INTRODUCTION

In the global economy, India is a force with a high demanded human resource talent and India is advancing every year. The talent source consists of both educated men and women. While Indian corporation have not recognized the women talent and utilized this talent in their corporations. But lately, now Indian organization is slowly starting to recognizing this talent and enforcing the concept of gender inclusivity or gender diversity in their policies. These gender inclusivity or gender diversity will give a path to the women employees to put their steps into the top managerial ranks in the organization. Now a days we can notice a shift in cultural and societal practices is happening, especially about perception for women who work that is shifting from traditional and stereotypical attitudes to modern thoughts. In the Indian corporate world we can notice a change is happening through proactive policies from the management and increasing the opportunities for women employees to get into the top management and gain executive positions.

When we talk about the gender equality in the organization, unfortunately in the organization still there is an inequality among the gender proportion. We can find that each degree of employees has some career plan ahead of them which adds meaning to their lifestyle and career. Entry level employees do undergo training to support their career growth, mentors to guide new entrants to create their career with a definitive career path, whereas mid-professional workers do not find clear career
advancement paths for them in their profession as these mid-career employees and managers will be at the crest of their productivity. Despite the fact that these mid career employees carry a long years of managerial experience and talents along with them, research studies divulge and determine them as the most dissatisfied segments of employees and managers in the organization. A manager/executive is a person tasked with overseeing one or more employees to ensure that the employees perform the assigned task as required in order acquiring the organization goals and objective. Majority of the managerial positions in corporate is held of male employees but now a small proportion of women employees are taking part in the top managerial positions. Women today share the podium with men in particularly all areas, be it kitchen or in defense. In the corporate world women employees are not seen as a rarity and are now accepted as an integral part of their work force. Considering the fact that the inclusion of more women in the team of workers has been strongly promoted that in recent occasions women in the middle and top management positions are still a rare species.

The concept glass ceiling has been thought to have first been used to refer to invisible barriers that impede the career advancement of women in the American workforce in an article by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt in the March 24, 1986 edition of the Wall Street Journal. Nevertheless, the thought was used prior to that; for illustration, it was once utilized in March 1984 Adweek article by Gay Bryant. The idea of glass
ceiling was used prior to the 1984 article by two women at Hewlett-Packard in 1979, Katherine Lawrence and Marianne Schreiber. Upon becoming CEO and chairwoman of the board of HP, Carly Fiorina proclaimed that there was no glass ceiling. After her term period at HP, she called her earlier statement a dumb thing to say. However, the concept was used by the U.S. Department of Labor in 1991 in response to a study of nine Fortune 500 companies. The study demonstrated that women and minorities encountered considerable glass ceiling barriers in their careers.

In organizations where women employees have managed to put their step into the top–level managerial positions, but these top position often limited to those areas where less central or strategic importance are there to the organization. As women employees are still struggling to reach those strategic areas like finance, product development and so on. As these strategic areas, will help an employee to grow in their career and set their career path towards key executive positions.

For Women the societal ideology will influence more their career choice. They have an ideology that women are the primary caretakers of their family, their children, and their elderly and so on. It more problematic for women employees who are in middle senior-level, as some organizations may not sufficiently offer work/life balance programs to support their outside commitments. Therefore, many middle level women employees are at a disadvantage situation to take steps higher to the top management. In organization, promotional opportunities often favor male employees due to
developmental prospects, such as mentoring and networks. Women employees may not have full access to informal networks in the organization as male employees use to develop work relationships in the company and these networks often tend to exclude women employees. The exclusion of women employees from the informal networks is mainly due to the nature of their activities or the perception that these are male activities, thus contributing to gender barriers in the workplace.

In women employees career the societal view and family play a vital role, especially in their decisions regarding promotions in the organization. A tradition is consciously maintained in the society that a woman’s place is at home (Jacob, 1999; Moore, 1995). Most of the educated women who are working, once they get married or had children will limit their duties only to household works, looking after their children and their family. For Women societal ideas were deeply enrooted into their minds from their elderly parents in the family, which cannot even ignore these principles on them. In some circumstances they accept these ideas as the thumb rule and adjust to the situation by sacrificing their self desires and goals. These kinds of thoughts will gradually de-motivate women and so they lose their confidence and enthusiasm. And among them there are some categories of women who struggle to overcome these thumb rule principles and reshape their mind towards their career. These categories of women were actually psychologically potential to manage with any situation in corporations.
Indian society still has not been able to break the shackles of old tradition of woman at home concept. Women are normally in the dilemma to make a choice between the family and the career. This problem creates a heavy influence essentially on married women. Marriage is social institution and as soon as woman is married, it is their prime responsibility to care for her husbands, in laws and children. It has been seen that male are the primary bread earners for their families and women, either married or unmarried, do their household works including elder care and if married, neonatal and kids care, and if she is a working person then her income is considered as a additional income. As women have long been considered as household workers so ‘education for women’ obtains the least or no priority in the society. Now, the mentality of the society has been changed with the change of time and economy of the country. In this era of globalization, no nation can grow having the ‘half human resources’.

However, with the advancement in education and changing mindset of young generation had compelled women to think differently to retain the social values and ethics. Besides, globalization and changes in economic and social condition act as constructive catalyst for altering the role and self perception (Stedham & Yamamura, 2004). Nowadays, women are looking to participate within the public domain and progressing in the direction of managerial ranks or higher level of administration in their participating organization. However the career path does not welcome women with red carpet. In spite of these positive changes, women still ought to face
intangible barriers in climbing up the corporate ladder. Regardless of changing situation, women employees still have to face issues as they have to play dual roles like an employee of an organization and household worker. Nowadays many organizations have started Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) for women by the means of job sharing, flexi-time, telecommunicating and many more, to give them relaxation. According to Anker (1977), women cannot pay attention at their workplace as they carry their domestic responsibilities and children with them at their workplace and prefer flexible work time for their convenience. So women are compelled to take a career break or flexible working hours to shield their young children (Schwartz, 1989) and these are few barriers in acquiring managerial positions in their organizations.

Despite of all these limitations, women are trying to put strong foothold in corporate world, but the proportion of women employees in senior management position in India remains to be very less in number. Glass ceiling effects are such barriers which might be unseen and yet forged spell a lot on working woman in order that organizations having intention to retain them, eventually they are in vain. Glass ceiling effect is originated by the problems of gender differentiation and gender stereotyping which have an impact on women executives regularly. Even though there lays a glass ceiling barrier, women executives are still in confusion about the presence of glass ceiling in the organization. Even most of the executives do blend gender discrimination and glass ceiling as one and the same but in reality
gender discrimination is one of the barriers among other barriers found in the glass ceiling concept. Having the stereotyped and preconceived concept, male employees are not able to accept women for their upward mobility in the organization and check out to create obstacles in any form. In reality male employees are not willing women to be as their boss. Women are excluded from informal organizational network and get no aid from their colleagues in decision making process. Thus by restraining women from strategic decision making process male counterparts attempt to heckle intentionally and creates a barrier for promotion. So women are less popular in strategic decision maker position. As a result of male imposed pressure women are also stressed out in the course of the day and indirectly it affects their performances and then it would be easy to find excuse to restrain them from promotion. This kind of thing sometimes causes losing of enthusiasm and it also affects their personal lives. It has been seen that a woman, in her prime time in organization or at the peak of her profession, all of the sudden bounds to drop her career to meet social obligations and responsibilities and certainly not suppose of returning back due to the unwelcoming situation in the organization.

As society play a vital role, it should carry on this noble Endeavour by encouraging women in every step of their lives keeping a thing in mind that where women are the creators of new life then they can easily maintain lifelines of the organization. As a society family play a major role in a women life, so her family should take care and encourage her in every step
i.e., in work life and family life, so she can balance both her work life and family life.

When women take a pit off from her career to raise her family and if she wants to reenter into career then it is a hard choice for both the organization and herself to decide, because as she taken a break for couple of months it’ll be hard to an employee to cope up with her counter parts and for organization it is hard to place that employee in the same position where her counterparts have reached. Alternatively, Entrepreneurship could also be the choice for women who are ambitious, careerist and have passion for work and especially who want to prove themselves. On the other hand, society, government and private organizations should take collective efforts to minimize the practice of gender diversity and gender stereotyping for the amelioration of society, organizations and women.

**Evolution of the concept of Glass Ceiling:**

The concept of glass ceiling was originally introduced outside of print media at the National Press Club in July 1979 at a Conference of the Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press by Katherine Lawrence of Hewlett Packard. This was part of an ongoing discussion of a conflict between written policy of promotion versus action opportunities for women at HP. The term was coined by Lawrence and HP manager Maryanne Schreiber.
The term was later used in March 1984 by Gay Bryant. She was the former editor of Working Woman magazine and was changing jobs to be the editor of Family Circle. In an Adweek article by Nora Frenkel, Bryant was reported as saying, Women have reached a certain point—I call it the glass ceiling. They're in the top of middle management and they're stopping and getting stuck. There isn't enough room for all those women at the top. Some are going into business for themselves. Others are going out and raising families. Also in 1984, Bryant used the term in a chapter of the book The Working Woman Report: Succeeding in Business in the 1980s. In the same book, Basia Hellwig used the term in another chapter.

In a widely cited article in the Wall Street Journal in March 1986 the term was used in the article's title: "The Glass Ceiling: Why Women Can't Seem to Break The Invisible Barrier That Blocks Them From the Top Jobs." The article was written by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy D. Schellhardt. In 1991 the US Labor Department's chief, Lynn Morley Martin, reported the results of a research project called "The Glass Ceiling Initiative" formed to investigate the low numbers of women and minorities in executive positions. This report defined the brand new term as those artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions.

Glass ceiling is a concept that refers to barriers faced by women employees and minorities who attempt, or aspire, to attain senior positions (as well as higher salary levels) in corporations, government, education and
nonprofit organizations’ even though they are well educated and experienced. Glass ceiling is the term used to describe the barriers that prevent women and minorities from advancing to management positions in corporations and organizations. The term glass ceiling became a permanent part of the American lexicon with a subsequent article in the Wall Street Journal published on 24 March 1986 by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt. The term may be casually used but the Department of Labor took it very seriously in 1991 when they issued a definition of it, stating that a glass ceiling is made up of Artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upward in their organization into management-level positions. The Department went on to establish a Glass Ceiling Commission in an effort to level the playing field.

Women executives insist that the glass ceiling is a real barrier to having male-dominated positions in business, many challengers say that it exists mainly because, women choose to focus more of their time on family and, in the end, cannot dedicate as much time to their career and are less supportive in sacrificing their personal desires to grow in their career. Others claim that women think they want to focus on their career, but in reality choose their family over career, as they feel their primary responsibility is toward their family and then to others. Glass ceiling is the term used to describe barriers that restrict women and minorities from advancing to the top position in organizations. The failure of more women and minorities to
crack the higher levels of corporate management is because of the glass ceiling. Yet the glass ceiling blocked women from rising to top management positions as mentioned above. Women were expected to be tough however no longer show macho characteristics; they were expected to take responsibility yet be obedient in following orders; and so they were expected to be ambitious yet not to expect equal treatment. Also, the glass ceiling applied to women as a group, not just individuals.

In a study, the Catalyst also found a glass wall in the women employee career which restrict on women's lateral mobility into the top position. The organization examined the employment and advancement trends for women employees in financial services, manufacturing, food and beverage industries, fashion retail merchandising, and high-technology corporations in their study. The study concluded that women employees do face this glass wall early in their career and miss their opportunity for progressive training in the organization. Following the glass wall, the glass ceiling naturally limits upward advancement of women employees career in the top management.

THE GLASS CEILING INITIATIVE

The glass ceiling spreads beyond the corporate environment. Among the first institutions to recognize the existence of the invisible barrier was the Federal government. Recognition of dramatic changes in the economy and the employees appeared in a formidable report published by the DOL in 1987. Workforce 2000 was a 117-page document that helped to increase
awareness of the role of women and minorities; it also defined the so-called "glass ceiling" with its various barriers.

1.2 Problem statement:

There is a need to examine the status of women in workforce in terms of their presence, participation and progress in the corporate sector. In this study, an attempt is made to examine whether glass ceiling is a reality or a myth which is self created that restrict women employees’ career growth. Further an attempt is made to identify and investigate the effects of glass ceiling on the women executives in a corporate sector.

1.3 Significance of the study:

The outcome of this study has a wider significance and implications for organizations and mainly for women employees working in the organization. Women were in the past and are now finding it difficult to challenge the inequalities prevailing in the workplace and the family. Even though number of policies was made by the organization and the government we see there are very little representation of women employees in the top. The study looks into the participation of women in the workplace, their professional advancement, organization effort to improve their conditions for career growth. The study attempts to highlight representation of women executives at different levels of organizational hierarchy, examine the opportunities available and limitations for the advancement of women within the organization, organizational initiatives in promoting the inclusivity of women by limiting the women perceived
barriers within and outside the organization which may act as an obstacle in their professional growth.

The study will give directions for the organizations to provide supportive structure and empower them to provide opportunities to climb the organizational hierarchy. This study will identify the obstacles to women in their career growth.

1.4 Objectives of the Study:

The study pursued the following objectives,

- To identify barriers that deprives women of access to the higher levels in the management hierarchy.
- To classify the barriers as self created or groomed by factors external to women.
- To investigate the effects of glass ceiling on career program.
- To investigate organizational initiatives in encouraging gender inclusivity.
- To suggest mechanisms to eliminate barriers affecting women executives.

1.5 Scope of the study:

The study area considered in the research includes the study of Women Executives in corporate sector. The sample for the study will be drawn from different sectors/companies based in and around Mysore city and the sample size selected for the study are 100 women executives. This
research focuses on the factors that come across in way of Women executives’ career progression in the corporate sector and it specifically examines the factors influencing career advancement such as work environment, job satisfaction, family factors and fairness & equity. The study traces the factors influencing the glass ceiling barriers, and collects the information about the solutions for the barriers from the respondents.

1.6 Hypothesis:

The following research hypotheses are stated in the study to evaluate the factors that influence glass ceiling of women employees working in Indian corporate companies of Mysore city.

Hypothesis 1:

H_0: There is no significant association between demographic factors (age group, education, marital status, family type, dependents, job position, no. of experience, previous experience, number of promotion, responsibility and work life balance) and glass ceiling.

H_A: There is significant association between demographic factors (age group, education, marital status, family type, dependents, job position, no. of experience, previous experience, no. of promotion, responsibility and work life balance) and glass ceiling.

Hypothesis 2:

H_0: There is no significant association between work environment factors and glass ceiling factors.
H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant association between work environment factors and glass ceiling factors.

Hypothesis 3:

H<sub>O</sub>: There is no significant association between Job satisfaction factors and glass ceiling factors.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant association between Job satisfaction factors and glass ceiling factors.

Hypothesis 4:

H<sub>O</sub>: There is no significant association between family factors and glass ceiling factors.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant association between family factors and glass ceiling factors.

Hypothesis 5:

H<sub>O</sub>: There is no significant association between Fairness and equity factors and glass ceiling factors.

H<sub>A</sub>: There is a significant association between Fairness and equity factors and glass ceiling factors.
1.7 Limitations

- The study relates to the use of non-probability sampling technique which implies that the results cannot be confidently extrapolated to the whole population of women executives.

- The study is confined to select women executives working in organized sectors of Mysore City; hence it may not reflect the overall views of women working in the organizations.

- The study is not limited to a single sector, so the responses may differ when a sector centric study is conduct.

- The responses are instantaneous and pertain to the time of interview, which may not disclose the present facts.

- The research is based on the responses of the survey and interviewed women respondents in Mysore city.

- A written confidential non-disclosure agreement had to be signed by the researcher before administering the survey as most companies at first were unwilling and even if permitted to participate were on the conditions that their identity would not be revealed no matter what.
1.8 Framework of the report:

The report is being planned to be laid out in chapters spread out in the following manner

Chapter 1
- Introduction
- Problem statement
- Significance of the study
- Objectives of the study
- Scope
- Hypothesis
- Limitations

Chapter 2
- Review of Literature

Chapter 3
- Research methodology

Chapter 4
- Data Analysis and interpretation

Chapter 5
- Summary of research findings

Chapter 6
- Suggestions and Conclusion

Bibliography

Appendix