are numerically fewer and this largely reduces the possibility of a woman being able to find another woman for mentor who would nurture her career. Also as our data show senior women themselves are reluctant to mentor women and do not have sufficient trust in the junior women’s commitment to career goals.

Some newer initiatives have been started in social media to fill this void. Through blogs on social media women ask and answer career related questions and look out for each other. Facebook the popular social networking website along with some other agencies (Today, Box, Facebook, and Pinterest) have also developed a mentoring initiative called ‘WEST’ (Women Entering and Staying in Tech.), described as a “one-on-one mentorship program” committed to helping more women to enter and flourish in their technology jobs (facebook.com). These websites bring together experienced women professionals from top technology companies across the industry to sustain a mentorship network, help women with job related concerns and apprise them of newer upcoming opportunities in technology jobs availability and upgradation.

In the preceding paragraphs an attempt has been made to exhaustively cover all the presumed reasons for glass ceiling inequality especially those that were revealed through the literature review. There can be of course countless other factors that could together influence salary and job prospects such as location of work, size of organisation, one’s own cultural capital and social capital, certain extraneous factors like organisational expansion, or alternately a recession driven cut back among others. The IT sector in that sense is a very fluid sector people can literally take their office with them where they go. The industry trend is also that when talent undergoes a locational shift it usually means that an entire team shifts along with that person.
Women may tend to lose out in such situations. Salaries in the sector at higher levels in particular are the product of negotiation. Men usually do not feel shy to demand what they think they are worth, while women do not make such effective negotiators and often as our findings reveal are even unaware of their true worth. These are all outward manifestations of causation. The core reason has to be only understood with a sociological basis.

Summary and Conclusions

In chapter 5 we defined glass ceiling as a social fact and showed through the primary data that in the IT industry there is indeed a sharp glass ceiling inequality for women. In this chapter now an effort has been made to explore the causes for the glass ceiling – Who is to shoulder the responsibility for this aberration? The data collected from the field was arranged in terms of its content into broad categories of reasons that are likely generators for this glass ceiling inequality based on the prevailing explanations contained in the exhaustive review of glass ceiling literature that was presented in chapter 2 of this thesis. In this manner the validity of the prevailing explanations has been tested in order to be able to identify the cause for the glass ceiling inequality.

At the very outset the question was asked, do IT organisations knowingly or unknowingly foster a culture of inequity? Effort was made to gauge this aspect of the culture of organisations through employees’ perceptions on various indices such as fairness in their work conditions, the degree to which their work potential has been developed, their levels of job satisfaction, the organisation’s commitment to diversity, the importance of gender in work allocation and career growth, the nature of interaction among co-workers, and the sexual harassment strictures in place.

With regard to fairness in work conditions majority of the responses of both men and women ranged within different degrees of agreement. It is found that 58% of the women concede to being treated fairly at work. A significant aspect of fair treatment in the workplace is also the quality of work exposure provided to the personnel that can improve their chances of occupational mobility. Empirical literature on glass ceiling had mentioned that women do not get sufficient share of desirable assignments and competitive work experience. When employees were
specifically questioned about the nature of work exposure that they received however, both men and women executives felt 83% and 77% respectively that they were given adequate exposure at work to develop as employees. Although on objective criteria women are receiving lesser rewards than men, in their subjective opinions they are unable to perceive this to be the result of discrimination. The fact is that the men appeared to be more discontented about their work incentives than women. In terms of job satisfaction levels also 71% of the women express a fair degree of job satisfaction. However, only 60% of the men showed feelings of job satisfaction which is a fairly sizable gap of about 11% between the perceptions of men and women on job satisfaction. Women by and large are unaware of being persecuted and appear more satisfied with what they had been receiving as workplace rewards. Women enter their careers with appreciably lower expectations than men and are quite easily satisfied with whatever recompenses the job offers. Most of the interviewed women reported feelings of being “fortunate” or “truly blessed” or plain “lucky” conveying an (erroneous) impression that they had received more than they rightly deserved. Women tend to regard the career element as a secondary component of their total selves the income accruing from it being a useful supplement to the family pool. The men on the other hand place greater value on their careers, make for more demanding employees and do not attribute their success mainly to good luck rather they attribute it to their own hard work and ability. Though in absolute terms and relative to the women the men are faring far better in the industry their satisfaction levels are noticeably lower. Psychologists have found that individuals with a strong internal “locus of control” (their extent of belief that they have control over their own lives) believe more that they can control events affecting them and tend to assume responsibility for their successes while others (in this case women) attribute their success (or failure) to factors outside of themselves such as the environment or extra-natural factors like luck or fate. This perceptible difference in the mindsets of men and women has been a consistent strand throughout the survey regardless of the sphere of question involved.

The analysis shows that IT organisations pride themselves on their gender and pro diversity policies often taking proactive measures to provide a ‘women-friendly’ organisational culture. Organisations vie with one another on their ‘great place to work’ quotient. There is zero tolerance towards sexual harassment; most organisations
have well formulated policy paradigms to manage diversity related issues including
gender diversity. Therefore when it comes to the question of actual incidence of
having witnessed or experienced sexually undesirable behaviours, 89% of the women
categorically deny having observed or undergone any experience of any kind of
sexual harassment.

Both, 76% of the women and 79% of the men agreed that indeed IT
organisations have proactive diversity policy. At the same time women later in their
careers start experiencing the disjunction between organisation policy and actual
practice. While only 37% of the women in junior management find gender an
important variable in career growth this number goes up to 59% in middle
management and ultimately 100% of the women senior managers declare that their
gender is a crucial variable that impedes their career mobility. Men definitely come in
with an advantage. At the same time men have differing perceptions on whether
women face difficulties because they are women. Though more men at senior levels
are willing to concede the importance of gender still there are 52% men who continue
to believe that gender is not an important variable in career growth. This shows that
perceptions on injustice vary depending upon which end of the situation one resides
in. A woman especially a senior manager understands all too well and regretfully the
meaning of being a woman.

Senior level managers confessed in the course of interviews that while
picking a team for any assignment or project all else being more or less the same they
prefer to select a man over a woman keeping in mind the larger context of continuity
of the team. So, all else being roughly the same men have better chances of being
picked for crucial tasks. The undesirable consequence of this other than the more
obvious is the creation of glass walls, a surely but steadily executed measure of inter-
gender occupational segregation. Over time the men gain a wealth of job related
exposure that women lose out on. Since women are deprived crucial work exposure
they can ascend the job ladder only up to a certain level. A fall out of this is the
inevitable glass ceiling.

This attitude seems widespread among bosses across genders. Such is the
stranglehold of gender predispositions that even a woman boss will pick those persons
(men) who she feels will lend stability to her team. She is reluctant to mentor a junior
woman and help shape her career. Women despite being the victims themselves often unconsciously perpetrate the same discrimination driven by deleterious beliefs that shape their mindsets. It was found amongst the women that indeed there is in them a disjunction between the objective reality of discrimination and the subjective reality of admitting to that discrimination and recognising it as one’s own state of being. The sociology of revolutionary action teaches us that the very first step in any revolutionary praxis is to recognise being in a state of relative deprivation and disadvantage. It is this consciousness of one’s condition that sets the dialectic of transformation into motion. Corporate women are reluctant to acknowledge that they personally suffer any discrimination. There seems to be some deep seated sense of mortification associated with being discriminated against that compels educated women to a subconsciously lingering state of denial. Women often assume a stance of penitent self-reproach even as they are being wronged feeling as though they deserved their situation. There seems to be some kind of stigma associated with being less than successful at work such is the projection of meritocracy in the organisation. It appears that the organisational fair play initiatives are so well projected as to effectively cloud any suspicion of wrongdoing or biases in operation.

The literature review had pointed to the prevalence of ‘second-generation biases’ wherein successful men are also popular while successful women are automatically considered less than likeable by both men and women alike. These biases constitute the undercurrents of the façade of a just and equitable work sphere. This analysis showed that in a highly competitive work sphere antagonisms and resentments among peers can happen but these are not specifically gender centric. Co-workers are not apparently hostile to women because they are women. Success inspires awe, envy and certain veiled animosity and this is common across genders. Admittedly ironically due to the glass ceiling women do not experience such success as to have the others resent them.

Further, a lot of the reviewed literature had suggested lack of meaningful communication among men and women colleagues to be an important impediment to the advancement of women in their careers. The two genders do not socialise much within the workplace. The access of opportunities to women at least cannot be said to be contingent in any measure upon their level of dialogic communication with colleagues. As per the responses of the employees over 50% of both men and women
claim to often interact socially with co-workers across genders. In most cases the universe of communication is a rather impersonal one and co-workers interact through cyber tools such as instant messaging, email, text messages etc. Moreover, men and women avoid personal intermingling due to the stringent sexual harassment legislation that organisations also zealously implement.

The research found that in terms of being able to devote to their careers when it comes to putting in hours at work both men and women put in a fair amount of time at work. Overall on an average a woman manager works 45 hours a week and the male manager works 47 hours in a week a difference of 2 hours or a very nominal difference of about 5%. The average woman junior manager works 44 hours a week whereas her counterpart male manager works 47 hours, a difference of 3 hours weekly which is about half an hour extra per day in a five-day working week. It is argued that it is this extra half hour or more a day put in early on in the career that gives the vital head start to the male manager. At the start of their careers when employees ought to give their utmost to their professional lives women’s time and preoccupations unfortunately get diversified between spouse hunting, settling down in marriage, and then starting a family. Women also experience a stricter adherence to time constraints laid out by their families and usually cannot stay late at work, and as respondents revealed, office managers also avoid keeping women late at work. There are also labour laws to comply with and the general deterioration in urban safety conditions in big cities. Hence, the little extra that men are able to put in at the onset gives them continued leverage. Finally by the time a woman does actually reach a senior management position she in fact works on average a gruelling 50 hours a week and the male manager continues in his trend working 49 hours a week. The woman has to in fact work harder to prove herself and to retain her high level position. This is in effect the glass cliff hypothesis that behavioural scientists have argued about.

Concerns about job security constitute an important element of career orientation. In the survey we find that 46% women are concerned about aspects of securing their job to a lesser or greater degree. In relation to this 43% of men have apprehensions about job security. The men’s social roles as primary bread winner have conventionally had a bearing on their need for job security. But the increasing desire in the women to secure their jobs illustrates that women have also started assuming crucial provider roles within the family and are also committed at least to
their jobs and somewhere there nestles a fear in them of losing out on their job incomes and careers possibly due to the multiple roles that they need to balance in their lifetimes. That married women in particular have deeper job related worries that perhaps even they are neither explicitly conscious of or are willing to admit per se. It also shows that the conventional male bread winner paradigm is undergoing a shift in middle class corporate India. If we compare married women with single women the married women show a better trend of continuity in jobs and career with 22% hoping to continue in their jobs long term. Only 16% of the single women are able speak about their long term career plans with any degree of certainty. The women hesitate because their careers are tied to those of their spouses and the needs of their families. The men on the other hand seek to strategically change jobs to better their career prospects seeking positional jumps and salary hikes.

The woman’s career still remains a function of her familial and conjugal situation. Women’s compliance with social expectations that leads to their aborted careers cannot be considered the offshoot of their own latent wishes to do so or as a matter of exercise of ‘choice’. When the actual reasons for quitting were ascertained in terms of tangible reasons for wishing to quit 24% of women admit that they want to quit for better prospects, 13% for fulfilling family responsibilities, 15% on account of health reasons and a major 48% due to work pressures. When it comes to quitting for bettering their career prospects, at nearly 41% the number of men is almost twice than that of women. Women are 34% more likely than men to quit their jobs on account of family responsibilities. Health becomes an important reason for the women to quit. Women are up to three times (2.6 times or 258%) more likely to quit for health reasons than men. When women quit jobs one of the reasons is the increasing work demands leading to stress and causing health concerns. Their opting out in the interest of the larger good is not be construed as a sign of lack of career orientation.

Overall if we look at the data pertaining to career orientation it is not as though the women are any less determined to pursue their careers. And yet when women weigh the net balance of consequences it appears to them only ‘fair’ that they ‘sacrifice’ their careers. Such statements come implicitly laden with the patriarchal presumptive doctrine that these men’s wives could hold jobs only with their consent. Women taking the male-centric view of the world try to actualise themselves through
their motherhood roles rather than as individuals. Their sense of self-worth is to a great extent shaped by their score card in their feminine roles.

Ultimately any analysis of an inequality that is not supported or condoned by institutional structures has to be in some ways understood through these and other such imperceptible differences in the socio-psychological states of the participants themselves. These core beliefs internalised by both men and women at times even without conscious thought gnaw at the root of the careers of women. That and accompanied by the fact that a woman’s work is supposed only for the benefit of extra income and little else creates the necessary cultural ambience that sustains inequalities in the workplace.

Surprisingly few women actually considered their households male dominated. From the survey it was found that on an average a married woman manager devotes about 12 hours a week to housework and a single woman 9.5 hours. In contrast a married man spends an average of 10 hours on household chores and his single counterpart 8 hours. A married woman thus devotes 13% more time to housework than her married male colleague. A single woman works 20% more than her single male colleague. To conclude, as such the financial wellness of the IT employees, the ready availability of household labour at nominal costs, the presence of bilateral kindred can all be availed of to share the onerous household burden from the women employees leaving them at least in theory more or less free to continue with their jobs. 72% of the women report significant stress levels as against 62% of the men a difference of 10%. Women are much more stressed than the men in the workplace despite all their claim of supportive families and spouses.

Studies have shown that workaholism leads to reduced mental and physical well-being. People who work more than 50 hours a week are more prone to skip meals leading to reduced physical and mental well-being. People knowingly work more even though it takes a toll on their health and erodes their leisure. According to Nobel laureate Gary S. Becker’s theory of allocation of time while working more creates wealth it also reduces the leisure required to spend it. Other than the work-labour dichotomy there is also requirement of time for tasks that cannot be categorised as either work – household or market, or leisure. For instance the time spent on commuting to work. Time (and energy) expended on commuting may reduce the
productive potential of an individual. Organisations however do give flexible work hours especially for certain categories of assignments and many employees also avail of the option to work from home. 46% women say they have availed of flexible work options and 51% of the men also say so. There is an almost equal number of people confirming or refuting the choice of flexible timings.

**Need for a Paradigm Shift**

Work culture within the organisation not only means the working environment and lack discriminatory thinking, it also includes even the physical ambience of the place. Sometimes an office space may just not be woman friendly. Sheryl Sandberg COO of Facebook recalls an incident when in one meeting she attended they took a few minutes break, she asked for the women’s restroom, only to discover to her astonishment and that of those around her, there was no woman’s room in the venue (Sandberg, 2013). This is an incident from well into the first decade of the 21st century. Offices have to provide physical structures like women’s rooms, child care area, even something so much as the décor of the interior could be perceived as masculine or feminine. These visible structures are ultimately an extension of the organisational mind and go to show how much an organisation really cares. In the ultimate analysis women do not have to be patronised or humoured they need to be treated with respect and dignity. Career itself needs to be conceptualised in the feminine mode providing for, in its fold those situations in the life of a woman which impact her very life and may cause interruptions in her career. Ultimately all this calls for the need for a paradigm shift.

Together these attitudes and behaviours coalesce to contribute to lack of female representation in critical senior-level positions in the technology sector leading to the glass ceiling. If this glass ceiling is to be cracked the blow would have to be delivered at its foundation. In the chapter that follows an attempt has been made to look at the still deep seated causes for the glass ceiling that possibly constitute the foundation for this inequality. Chapter 7 contains findings from data collected from students of computer engineering in Mysore to this very end.
REFERENCES


- Deccan Herald. “Women Engineers Quit Due to Poor Workplace Climate.” Deccan Herald, Mysore, August 12, 2014.


