

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter in the thesis is on discussions of the results, conclusions drawn from findings and recommendations emerging out of the study. There are two sets of recommendations one each for the women managers and the organisations that employ them.

5.1 RESEARCH SETTING: THE CASE STUDY OF AJMER DISTRICT

The Ajmer district in the State of Rajasthan in India is typical of the North Indian districts in terms of women issues. Women face gender discrimination, marginalisation, malnourishment, and are not able to fully take the benefit of various government schemes. Awareness of personal hygiene, particularly among women, is low. There is high prevalence of girl child marriage with infrequent foetus homicide if a girl child is suspected to be born. Women often face domestic violence and atrocities. Women constitute less than 50% of the total population in Ajmer district. Industrial activity is low with not many large scale industrial units being situated within the district. Most industrial activity is centred in small and medium scale units. Employment is preferred, as in most parts of India, in the government sector as a government job is perceived to offer higher security and stable emoluments.

On the other hand, women have made tremendous progress in terms of education, economic growth and employment. Rajasthan's literacy rate of 67% in 2011 is below the national average of 74% with its female literacy the lowest at 53% according to figures available with the Azim Premji Foundation (<http://azimpremjifoundation.org/Rajasthan>). But this figure has risen steeply from about 21% in 1991 indicating spread of awareness of the benefits of women education. Enrolment of girls at the lower school levels has grown appreciably and not far behind boys' enrolment. Economically, women have come forward in a big way to compete for jobs not only in the traditional fields of education and health but also industry.

In the backdrop of this mixed dismal-optimistic scenario, this study seeks to examine the status of women managers in Ajmer district.

5.2 REPRESENTATIVE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF WOMEN MANAGERS

The thirteen tables provided in the preceding chapter in Section 4.1 provide statistics related to the data collected for the research study. The value of the mode has been taken to draw up the profile of the representative respondent in this survey. The demographic data related to the representative respondent is presented in Table 5.1

The representative respondent could be described as below.

The representative respondent is a woman manager in Ajmer district belonging to the age group of 41 – 50 years residing in urban area. She has a Masters’ degree or above, specialising in Arts subjects. She works in the government / semi-government sector in the education industry. She works in the functional area of financial management. Her total working experience is less than 10 years and she has been working in the present organisation for less than 5 years. She holds the title of manager / officer / administrator. She is married, has 1 or 2 children and lives in a medium-sized family of 4 through 6 members.

Table 5.1: The representative respondent

Demographic variable	Representative data*
Age group	41 – 50 years
Place of residence	Urban
Highest level of educational attainment	Masters’ degree or above
Area of specialisation / major for the highest level of educational attainment	Arts
Sector working in	Government / semi-government
Industry working in	Education
Functional area working in the present organisation	Financial management
Total working experience	Less than 10 years

Working experience in the present organisation	Less than 5 years
Title/role in the present organisation	Manager / Officer / Administrator
Marital status	Married
Number of children	1 – 2 children
Family size	Medium; 4 – 6 members

*Based on value of mode in Tables 4.1 through 4.13

5.3 THE STATE OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS COMPONENTS

Table 5.2 provides a summary of the significance of relationship that the study variables of work-life balance (WLB) and its three components have with the demographic variables based on ANOVA. As observed, the relationship of these study variables cuts across the different types of demographic variables. They are found to relate to the contextual demographic variables such as the residence place, sector and industry where the women managers work. They also relate to organisational demographics such as functional area the women managers work in and the title / role they have or perform. At the individual level, WLB and its components are related to total working experience, marital status and family size.

This relationship cuts across the different types of demographic variables explored in this study. At the broader level, WLB is related to residence place and the sector and the industry where the women managers work. Within organisations, the functional area they work in and the title/role they have is related to WLB. And within the personal sphere, WLB relates significantly with family size.

The most significant issue that relates across WLB and its components is of functional area that women managers work in. Three of the demographic variables of residence / place, industry and the title/role emerge as significant in three of the study variables. The demographic variable of family size relates significantly to two of the study variables. Total working experience and marital status only relate to the work life- personal life enhancement component of WLB.

Table 5.2: Significance of demographic variables on work-life balance and its three components based on ANOVA – Summary results

Demographics on composite scores of work-life balance	Demographics on composite scores of work life influence on personal life	Demographics on composite scores of personal life influence on work life	Demographics on composite scores of work - personal life enhancement
Residence place**	Residence place*	Residence place**	
Sector working in**			Sector working in*
Industry working in*	Industry working in*		Industry working in**
Functional area working in*	Functional area working in*	Functional area working in*	Functional area working in**
Title/role in organisation*	Title/role in organisation*	Title/role in organisation*	
Family size**			Family size*
			Marital status*
			Total working experience*

Source: Analysis in Tables 4.14, 4.22, 4.28 and 4.33; Chapter 4

Significance at * $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

Table 5.3 presents the summary of statistical significance results resulting from the cross-tabulation of the selected demographic variables that exhibited relationship, on the basis of ANOVA, to the study variables of work-life balance and its three components. When tested through Chi square analysis, fewer statistical relationships emerged. Work life balance retained its statistical significance with residence place, industry and functional area. Work life

influence on personal life related with the same set of three study variables. The personal life influence on work life related only to the functional area. Lastly, work life – personal life enhancement showed statistical significance only with marital status.

Table 5.3: Significance of demographic variables on work-life balance and its three components based on Chi square testing – Summary results

Demographics on composite scores of work-life balance	Demographics on composite scores of work life influence on personal life	Demographics on composite scores of personal life influence on work life	Demographics on composite scores of work - personal life enhancement
Residence place**	Residence place**		
Industry working in**	Industry working in**		
Functional area working in*	Functional area working in*	Functional area working in*	
			Marital status**

Source: Analysis in Tables 4.16, 4.18, 4.19, 4.24, 4.25, 4.26, 4.31 and 4.39; Chapter 4

Significance at * $p < .01$; ** $p < .05$

Further discussion is based only on the statistically significant relationships based on Table 5.3.

5.3.1 Work-life balance

Work-life balance emerges as a very important issue in this study. Analysis shows that it has a significant relationship with three demographic variables. Cross-tabulation of these selected demographic variables with the composite scores of WLB yielded statistically significant relation with residence place, industry and functional area. It is to be noted that none of the demographic variables such as age, education, specialisation in education, etc. that are commonly considered to identify individuals mattered so far as work life balance is

concerned. Except for residence place which seeks to define the spatial location of an individual, the other two variables are both related to the organisation in which the women managers work.

In the literature survey, a sub-section was devoted to the women managers in different geographies and it covered sources related to studies in different country, region or other geographical contexts. Studies related to comparison or contrasting women managers in rural / urban settings are sparse though other aspects of gender – geography issues are commonly available. Thus, we do have extensive references to analysis of wage differences among rural and urban men and women, for instance or analyses of access to health services for pregnant women in rural and urban areas that may be different in terms of quality. In the industrial context, some studies do focus on the urban – rural dichotomy but they are mostly in the context of entrepreneurship rather than management. For instance, Bird & Sapp, 2004 investigate the causes and consequences of the gender gap in small business success in rural and urban places but focus on comparing men and women success in small businesses in urban and rural settings. Or another study on entrepreneurship by Davis, 2011 that

Studies on whether rural-women managers may have to put in greater effort to maintain work-life balance than urban women managers would still seems an unexplored area.

From the data presented in Table 4.16, it is evident that urban-based women managers generally tend to have a slightly higher work-life balance than their rural counterparts. The questions that this finding raises is whether the urban women managers are better able to handle work-life conflicts or they have lesser work-life conflicts as compared to the rural-based women managers. The typical perception of urban life being more affected by distractions and rural life being more serene and peaceful may not be realistic. If such is the case, urban life styles also offers better access to labour saving devices or better health facilities. It may indeed be difficult to characterise either rural or urban life style as better in terms of maintaining better work-life balance. Ajmer district, the setting of this study and Ajmer town is a geographical area that is still unlike metropolitan cities such as Mumbai or Delhi or even neighbouring Jaipur. It could still be considered a sleepy, little town in many ways with much of its population consisting of first-generation urbanised families many of which still retain their rural roots. Thus, the urban-rural dichotomy may not be as sharp as it

could be in some other contexts such between metropolis Mumbai and neighbouring Karjat rural areas.

Industry and functional area the women managers work in emerge as two significant variables in the study. Among the different industries women managers work in, in two of them banking and finance and in manufacturing more number of women managers report lower work-life balance. Only in the case of marketing services, the work-life balance is reported as higher. In the other industries such as education and health services the sample is divided more or less equally among the low and high work-life balance groups. It is to be noted that according to many studies women are better represented in these two industries worldwide. In banking and finance and in manufacturing, however, women managers may be late entrants, lesser represented relatively and working in lower level supervisory positions thereby facing conditions that could disturb their work-life balance. Women managers in marketing services however report higher work-life balance a phenomenon that is difficult to explain as marketing services is also an industry where women managers may face similar conditions to that in banking or manufacturing.

5.3.2 Work influence on personal life

Work influence on personal life (WIPE) component of WLB deals with the impact that work and its responsibilities and requirements have on personal life of employees. For instance, family life has an impact on professional life. This impact could be both positive and negative. This impact is also not necessarily limited to women as men could also face challenges in balancing their work life with personal life and experience the impact of their work on their family life and vice versa may also hold true. Yet, it is in the case of women that the relationship is considered as more relevant due to greater demands on women's time for household duties and responsibilities.

Table 5.3 reveals WIPE being significantly related to residence place, industry, and functional area.

As shown in Table 4.24, women managers working in rural areas experience higher WIPE. The reasons for this could be that there is lesser exposure in the rural setting for indulgence in hobbies so people, especially women, end up just working and sometimes over working. Another reason could be that workers in the rural areas may aspire for urban life and its

charms and it is only through work that they can achieve their aspirations. Women managers in the urban setting may be able to handle it better because they have better resources available to deal with their personal responsibilities.

In support of the statements mentioned above it is stated that Vernon (2001) links the many disabilities faced by women workers in the undeveloped countries with that of Indian working women. He has expressed that their absence from managerial responsibilities is more extensively evident in certain regions due to the level of education and gender-segregated characteristics possessed by certain communities in India. These communities are generally rural ones as the exposure level in them is lower compared to that in the urban areas. Because of the more gender-segregated set up in rural areas there is a possibility that women managers fail to enjoy as much support of their husbands as urban women managers do leading to a failure in balancing their work life balance and a high work influence in their personal life.

Interestingly there is a study by Agarwal (1999) that in a way contradicts results of the present research study. Agarwal is of the opinion that rural women are more experienced since they face harsher situations than their urban counterparts. It is apparent that rural women are more exposed to many challenges that harden them to face adversities and exposes as well as enriches their resolve to face those challenges.

Menon & Sarkar (2012) in their study *Women Participation: Paradoxes in Management of Small Scale Industries: Urban – Rural Disparities* make an observation about the awareness level of respondents on their role and responsibility as owner-manager-employee. It was found to be significantly higher for rural women than their urban counterparts. The authors observed that respondent's awareness level on their right to participate in management was more evidently seen among rural women, who had taken it as a passion in Kerala.

The researches on work life balance issue have indicated work life balance and, to a greater extent, WIPE as a major concern in today's context. The Ph.D. thesis of Mehta (2012) focuses on the WLB among women employees in the service sector in Pune city. The researcher notes with concern that increasing working population and changes in perceived company commitment and loyalty has led to WLB becoming a real issue for employers and employees. The findings of the thesis show that just 4 % of the respondents feel that they have the right balance at present. Those of the 96% who reported imbalance were of the

opinion that work dominated their personal life. The thesis concludes that much leaves to be done to restore balance to the work and family life of the women employees. (Mehta, 2012)

The other two significant relationships were found in industry and functional area working in. In the different categories of industries, marketing services emerge out to be the industry in which the work influence on personal life is less as compared to all the other categories as evident in Table 4.25. The results were a surprise though. Traditionally marketing has been a job which is becoming popular but it is considered to be demanding at the same time. There is a possibility that the work profile of the women managers who work in this field work from home or work in online marketing that gives them the freedom of flexible working hours. On the other hand education, banking and finance, and health services are industries where there is a high work influence on personal life.

According to the concept of occupational segregation, there are certain industries and roles that have considered suitable for women while others were not. To support the statement we can quote a study by Nath (2000), where he comments that over the past three decades or so, Indian women have started entering all occupations and have branched out into diversified professions, which were earlier considered exclusive male domains. These include banking, marketing research, advertising, civil services, police and armed forces and many new emerging fields related to IT and communication. In the 1980s, this influx was dominant in sectors such as banking, health and the civil service along with the traditional sectors of teaching and administrative support. Even so, significant differences exist in India regarding the status of women in the workforce.

Pareek and Mehta (1997) found that school teachers scored lower on all kinds of role stress in comparison to female bank employees and gazetted officers in civil services.

Education and health services were industries which were traditionally a woman's domain. But then the nature of these jobs has changed as well. They have become more demanding. Doctors are required to work late at their personal clinics and academicians are busy accomplishing new researches so their work starts to take a toll on their personal life. With increasing privatisation of health and education the workload of employees has been increasing leading to greater stress on the job. Budhwar et al., (2005) in his study *Women in Management in the New Economic Environment: the Case of India* shares the interview results that reveal that the biggest challenge faced by women managers today is managing

their dual role of organizational managers and housewives. Women experience tremendous stress caused by either work overload or under load. Women's overload comes from the pressure to work harder to prove them, thereby work take over their personal life.

In the fields of legal corporate communications and research and development women managers have high WIPE. This could possibly be explained by the demanding nature of the jobs in these fields. It could also involve more travelling as compared to other industries. In the other fields such as financial management, human resource management, production and operations there is a not so significant tilt towards high work influence on personal life.

A majority of the respondents in this study report working in the field of financial management. A study by Sundari & Sathyanarayana (2012) *Challenges of Working Women in India – An Analytical View* makes a comment that in the banking sector more female employees are employed because many women feel that banking jobs do not involve more stretching of working hours and are less stressful than the job compared to IT sector. The working hour is also more suitable when a woman has to play multiple roles alongside at home too. IT sector on the other hand demands long stressful working hours, which many women at the later point in life cannot afford to contribute as her role back home is more demanding. If we want to increase the 30% to 50% average women employees in the IT sector we should look at how best we can tackle the above mentioned issues. A few of the suggestions could be flexible working hours, work from home, providing child care/ elder care facilities etc. The following comments have been authenticated by our results as is evident in Table 4.26 that though there are a few women working in the information systems management but they have shown a trend that more face the problem of WIPE as compared to in the financial management.

Taking an overview of the other industries, we can observe that in almost all of the functional areas there is a high work influence in personal life. Be it for R& D or legal/corporate communication or HRM. There are many studies that support the conclusions that the present study reaches. The demands originating from the work and personal life of women are quite often mutually exclusive rendering it very difficult to strike a balance between the role demands. Mathew & Panchanatham (2009a; 2009b) comment that previously, the female workforce in India was mainly employed in non-managerial, subordinate or low-profile positions. Now, they occupy almost all categories of positions in the workplace. These

changes in work culture have added to women's duties and responsibilities to their family as well as to society.

According to Nayyar et al. (2007), women have been recognised as successful entrepreneurs because they possess qualities desirable in and relevant to entrepreneurship. However, in a society where women have a multitude of roles to play, role overload may occur when an individual is expected to fulfil multiple roles within a limited amount of time. Personal issues of women managers like quality of health, dependent care issues, problems in time management and issues related to support network also emerge as consequences of WLB, when work starts to interfere with personal life.

Overall, two significant relationships of work influence on personal life were found significant with the industry and functional area that the women managers are working in.

In the different categories of industries, marketing services emerge out to be the industry in which the work influence on personal life is less as compared to all the other categories. Education, banking, health and manufacturing all these industries show a trend towards high work influence on personal life. Women are getting more conscious and ambitious with time. They give as much importance to their work as men do. So it is possible that many times work takes a lead over personal life commitments.

When talking about the functional area, in the marketing services women managers are better able to manage it and have a lesser work influence on personal life. In the fields of legal corporate communications and research and development women managers have a high work influence on personal life. This could possibly be explained by the demanding nature of the jobs in these fields. It could also involve more travelling as compared to other industries. In the other fields such as financial management, human resource management, production and operations and information systems there is a not so significant tilt towards high work influence on personal life.

5.3.3 Personal life influence on work life

The second important dimension through which work life balance is studied is the vice versa of the previous one, personal life influence on work life (PLIW). Table 5.3 reveals just one

study variable of functional area related significantly to personal life influence on work life (PLIW)

From Table 4.31 it can be observed that women managers working in the industry of research and development, legal, public & corporate communications and productions and operations have a high personal life influence on work. It is interesting enough to note that women managers working in the research and development and legal corporate communications industry also experience a high work life influence in personal life (Table 4.26). This could be indicative of the fact that women managers in these fields are not able to balance their work and personal life so in the process sometimes work interferes in personal life and sometimes personal life interferes in their work. Women managers working in the field of human resource and financial management have a lesser influence of their personal life on work life. Human resource involves more of interaction with people so it is involving enough that at the time of work personal life takes a back seat.

Approximately 69% of the respondents are married women as is evident from table 4.11. One of the international researches claims that since women managers have more responsibilities at home their inter-role conflict amplifies as a woman becomes more involved in the family, with getting married, having children, and caring for the elderly that their work gets neglected. (Ayo et al., 2009; Lechner and Neal, 1999).

Researchers view work-family conflict as a form of tension in which the demands of work and family roles are mutually disproportionate – so that meeting the load of one domain makes it difficult for the individual to meet the stress and strain of the other. Marital stress occurs as spouses generally do not alter their own domestic roles. Therefore at many instances domestic responsibilities overshadow responsibilities at work. (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985).

In today's times the families of working women are understanding and supportive still the divide between work and home is rather daunting and not easy to remove 68 percent of working women surveyed in the age group of 21-52 years was found to be afflicted with lifestyle diseases like obesity, depression, chronic backache, diabetes, and hypertension (Assocham, 2009). These personal problems affect the female workforce adversely, causing high absenteeism, and fall in productivity, morale, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. (Wang et al., 2008; Dena et al., 2007).

Women remain generally responsible for the bulk of the household work and childcare, which interfere with their career progression resulting in poor performance reviews and job termination, in extreme cases (Bharat, 1995). Role conflict is the highest among women with preschool children (Pestonjee, 1992; Gupta and Murthy, 1984). The woman hardly knows how to manage her time and resources between work and family – owing to ambiguity and formlessness which in turn, makes her vulnerable to conflict, tension, and strain affecting her work chores negatively.

5.3.4 Work-life / personal life enhancement

Work life – personal life enhancement (WLPE) is shown to be significantly related only to marital status in Table 5.3. Observing the figures in Table 4.39 we find very distinctly that widowed women managers, which are very few in the sample, have shown a low WLPE. Separated and divorced women managers too have shown a low WLPE. There could be obvious reasons for this kind of a result. Women who are troubled in their personal life will be unhappy and therefore there will be very few chances that their personal life will enhance their work life. Though there is a possibility that their work could bring some charm in their personal life none of that has been supported by the results. The results indicate that among the single group there are higher number of women managers who feel that their personal work life enhancement is good and amongst the married group, which is a substantial number in the sample feel that their work personal life enhancement is low. A reason could be that marriage brings with it loads of responsibilities. This may create a situation where instead of the two swings of work life and personal life supporting each other each one of them may have competing demands of time and attention from an individual which leads to conflict instead of support.

In one of the studies by Maniam, et al., 2010 it was examined that the importance of creating a healthy balance between work and family life benefits all parties involved. Full-time employees who have adequate time for their families, and full-time homemakers who have adequate opportunities for other work, are less vulnerable to health related problems. There are substantial economic savings including increased productivity, lower absenteeism, and decreased medical expenses. Work is a central part of what can yield such fulfilment and provide individuals with meaning, structure, identity, and self esteem. Often unpaid labour, such as raising a family, provides greater satisfaction in these respects than paid labour.

An interesting situation is presented in the work of Desai, et al. (2011) where three groups of women employees are considered: working women, home-based working women, and homemakers. The findings of the study is that the home-based working women are the least stressed, most well adjusted, and the most satisfied with their careers among the three groups studied. Their ways of perceiving and handling stress are found to be more effective than those used by women in the other two groups. This might be an indication of the way home-based working women reap the advantages of both the work life as well as personal life enhancing both in the process.

When discussing work personal life enhancement a very interesting observation was made that the marital and job satisfaction appear closely related. While work family conflicts affect marital happiness negatively (Jang and Zippay, 2011; Asha, 1994; Chandra et al., 1995), marital satisfaction has been found to enhance job satisfaction (Odell et al., 2001) and reduce occupational strain (Zimmerman et al., 1980). Satisfying marital relationship and active support from spouses lead to higher self-esteem among women and less guilt about their role at home as good mothers and wives (Matsui et al., 1995). Work helps build self-esteem, and being economically active increases the women's bargaining power in the family (Mukhopadhyay et al., 1993).

Satisfying marital relationship and active support from spouses lead to higher self-esteem among women and less guilt about their role at home as good mothers and wives (Matsui et al., 1995). Favourable work variables such as income, discretionary time, job involvement, career salience, and self-esteem from job may affect life satisfaction and job satisfaction (Sekaran, 1984).

Overall, work life may enhance personal life and vice versa may also happen if women-friendly and family-friendly conditions are present in the work place. These can be ensured by various organisational means such as support to women in terms of flexible working time and child care support as well as spousal and family support at home.

5.4 THE STATE OF GENDER INEQUALITY AND ITS COMPONENTS

The second study variable in this research study is of gender inequality. The literature review indicated several aspects such as sociologically-driven role specifications that are prevalent in Indian society, patriarchal form of social structuring which is also reflected at workplace and

stereotyping image of female, confined to family roles. The significance of gender is also heightened in the case of women as the usual perception of managerial positions is masculine in nature. Often, women managers too tend to conform to the perceived roles in the belief that the adoption of such roles would lead them to more effective managers. The social stereotypes, gendered role expectations, individual prejudices and social factors which position the image of women as secondary to that of men also often discourage women to aspire for top positions.

Gender inequality is a significant concept that had gained a lot of attention in research. It is a complex construct and has several sociological, psychological and organizational aspects related to it. For instance, gender inequality is not only present in organisations but is widely prevalent in the society outside. In the present study, gender inequality is considered as an organisational phenomenon. The four sub factors identified under gender inequality on the basis of literature review are: dysfunctional organisational culture, occupational segregation, sexual harassment at work and pay differential.

Table 4.41 indicates that gender inequality was found to be significantly related to residence, industry and functional area. This means this was an effective factor and it did matter if a women manager was from rural or urban area and differences in the respondents from rural and urban areas do exist. A similar kind of a situation prevails for industry and functional area. If a woman manager is from education, banking and finance, manufacturing and health and similarly if it a woman manager is from marketing services, human resource services, information systems and research and development, it will matter for studying gender inequality.

Gender inequality is more of an organizational factor and less of an individual factor. So the sub four factors namely, dysfunctional organisational culture, occupational segregation, sexual harassment at work and pay differential are studied in the light of the organizational factors namely sector and industry working in.

5.4.1 Dysfunctional culture

Some of the studies that come across in the literature review support the presence of strong dysfunctional organizational culture as a cause of gender inequality. Organisational cultures vary in their functionality in terms of contributing to or detracting from organizational

performance and effectiveness. A dysfunctional organization culture is defined as one that constrains or limits individual- and group-level capabilities and/or that actually encourages and rewards mediocre individual- and group-level performance. An organization's leadership is likely to help create and perpetuate such cultures. (Van Fleet & Griffin, 2006)

Discussing the results of the sub factors of gender inequality we observe from Table 4.42 that dysfunctional organizational culture does not emerge as a very significant factor as around only 10% of the respondents experience high or very high dysfunctional organizational culture. The studies that come across in the literature review have indicated a strong presence of dysfunctional organizational culture but this may not be applicable to our area of study, Ajmer district as a substantial number of respondents come from educational institutions and majority of them happen to be all-girls or all-women institutions.

Table 4.43 depicts the relationship between organizational dysfunctionality and sector. It shows that there is not much of a difference when observed across different sectors. A possible reason for this kind of a trend could be that the respondents are working on the same kind of profile across all the sectors. However a different kind of a picture emerges through Table 4.45 where a significant relationship is established between organizational dysfunctionality and industry. Observing Table 4.45 we find that respondents in banking and finance, and manufacturing have indicated moderate to high presence of cultural dysfunctionality. Since these industries could be considered as being driven by more by masculine values it can be said that women experience organizational dysfunctionality in these industries. To support the argument, we can quote the ILO (2007) report that stated that despite increased numbers at lower grades, women are not making breakthroughs to CEO and executive jobs within the financial services industry of most developed countries. Women's numbers and entry into senior management positions remain a major concern for banks in the developing countries (Charlesworth & Baird, 2007). This is so even when there is tremendous increase in the number of women joining the banking industry. Yet, most of these women are still clustered in clerical, teller, and support staff levels (Brizendine, 2008). The evidence is clear that just like in other countries, women's share of the administrative and managerial positions is far less than that of their male counterparts in the banking industry. (Brizendine, 2008; Ndemo & Maina, 2007).

5.4.2 Occupational segregation

Throwing some light on the second sub factor of gender inequality, occupational segregation we find that Table 4.47 suggests a similar trend that occupational segregation too does not seem to be a determining contributor to gender inequality in organisations. Only 10% of the women managers report experience high or very high occupational segregation. Table 4.48 states that there is no significant relationship between the sectors and occupational segregation.

Occupational segregation, however, turns out to be significantly related to the industry in which the respondents work as can be observed in Table 4.51. Research studies do indicate that there is a relation between occupational segregation and industry one works in. There are a lot of interesting researches on gender differences that have studied the correlation between these two factors. In one of the studies by Jha & Tiwari (2011) they state that gender differences exist in terms of ability and inclination to do a particular kind of a job. Studies also reveal that there are significant differences among men and women in taking up the same kind of tasks. At the global level, Beyer & Bowden (1997) in their study also state that the most common hypotheses for the gender disparity are discrimination and gender differences in abilities and in preferences for types of jobs in certain industries. The psychological literature suggests that women and men differ in their self-perception of ability in many domains. This means that there will be certain kinds of industries where women managers will be found more suitable. Interestingly this kind of a perception could be just a self perception i.e. women managers think that way about themselves and external reaction i.e. the society thinks that way about women managers.

Previous researches in the area of gender inequality support the findings that there are stereotypes that women managers face at work. For instance, a study *Gender Stereotypes at Work* by Khandelwal (2002) notes that stereotypes and perceptions of Indian women in the workplace appears to have had a significant negative impact on the position of women managers. This study suggests that Indian male managers are viewed, stereotypically, as working in the areas of sales, marketing and production; being good leaders, decision makers and bosses; and handling challenging assignments. On the other hand, Indian women are viewed as working in PR, HR and administrative positions at low to junior levels, and in fields such as fashion and beauty.

Maliye (2011) found occupational segregation in the managerial field. This occupational segregation is at the horizontal as well as vertical levels. Maliye observed that in the departments of personnel management and industrial relations, a majority of women managers performed the perceived 'soft' functions such as health, insurance, welfare and training while men were allotted the 'tough' job of managing industrial relations.

Elaborating further on occupational segregation an observation was made by Gupta et al., (1998). While liberalisation of the Indian economy has created considerable employment opportunities for many, including women, who possess marketable skills and talent, women are seen mainly in HR and Information Technology (IT) departments and servicing activities. Their presence in hardcore production or marketing is less than men's and still lower at strategic policy-influencing levels. This is despite claims that women in India have played significant roles in social organisations, politics and administration.

5.4.3 Sexual harassment at work

The Government of India have propagated many laws to protect women's rights. The constitution prohibits discrimination on many grounds, including gender, and recognizes the principle of equality for all before the law and of opportunity in matters relating to employment. The Supreme Court of India in its judgement on Vishaka & others versus the State of Rajasthan & others laid down the definition that workplace sexual harassment as unwelcome sexually determined behaviour whether directly or by implication. The Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill (2010) bases its definition on the same Supreme Court recommendations. Though the Vishaka guidelines against sexual harassment were laid down by the Supreme Court in 1997, some studies show that working women are still not aware of this.

The third component of gender inequality is sexual harassment (also commonly referred to in India as 'eve-teasing'). As observed in Tables 4.54 and 4.56 there is no significant relationship of sexual harassment with sector and industry respectively. Table 4.52 shows the distribution of frequencies for sexual harassment. Approximately 16% of women managers have indicated that they face low protection from sexual harassment at work.

These results can be seen in conjunction with some other sources of reference such as the National Commission for Women survey of 1998 that said at least 50 per cent of working

women alleged mental or physical harassment at the workplace. (NCW, 2005) Another survey published in November 2010 by the Centre for Transforming India found that more than 80 percent of the female employees of information technology and business process outsourcing companies had been subjected to some form of workplace sexual harassment. (Dhar, 2010) Compared to these high figures, the present research study finds a very low percentage of women reporting low protection from sexual harassment. In fact, the percentage of women reporting high protection from sexual harassment is encouragingly very high and high at 69 per cent.

To look at it as a percentage might be small but still it is a fact that cannot be not be ignored and suggests that it does exist in some form and at some level. Another fact that has to be taken into account is the reluctance of women to accept or admit sexual harassment at the workplace for various reasons such as threat to employment. The research context Ajmer district is generally a conservative place with regard to sexual mores unlike bigger cities and women are likely to keep quiet.

Another facet of the result is that the sample represents a majority of women working in institutions that may be female only ones. The results that indicate towards a low significance of sexual harassment as a component of gender inequality can be justified to an extent that the organizations where the respondents come have majority of their worker as women. The presence of other factors like corporate culture, late working hours, distances between the workplace and the home, that encourage this kind of a phenomenon in organizations is less prevalent in Ajmer district. Table 4.51 represents 17% & 15% respondents from manufacturing and health services. When talking about these industries the female doctors practice at home in the evenings and in the manufacturing sector the women have assistance of their husbands in this industry that might be keeping them safe from this phenomenon which is otherwise very much existent in organizations.

Renick (1980) discusses the several causes of sexual harassment at work including the major ones like stereotyped sex roles, double standards, and the economic vulnerability of the working woman leading to several psychological, economic, and physical problems for the victims. Sexual harassment is sex-based discrimination because it singles women out for special treatment in a way that adversely affects their employment status, and as such is a violation of their rights.

Sundari & Sathyanarayana (2012) have stressed on sexual harassment as a deviant organizational factor and a major challenge that women face at work. An analysis on the challenges faced by women employees at the workplace shows that women find it difficult to deal with staying long hours for completing work, they are not given opportunity to give suggestions or feedback about the work, compelled to do others work in organization, they also feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass or underestimate them on the basis of gender and many of them suffer from health complications like mood swings, depression, concentration problems etc. due to these problems at workplace.

5.4.4 Pay differential

The existence of a differential payment between men and women is taken as a universal phenomenon in almost all countries regardless of the nature and structure of the economic systems. Pay differential is one component of gender inequality that has a lot of research work to its credit. Literature on women managers notes pay differentials based on gender, as well as employment inequity in terms of opportunities for higher earnings in future. There is also linkage between pay differential and occupational segregation as women managers tend to be concentrated in occupations that minimise their chances of having managerial authority and job autonomy thus preventing them from reaching positions that pay well.

The last component of gender inequality i.e. pay differential attracted the maximum attention among the participants. Table 4.57 shows that almost 86% of the respondents have indicated that there does exist high to very high pay differential. The cross tabulation analysis does not establish any significant relationship between the sector and industry as is evident in Table 4.59 through 4.61 respectively indicating that the sentiment of feeling aggrieved at being discriminated against in terms of pay is more or less even and widespread among the respondents in the sample.

The study by Sinha & Prabha (1998) makes an interesting insight into the kinds of gender differences that prevail in organizations. The restrictions imposed on working women were found to be more pronounced in white collar jobs. The issue of gender inequality is also prevalent in the form of promotion of women managers to higher positions in organisation, as well as being paid lesser than their male counterparts. A study by Nath (2000) stated that many firms had a gender-free performance management and reward structure, still many

women interviewees reported that they had to work very hard to prove their worth. Their personal drive to achieve and build on their strengths along with their ability to adapt to the environment and stay focused played an important role in their success. Many studies have confirmed the fact that women have to work more than men for the same amount of credit received and to prove their worth. The social stereotypes, gendered role expectations, individual prejudices and social forces which promote the image of women as secondary to that of men also discourage women to aspire for top positions limiting their chances of higher earnings. Several studies have noted the widening gap between pay for men and women in India despite globalisation and market reforms (see for example, Reilly & Dutta, 2005 and Menon, 2008).

5.5 THE STATE OF GLASS CEILING EFFECT AND ITS COMPONENTS

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

The third component in the present research study is of the glass ceiling syndrome or effect. The results of the study support past studies while there are some contradictions that will be discussed further. Table 4.62 indicates that only two of the thirteen demographic variables

have demonstrated a significant relationship with glass ceiling effect. They are age group of women managers and the industry they work in. The other eleven demographic factors do not have a significant relationship with glass ceiling effect.

The age group relationship with glass ceiling is evident in the simple fact that rising to higher levels of management can only be expected when one has spent some years working thus aging in the process. It could also be explained by the reasoning that women managers would take some time - usually more than men would do - to climb the ladder in the organization. If after serving in the same organization for some years they are still not able to achieve the position that they deserve and have aspired for some time then a rift starts to happen and they start experiencing the effects of glass ceiling. Table 4.1 shows that approximately 55% of the respondents fall in the combined age groups of 31-40 and 41-50. This is the age group when any employees look to climb the organizational ladder if they have served for more than 5 years in the same organization. The results therefore reflect the frustration of women in the higher age groups of experiencing the glass ceiling syndrome.

Another facet of the glass ceiling being experienced at higher age groups are the typical barriers pointed out in the literature review of women being charged with the responsibility of child-bearing and child-rearing as well as elder-caring. With work-life balance being tilted against women as they move up the age group the higher could be the incidence of glass ceiling too.

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

The other significant relation of glass ceiling is with the industry in which the women manager works in. The sample of this study has more women from education with many of them working in the government sector. As is the common experience, promotions in government take time in materialising thus creating glass ceiling for women. Further, in Table 4.6 the data shows lesser presence of women workers in certain industries for instance, manufacturing (11%) and marketing (12%). Since these industries are often male dominated the respondents may find it even harder to climb the organizational ladder. Nath (2000) in

her study supports the findings. She opines that there are formidable barriers of entry for women into certain professional careers. Those who do gain access, are often segregated in female occupations, relegated to lower ranks in organisations, and barred from moving up the hierarchy because the promotion criteria are conditions they cannot meet. The fact that women may face barriers in upward movement is also seen in the phenomenon of occupational segregation. With many women managers working in 'non-strategic' areas such as human resources or administration they tend to be out of the loop within organisations that can offer them pathways to the higher levels of management. This fact is pointed out by Linda Wirth in her ILO study on glass ceiling effect. (Wirth, 2001, p. 25). Such phenomenon of women managers not being able to enter strategic areas within organisation is also referred to as the 'glass wall'. (Wirth, 2001, p. 47)

Further analysis is of the three dimensions of glass ceiling effect within organisation i.e. the lack of career exposure, lack of training opportunities and the lack of promotional opportunities.

5.5.1 Lack of career exposure

Literature offers myriad ways of getting career exposure ranging from on-the-job experiences, continuing education, networking with professionals and techniques such as job rotation and stretch assignments. The review of women in management literature showed that one form of gender discrimination within organisations is women getting lesser career exposure than their male colleagues. O'Neil and Bilimoria (2005) point out three differences in the career development among men and women: women facing differential impact of family responsibilities; the centrality of relationships in women's lives and careers; and under-representation of women at higher levels. As a result of these differences women employees often react to situations differently than men do. Taking advantage of career exposure opportunities is one such situation.

In the context of the present study, preliminary enquiries led to the identification of three dimensions along which career exposure could be investigated. These are: transfer to a better post, foreign assignment, and deputation to a better post. A fourth dimension of attendance at seminars and conferences too emerged post-data collection. Transfer to a better post was chosen as the most popular means by the women managers to achieve career progression,

followed by deputation to a better post. The least popular means was attending seminars and conferences. (Table 4.63)

Around 70% of the respondents are married working women as shown in Table 4.11. They favoured transfer to a better post as the most popular means followed by deputation to a better post. This may be because these mediums do not involve the shifting aspect which may be a tough call for married working female managers. Transfers and deputations as means of career development may be seen as more relevant to government and public services rather than those in the private sector where the career progression is seen in terms of on-the-job and off-the-job training programmes.

The data reveals that attending seminars and conferences was the least popular means, the reason being it is given the least weight when it comes to calculating the career exposure of any worker but at the same time it is the most convenient one to adopt as it might not involve travelling and even if it does it is for a very less time which could be manageable. Only 10% of the respondents have favoured foreign assignment as is evident in Table 4.63 as it might involve major upsets in the personal life so many women managers are hesitant to adopt this means though it brings with it a lot of experience besides exposure to cross-cultural experience.

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

5.5.2 Lack of training opportunities

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

The organisational factors may be the dysfunctional culture that does not support women employees getting training opportunities. Women often find the work environment more hostile and 'women-unfriendly' as they move up the career path resulting in their decision to

abstain from seeking higher managerial positions in the organizational hierarchy (Roy, 2004) The negative organizational perspective is also supported a survey conducted by Tata Consultancy Services (2012) that states that leadership development programs are key retention measures for women. However, very few organizations provide such programs. Generally, organisations are not allocating budgets, resources and targets to support the mandate on gender inclusion.

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

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

5.5.3 Lack of promotion opportunities

Nearly 20% of the respondents have said that they are denied opportunity for promotion even when they deserved it while about 62% said they were granted an opportunity every time they deserved it. Thus, the perception that women are routinely denied promotional opportunity is not true in the case of this research study. Further, when talking about connecting with people who can help them in career development more than 50% of the respondents have said that this is a rare occurrence in their organization. So we have a situation where women get promotion opportunities but they do so, on the basis of their

competence without much support from outside. Overall, the respondents in the study hint towards low to moderate deficiency of promotional opportunity.

To discuss the results that has emerged out of this component of the study, we find that though less still there are women managers who feel that they are denied opportunity for promotion even when they deserved it. A lot of studies in the literature on this subject support our findings.

One of the popular studies by Gupta et al., (1998) highlighted the generally weaker position of women in management. Some of the findings included: fewer male managers believed that women are capable of acquiring the required managerial skills than did female managers; fewer male managers believed that women managers possess the required objectivity for evaluating business situations properly and possess the requisite self-confidence; a significant percentage of male managers and a third of female managers believed that women managers would let their emotions influence their managerial behaviour; women are considered less assertive, less competitive and less aggressive in meeting the demands of business situations. Other organizational barriers includes, women face barriers to their advancement in at the workplace due to hostile work environments, gender stereotyping, prejudices, role stereotyping and cultural biases.

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

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

There are studies at the global front also which support the case. Marshall (1995) reflected on the angle of personal barriers of women managers. He elaborates that the turnover of women

employees is because of low level of adaptability to the work environment, lack of job involvement due to higher levels of job stress and long working hours, lack of emotional balance and women's desire to spend more time for personal commitments.

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

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

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

5.6 ALTERNATE CAREERS AND WORK PATTERNS FOR WOMEN MANAGERS

The concluding questions in the research questionnaire asked the respondents whether they had ever thought of taking up a temporary or part-time job instead of full-time work and the reasons for such thinking. They were also asked whether they had ever thought of any alternate career instead of full-time work and the reasons for such thinking. The purpose of these questions was to examine the options that women managers had explored in the face of probable work-life imbalance, gender inequality and glass ceiling effect they might experience in their full-time jobs.

Only one-fourth (about 25%) of the respondents accepted that they had thought of temporary or part-time jobs or alternate careers to full-time work. This shows that a majority of them accepted their working status of full-time workers and did not foresee the possibility of adopting alternate career paths. Out of 153 respondents 37 feel that they need to take up a part time or temporary job, considerably 25% is not a very high percentage. The reason for this trend could be that temporary or part time jobs do not pay much and more importantly it is tough to find full time jobs these days.

For thinking about temporary or part-time work, most respondents feel that there are fewer career development opportunities for women. Other major reasons include the stressful nature of full-time jobs, the personal life stress created by full time work and other reasons that are related to gender inequality and glass ceiling effect. The 25% of the respondents who feel so believe that the reasons for this are that they are not able to balance the demands of personal and work life, there are fewer opportunities for career development for women in their organizations and that there is stress in their personal life created by their work demands. Other strong reasons come out to be, if the situation demands organizations do not support their women managers. They also feel that they are compared to men they tend to be paid lesser.

Women managers also feel that organizations do not support as much as they deserve, they tend to be paid lesser than men for similar kind of work, men are preferred for training programs over women. They also find it difficult to balance the demands of work and personal life and do not feel safe at work place. There are less chances of getting a promotion that is deserved along with monotony.

Interestingly out of all the reasons provided, women managers feel that their work never suffers because of family responsibilities and most jobs in organizations are not just for men.

Given a choice for an alternative career instead of full time work, 38 out of 153 respondents feel that they would choose one of the options. Work from home out at the top of the list of options followed by setting up own business. Working with an NGO comes out at the top of the list of options followed by work from home. A reason for this could be that women may feel less constraints working from home and experience a kind of a satisfaction working in NGOs for a cause of any kind. By the traditional mindset, a woman's first responsibility is at home so work from home comes out to be the second most popular option, in the light that if

a woman works from home she will be able to take care of the responsibilities at home along with work.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The best of the research studies have limitations. There are several limitations in the present study too besides the usual ones of time, money, and missed opportunities. The study is entirely self-funded without any institutional support.

First, the results are based on data collected through a survey questionnaire. Essentially, responding to a questionnaire is self-reporting and the credibility of the findings depends entirely on the way respondents prefer to self-report their experiences. Some respondents also impose self-censorship when faced with answering questions that they perceive are sensitive. The present study investigated issues such as work-life balance, gender inequality and glass ceiling effect a few or many aspects of which may be perceived as sensitive by the respondents thereby prejudicing their responses.

Secondly, the sampling of the study was essentially convenience and thus the research findings are based on 'what respondents were available to answer the survey'. The researcher has however made all efforts to include other means such as purposive, judgemental, snowballing and quota sampling so as to ensure objectivity as far as possible.

Thirdly, the reliability of two study variables of gender inequality and glass ceiling effect in the questionnaire turned to be on the lower side affecting the confidence that one could have on the findings emerging out of the analysis based on those responses.

Fourthly, the results are from a geographically delimited area of Ajmer district. Even within Ajmer district, certain places may not have been adequately represented due to lack of access to those respondents. Safeguards in sampling however made it possible to reach areas through snowballing and electronic means where physical access of research investigators was not possible.

Finally, there could be unintended, in-built bias in the present study. The study is on women, done by a woman, and data were collected by women. Most of the references quoted incidentally are also from writings by women. This reality has to be kept in mind while reading the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Based on the research study, certain recommendations are made in this and the next section. This section suggests some actions for women managers. The recommendations are organised into parts in line with the three themes of the research study.

5.8.1 Maintaining work-life balance

- Women managers should be clear and specific about their responsibilities at home and office and learn to keep them separate. They need to manage their time well.
- Women managers should be self-dependent, have right attitude and maintain open communication with their family members for better understanding. They should also help their spouse and other family members develop positive attitude toward their career.
- Women managers should make their family members realise the difficulties they face in balancing their responsibilities at workplace and at home and show a positive attitude towards them, giving cooperation and sharing the burden of work at home to create a happy home environment.
- Women managers need to habituate themselves to spend sufficient quality time with their family members regardless of their busy schedule.
- Women managers should buy kitchen gadgets that help them save time. If possible, they should also have someone to assist them in their household chores even if it is paid help.
- Women managers should prefer living with their in-laws so that their children get affection from a larger group of family members and they are not needlessly left feeling guilty of neglecting their filial responsibilities.

5.8.2 Fostering gender equality

- Women managers should make conscious efforts to sensitize themselves and others to treat gender differences as natural.

- Women managers should not expect and also discourage receiving favour and preference at workplace because of their gender. They should realise that these may be disadvantageous in the long run as they may be treated as less equal in terms of handling responsibility compared to their male counterparts.
- Women managers should be conscious about their legal rights and should always insist on being treated fairly as the situation demands.
- A professional forum should be made where women managers can register themselves, organize as a group and share their personal and professional experiences so that they can learn from each other and can mutually benefit.

5.8.3 Reducing glass ceiling effect

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

5.9 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ORGANISATIONS

This section suggests some actions for the organisations that employ women managers.

5.9.1 Maintaining work-life balance

- Organisations need to be empathetic to the fact that women managers often feel greater responsibility towards motherhood, childcare, eldercare and familial

responsibilities. If prevented from any of these responsibilities they may harbour feelings of guilt creating stress at workplace.

- Women managers should be extended organizational support in the form of adaptable work hours, part-time jobs, telecommuting, job-sharing, paid leave, paid sick days, limits on mandatory overtime, quality affordable childcare, and workplace flexibility.
- There should be counsellors in the organizations that help the women managers deal with work-related stress as well as stress induced by the influence of family life on work.
- Organisations need to have open communication policies so that the women managers feel free to share their problems with the senior management.
- Organisations should conduct exit interviews so that the reasons why women managers leave organizations are known and actions taken to prevent their attrition.

5.9.2 Fostering gender equality

- Organisations need to continually monitor their policies and practices to ensure they are free of gender bias.
- Organisations need to have affirmative policies in recruitment and selection of personnel providing fair access to prospective women managers at all levels.
- There could be regular monitoring to ensure adequate participation of women managers in training programmes and access to mentorship.
- Sensitivity training of both male and female employees can go a long way in ensuring gender equality within organisations and helping develop empathy towards women managers.
- Organisations need to strictly adhere to current laws, regulations, norms and practices in ensuring that sexual harassment does not occur at workplace and if it does then action is taken to bring offenders to book.

5.9.3 Reducing glass ceiling effect

- Organisations need to provide support in the form of continuing education and skill development of women managers so they are ready to shoulder higher level responsibilities.
- Organisations should ensure fair treatment to women in matters of promotion and to remove hurdles to their career growth.
- Organisations can look for ways to encourage their women managers to network with professionals that help them mentor for seeking higher positions.
- Organizations can demonstrate their commitment to women managers by including women members on the top management committees and decision making bodies. When women are represented at higher levels it is a source of inspiration and encouragement to women managers at lower levels.
- On a positive note, organizations should bring the work and accomplishments of their women managers in front of their stakeholders and the outside world so that these women managers are perceived as role models by others.

5.10 DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Research in the area of women in management has been reported since the last about four decades. Globally there is a wealth of information available related to women in management. Research has been reported in the form of doctoral and master's level work, journal papers and articles, work by consultants, and survey reports.

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

Table 5.4 Research directions in women in management in India at a glance

Broad research issue	Sub-categories of issue	Examples of meta level issue	Examples of meso level issue	Examples of micro level issue
Work-life balance	Work influence on personal life Personal life influence on work Work/personal life enhancement	Comparison of work-life balance across different sectors of Indian economy	Work life balance across the professions of law and medicine in India	Work life balance across the functional areas of marketing and production in Company C
Gender inequality	Dysfunctional organisational culture Occupational segregation Sexual harassment at work Pay differential	Gender inequality in business organisations in the Western Indian States	Gender inequality in rural-based non-governmental organisations in India	Gender inequality in public sector enterprise P
Glass ceiling syndrome	Lack of career exposure opportunities Lack of training opportunities Lack of promotion opportunities	Glass ceiling effect across selected industries in India	Glass ceiling effect in Indian management consultancy organisations	Glass ceiling effect in Company G

The future directions for research in the area of women in management in India could focus on the three broad issues of work-life balance, gender inequality, and the glass ceiling effect and the related sub-issues. An indicate agenda is presented in Table 5.4. These issues could be explored at a meta level in different regions of the country, among the different sectors (public / private) and industries. Meso level studies could be in different professions such as law and medicine. Comparative studies, contrasting women employees at different levels within the organisations as also across different functions and roles could be a direction for research at the micro level. Overall, ‘women in management’ is a promising field of inquiry in India.