

Status of Women Workforce in Corporate Sector With Reference To Glass Ceiling and Income Disparity

Mamta Jha
MBA(PMIR),NET

Abstract

GLASS CEILING EFFECT as the name suggests is an invisible barrier which prevents women from reaching the top of the corporate hierarchy. One would like to imagine that the glass ceiling effect is something that is easily reversible by women as long as they know the proper ways to fight it. Unfortunately, the glass ceiling is embedded within our society through a variety of barriers that can both indirectly and directly affect a female's ability to obtain management positions across the country. It is no secret that the glass ceiling is an issue faced by women all over the world, likely for many of the same reasons. The disparity doesn't end here. They also have to face yet another discrimination in terms of pay. This paper intends to highlight the distribution of women on top rungs in corporate and the disparity of income.

I. Discussion—Glass Ceiling

There is a marked decrease in the proportion of Indian women in senior positions in the workplace. According to the findings of a new study by Grant Thornton, titled International Business Report, the position of women in senior positions in the Indian work force fell from 19% in 2013 to 14% in 2014. What is even more alarming the report notes, is that despite the increasing impetus to improve female participation in the work force and address the lack of women at the top, half of all Indian business have no program to support or mentor women nor do they plan one in the near future.

In Indian companies, HR Director (21%) is the most common role filled by women in senior positions. 18% of women representatives occupied the leadership positions in company.

According to study by McKinsey & Co, female representation on executive boards of Indian Companies currently stands at meagre 5%. Only 5% of working women in India make it to senior leadership positions in the corporate sector/ compared to the global average of 20%.

The gender based research carried out by Anupriya Singh of Dehi Based Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management said there was gender inequality in placement of women in the corporate sector in India. The study said that, in India, women's strength in the labour force stands at 28% in the junior level, 14.9% at the middle & 9.32% at the senior level. India also ranks at the top in the dropout rate as well.

Out of 323 total executive directorship positions generally considered to be the prerequisites to holding the CEO position on the Bombay Stock Exchange 100, just 8 (2.5%) are held by women. 54% of companies on the Bombay Stock Exchange 100 have no women board directors.

A website has mentioned according to the list based on the Fortune 1000 list of companies published by Fortune magazine that women currently hold 5.2 percent of Fortune 500 CEO positions and 5.4 percent of Fortune 1000 CEO positions.

(Thomson Reuters Foundation)- only 4% of the directors of publicly listed Indian companies are women. Their report "Women on Boards", by Biz Divas, a national network of professional women, and law firm Khaitan and Co, said that men hold 8,640 boardroom positions and women 350 in the country's 1,470 listed firms.

India has two companies in the Fortune 500, Reliance Industries and Indian Oil, but only one of their total of 30 directors is a woman. The scarcity of women in the boardroom is not unique to India-nearly one fifth of the world's 200 largest companies have no women directors.

II. Pay Discrimination Faced By The Women Employees

According to The Guardian, Tuesday 19 August 2014 female bosses earn 35% less than male colleagues. Four decades after the Equal Pay Act, male company directors take home £21,000 a year more than female counterparts. Female bosses are still earning only three-quarters as much as their male colleagues, meaning they would have to work until they were nearly 80 to catch up with men's lifetime earnings, according to new figures.

The average pay gap between men and women aged between 46 and 60 stands at £16,680 a year, while among company directors men take home £21,084 more than their female colleagues.

Ann Francke, chief executive of the Chartered Management Institute (CMI), said: "This is all about apathy and ignorance. Companies think it is not a problem for them, so they don't do anything about it. Every company needs to conduct its own survey. The National Management Salary Survey, published annually by the CMI and employment lawyers XpertHR, covers more than 68,000 British professionals and compares data on people at similar levels of management within the workplace. Including male and female managers of all ages, the CMI said that the pay gap stands at £9,069, with men getting an average salary of £39,461 where women get £30,392." "This means women are earning only three-quarters (77%) of what men in full-time comparable jobs earn," the CMI said. "Yet the gap is far worse for women aged 40-plus, where the problem is twofold. Not only does the salary gap increase with age and seniority, but there is also a persistent "bonus pay gap". The average bonus for a female director stands at £41,956, while for male directors the average payout is £53,010."

Another article in a website says that the top male engineers at Google make nearly 20% more than their female peers. Many tech companies readily admit that their workforces aren't as diverse as they could be — and that they're trying hard to fix the imbalance. To date, company demographics that skew heavily toward whites and men have received most of the attention. There also exists a substantial gap in gender pay in Silicon Valley.

The wage gap largely mirrors the national average; according to the American Association of University Women, female workers in the computer science field make 77 percent what their male peers do one year out of college. By comparison, Census data suggest that women make 78 percent of what men do, generally.

But we're starting to get a better idea of specific differences between men and women's salaries at different tech companies. A recent survey of median salaries by Glassdoor suggests that at many Silicon Valley firms, men make thousands of dollars more than women every year.

.At Google, for instance, a male senior software engineer makes 19 percent more than his female counterpart.

A couple of other things are worth pointing out: The numbers are heavily conditional on experience and the number of reports from either sex. There are big discrepancies between men and women in terms of years worked, even within the same job. The male senior software engineer at Google has, on average, nearly a decade of experience compared to just 7.6 years for women with the same title. Experience is likely one factor that helps drive up male wages relative to women.

At the same time, however, where women demonstrate more experience than men, the wage gap doesn't substantially shift in favour of women like you might expect. For instance, female software engineers at Cisco largely have more work experience than their male counterparts — yet that isn't reflected in their salaries. A mid-level female engineer at the company with nearly a year and a half more experience makes just \$162 more per year, according to Glassdoor's data.

According to the White House, full-time working women earn 77% of what their male counterparts earn. This means that women have to work approximately 60 extra days, or about three months, to earn what men did by the end of the previous year.

III. Reasons For Glass Ceiling And Income Disparity

In the Wall Street Journal/Gallup survey, women managers were asked what they consider to be the most serious obstacle in their business careers. Only 3% cited "family responsibilities," but half named reasons related to their gender, including: "male chauvinism, attitudes toward a female boss, slow advancement for women, and the simple fact of being a woman." In the survey by Korn/Ferry International, executive women were asked to name the greatest obstacle they had to overcome to achieve success; the most frequent response was simply "being a woman" (40%). In a recent poll of 12,000 workers by the Los Angeles Times, two-thirds reported sex discrimination; 60% saw signs of racism.

More than 80% of the executive women in the Wall Street Journal/Gallup study said they believe there are disadvantages to being a woman in the business world. Men, they say, "don't take them seriously." In the same survey, 61% of the women executives reported having been mistaken for a secretary at a business meeting; 25% said they had been thwarted on their way up the ladder by male attitudes toward women. A significant majority 70% - believed they are paid less than men of equal ability. "On the basis of the above survey the fact remains that apart from societal barriers where some women may find it hard to obtain the education and training required to advance into management positions, corporate cultures and climate are also responsible for alienating women. Lack of mentoring, management training and opportunities for career advancement, Biased rating and testing systems, Lack of consistent monitoring and prevention programs, lack of support from upper management to address and eliminate gender issues are some of the reasons narrowing the percentage of women in senior positions and widening gender pay gap.

IV. Conclusion

There are a large number of women in lower positions but as we move up in the hierarchy there is hardly anyone left. There should not be any stigma attached for being a woman as the Gallup survey concludes. The abilities and the commitments of an employee towards the organisations should not be doubted simply because they are women. Employees must be appraised on the basis of their experience, qualifications, knowledge, skills and attitude. Assessment should be made between one employee and the other rather than between male and female employee. Companies should provide more opportunities and career advancement programmes for women so that they can get their due share. I believe that the sooner we understand all the barriers that create the glass ceiling, the sooner we can tackle each one individually and work towards creating a doorway in its place."

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