



Why there are only few Women Managers? A Case study of Indian Administration Service

Ph.D. Thesis

by

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CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Warren Buffet stated generously that one of the reasons for his great success was that he was only competing with half of the population.

Warren Buffet

8.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a synopsis of the study; reiterating main objectives of the study and enlightening the methodology used to interrogate and dissect them. Additionally, the chapter also tables a summary of the most important findings and how those findings assisted in answering the research questions. Limitations of the study, research contribution, and implications for future research are also provided

8.1 Overview of the Research Problem and Methodology

As discussed earlier that women still face countless barriers on their journey to public service. Constraints on women's participation arise due to a convergence of cultural norms and weak institutional norms that prevent women from taking on more public roles. This study revealed that women constitute nearly 22 percent at entry level, their numbers drop to 18 percent at middle level and remains merely 14 percent at senior level positions in the Indian Administrative Services. These trends suggests in articulated way that '*all is not well*' in the IAS. Indeed, it is apparent that gender based discriminations and preconceptions are firmly entrenched in the service. For instance, Indian politician

and former Defence Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav stated that if the Women's Reservation Bill in India is passed it would fill the Parliament with the kind of women who invite catcalls and whistles.

As stated earlier that the major issue behind this study was to uncover the main factors that encumber women moving higher in their career ladder in administration. In other words this research has a) the extent of gender representation in IAS, b) examined the issue of glass ceiling faced by women in the IAS, and c) indentified major factors that contributed to profession progress of women in IAS.

The following were the main sub-questions that have been raised during the research journey to explore, understand and examine main factors that affect gender parity and career advancement to higher positions particularly in the Indian Administrative Service.

1. *What is the magnitude of women's representation in civil service, in general and IAS in particular, from 2003 to 2013?*
2. *Why are some women administrators able to reach to the top positions in IAS?*
3. *How do women in senior designations in the Indian Administrative Service observe their encounter/s with the phenomenon of glass ceiling?*
4. *What are main prerequisites and resources that contributed to femocrats' career pursuit in IAS?*
5. *Does culture facilitate or inhibit women's career advancement in IAS?*
6. *Is institutional terrain augment women's career growth and development in IAS?*

The main assumption of this study is that “personal, institutional and socio-cultural factors affect women’s representation in public administration specifically in the Indian Administrative Service. These assumptions were derived from previously conducted research (see IUP, 2018; Catalyst, 2017; UN Women, 2015; Kerfoot, 2011; Lynch, 2010; Grummell *et al.*, 2009; Gronn and Lacey, 2006; Scott: 2003; Currie *et al.*, 2002; Datta and Kornberg, 2002; Sen, 2001; Peter, Karl 1995; Lægreid: 1995; Philips: 1995; Kanter; 1993).

Glass ceiling is the dominant metaphor used to explain major challenges faced by women in attaining upward mobility in career ladder. Many studies across the disciplines including public administration have been conducted to understand and examine the glass ceiling (Dolan, 2004; Crum and Naff, 1997; Cornwell and Kellough, 1994; Bullard and Wright, 1993). Several factors that impede the growth and development of women in senior positions have been identified in the literature. These are formal barriers (education and experience, mentors); informal barriers (networking and linkages); socio-cultural (gender stereotypes, familial responsibilities and commitment); and attitudinal and organisational biases (Eagly and Wood, 2012; Lever 2011; Palus and Bowling 2010; Riccucci, 2009; Eagly and Carli 2007; Dolan, 2004; Lewis, 1997).

8.2 Recap of Methodology

As discussed in the chapter four, the study was carried out through a mixed methods approach. The data was collected from 9 ministries and 2 departments of the government of India, i.e., MHRD, MEA, MHA, MWCD, MHFW, MEFoCC, MSJE, FINMIN, and

MOD. I administered 150 questionnaires for quantitative. Besides, 25 qualitative interviews conducted to understand participants' lived experiences. Indeed the qualitative data analysed to understand the phenomenon of glass ceiling in the IAS.

8.3 Summary and Discussion of the main Findings

8.3.1 The Magnitude of Visibility of Women in Indian Civil Services including Indian Administrative Service

The findings of the study show that women visibility in Indian public administration in general and IAS is far from reality. The effectiveness and performance of women managers is still not embedded in the cognition of the officials. In 1972, formal gender parity was introduced in the All India Services. Nevertheless, the percentage of women IAS is party and inconsequential, i.e., 14 percent of the cadre especially in office of paramountcy.

Only one woman is visible after every four males at the entry level of IAS. At the beginning of 21st century, i.e., in 2002 women were 19 percent of the total strength in the service. Eventually, in 2013 their number reached to 24.5 of total civil servants. A positive but not very reassuring trend is noticeable in last one decade (2002-2012) as women's figures have increased by 5.5 percent during this period. Lately some downward drift is manifested in their performance in CSE especially post 2012 when women's visibility was at the best. A slackening of 1.6 percent is observable in women's

representation in IAS from 2012 to 2015 which is not propitious portent for gender equity in the civil services.

The study demonstrates that male only club notion exist in permanent executive. The political bosses have a penchant disposition of replicate their gendered cognition while appointing their support staff. For instance, we can see the glimpse of only men's club in PMO as well as Central Secretariat when it comes to the question of chairing vital portfolios/departments. There are only 14 women secretary out of more 95 in various ministries at union level. Further analysis unambiguously exposes that women are confined mainly in the sectors that foster prevailing gender stereotypes of their innateness province of bear, rear and nurture.

The picture of Indian Police Service is no better than IAS. In a way it is obsessed with manliness. Women are perceived mismatched to enforce hard task such as law and order, tackling hoodlums etc of the department. Women are rarely visible at the top. Although some states especially Haryana has introduced concept of pink police (Mahila Thana) stations but these are more of cosmetic reconfiguration. Because the data suggest that the top of the police service is virtually being dominated by male and masculinity.

This study reveals that women constitute merely 5.3 percent of the total strength of DGP/Spl. DG/ADGP posts in Indian Police Service. Further, at middle stratum their situation is slightly better, that is, women are 7.2 percent of the total membership of the

service. Finally, their condition is marginally improved at the junior level. In other words, women are 8.4 percent of the total strength at junior level.

Kerala was the first Indian state to have women in the police force, beginning with the first woman inducted into the then Travancore Royal Police in 1933. Thereafter recruitment of women into the police in other states began only after independence, and even then it was sporadic at best. It was not until 1972 that the first woman was appointed to the Indian Police Service. By the time the National Police Commission completed its eight reports in 1981, women accounted for a mere 3000 or 0.4% of the total police in the country.

As on 1/1/2015, there are 110872 female police personnel in India, making up a national average of 6.4 percent of the police. Many states have acted on the MHA's advisories to adopt a reservation (33 percent) policy for women in police forces at entry level. However, the target remains very much on paper and the government is least interested to address the issue. Maharashtra has had a reservation (30 percent) in place since 1971 (the longest running at 44 years to the present), but women police are barely pushing 10.9% of the force. Even with evidence of minor incremental gains, these dismal figures reveal the lack of priority to actually fill the numbers with women in police departments.

8.3.2 Profile of Successful Women at Entry Stage into IAS

The study illuminates that majority of women who are young in the age group of 25-30 years are at the advantage when it comes to the question of who will be the part of most

coveted public services in India. For example, 67 percent of women are less than 25 years at the time of their entry into the ICS. Secondly unmarried women are better placed in comparison to married women while competing for these prized positions in the public administration.

Thirdly, the elite Indian services are invariably dominated by urban and semi-urban women. For instance, a mere 94 percent of successful women in UPSC exam are having urban/semi-urban background and merely 6 percent rural women made it to the final list. Finally, their parents' occupation also plays important role in their entry into the services.

Further, the study reveals some interesting facts that professional academic background is key for candidates to succeed in the CSE. Also it is an open secret that women in professional degrees especially in engineering are most scant in India. For example, currently, women make up just 8 percent of the student strength at the 23 IITs across the country. Alternatively, the gender imbalance is not surprising because when it comes to STEM subjects --- science, technology, engineering, and mathematics --- it's very much a boys' club.

Fifthly, mode of education is key factor that influences success of female candidates in the civil services exam. The data divulges that 93 percent of successful female candidates were regular students during their education. Finally, access to resources (such as

coaching, mobility etc) is another vital factor that can unlock the plethora of avenues for individual entry into the civil service.

In brief, women from well-off families; having professional background; living in urban and semi-urban places and enjoy access to resources are better off, and have more probability to defy all odds especially gender based including patriarchy, masculinity and gender discrimination during their march towards Mussoorie (the Location of Lal Bahadur Shatri National Academy of Administration – LBSNAA).

8.3.3 Major Hurdles encountered by Femocrats in IAS

In no region do women and men have equal social, economic, and legal rights and India is not an exception to this reality. Women continue to have systematically poorer command over a range of productive resources, including education, land, information, and financial resources. Many women cannot own land, and those who do generally command smaller landholdings than men. Women participate in public places but sans security, mobility and impartiality. Such disparities in realm of socio-cultural life in general and access to resources particularly, hurt women's ability to participate in civil service as well as career development.

Most of India, with some exceptions, has strong patriarchal and patrilineal customs. For example, kindles 'inter-generational contract' that provides strong social and economic incentives for raising sons and disincentives for raising daughters (Larsen, 2011). It is perceived that parents of a woman essentially would lose all investments that they have

made during their daughter/s upbringing (*called as Paraya Dhan, Bojh*) as it is imminent that girl shall depart from her parental house to husband's after marriage. In other words, such cognitive and social impression disincentive as well as deter parents to devote resources towards girl child during her youth.

Social factors adversely affect girls' education. As a matter of fact, gender discrimination exists from primary education level and there is a gap in male-female literacy. For instance, according to 2011 census data, male literacy rate is 82.1 percent while women literacy rate is 65.4 percent, that means, there is a gender gap of 16.68% between male-female literacy.

Unquestionably, either women have lack of access or limited access of resources. Theoretically speaking, women have equal rights under the law to own property and receive equal inheritance rights, but in practice, women are at a disadvantage. This is evident from the fact that 70 percent of rural land is owned by men. For example, the Hindu Succession Act of 2005 provides equal inheritance rights to ancestral and jointly owned property nevertheless the law is toothless and unsubstantial in its enforcement especially in Northern India.

Figure 8.I: Facilitating and inhibiting factors in career advancement of women's

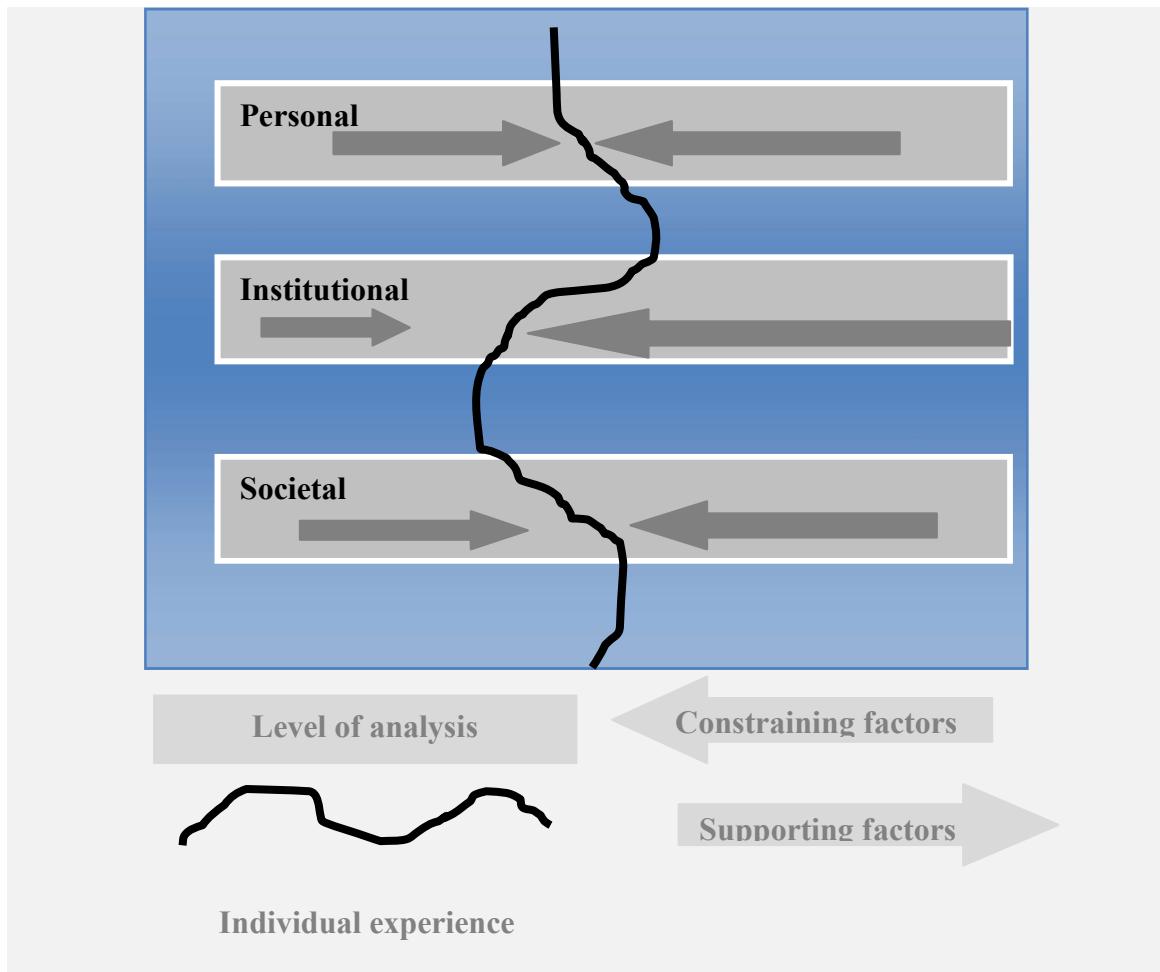


Figure 8.1 illustrates the major factors that contribute to career growth and development of femocrats in the Indian Administrative Services. It depicts broadly three categories of factors viz. personal, institutional and societal affect women's pursuit to career advancement in IAS. In fact, these factors consist of sub-set of elements that work both facilitators as well as inhibitors in career development depending on individual life experience.

8.3.4 The Glass Ceiling in Indian Administrative Service

The study findings suggest although not categorically that glass ceiling is discernible in IAS. Because the secondary data delineates that more and more women disappear during their journey towards pinnacle of their career advancement. Of all positions at Junior Administrative Grade in IAS cadre 22.1 percent are occupied by women while 77.9 percent of the positions are taken by men. Further their numbers reduce to 18.01 percent at mid level managerial positions in the services. Finally only 14.09 percent of women cracked the glass although invisible to reach at the apex level to inhabit seniormost positions in the hierarchy. To sum up, nearly 8 percent women vanished during their journey from bottom to top in their pursuit of professional progress.

Above and all, so far no femocrat has become cabinet secretary, India's top bureaucrat by status, power, rank and pay (entitled bungalow in the heart of Lutyens' Delhi). The reason is more of technical in nature than competence and capabilities of corridor's top women. In summer of 2009, it was a narrow miss for 1972 batch Kerala cadre IAS Sudha Pillai who was then the senior most IAS, and then cabinet secretary KM Chandrasekhar's two-year term was to end. But it's a different matter that Chandrasekhar got serial extensions which not only denied Mrs Pillai her 'due' to become country's top most bureaucrats but also explicit case of both gender discrimination.

Similar inferences can be deducted the case of former foreign secretary, Ms Sujatha Singh. Additionally, the secondary data significantly divulge, no woman IAS has become

home or defence secretary either. In fact, secretaries in the ministries of home and defence finance and external affairs get a two-year fixed tenure (can be extended), as these posts are considered more important than the rest. The above text quite safely suggests that the phenomenon of gender based occupation is profoundly ingrained and discernible in IAS. To infer glass ceiling in IAS we need more research and data to drive robust and sound conclusions on this front. Nevertheless gender discrimination is blatantly rampant in IAS especially at the seniormost and top positions in key ministries and departments or organisations/institutions.

In nutshell, no other factor related to job may explain the pitiable plight of women in power positions in IAS. Secondly it is perceptible that gender inequity in IAS increases over the course of career. All this reflects that gender based glass ceiling is an emerging issue in the Indian administration.

8. 3.5 Key Facilitators of Career Advancement of Women in IAS

The study finding suggests that there are certain essential prerequisites those have positive effect on professional advancement of women in public services. Formal attributes such as competency, performance, expertise and knowledge, critical events etc are indispensable ingredients to be effective managers. However the study revealed for access to strategic elite networks is key to reaching at zenith of career ladder. As networking enhances ‘trustworthiness’ index of potential candidate/s especially among power holders. In other words, women administrators must acquire both formal as well

informal factors to augment their future prospects of taking up important assignments in IAS.

8.3.6 Socio-cultural Dynamics - Main Inhibitors to Women's Professional Progress

'Yes' socio-cultural perceptions and practices effect on women's career prospects but negatively. These may be levelled as negative and biased gender images engendered, reinforced and perpetuated to maintain male hegemony. This study tags them as inhibitors since existence of these impede women's visibility as well as advancement in IAS. There are the many overt and covert 'glass-ceiling' factors that impede women's career paths. These include: male managerial styles, stereotypes, social roles and expectations, premium on masculinity devaluation of femininity, patriarchal discourse etc. For example, biology assigned only reproduction as female exclusive domain but social discourse, i.e., social genderisation – division of work on basis of sex not only delegate but coerce women to nurture, care and bear among other. Therefore family, domestic chores, child, elder care and so on are treated as sole responsibilities of women.

These observed differences between visibility of male and female managers may derive from barriers such as family responsibilities largely inhibiting the ability of women generally to meet the criteria identified as critical to a successful career (Gardner et al., 1998). The most intractable problem came in the tension between career and family. It was noteworthy that almost every woman who had children lamented the difficulty in balancing these two roles.

One participant blames the situation on Indian society. “Our society is largely a patriarchal one,” she says. Further she goes on to say, “Because men headed most important positions and institutes at one point of time, women are not considered capable (of the responsibility). Women are dismissed on flimsy grounds - family and private responsibilities. People start questioning whether a woman leader can function both in her private and professional space.

8.4 Recommendations for Gender Parity in Civil Services including IAS

Women’s presence at top leadership positions can be increased through implementing certain arrangements by the government. The examples depict the reasons, explanations and their effectiveness.

8.4.1 Legislating for Change

To bring gender equality government should initiate legislative measures to address women’s under representation in public as well as private sphere. For example in countries like Australia and Bangladesh India can allocate minimum 30-40 percent of public offices to women. To realise these lofty goals penalties should be fixed in black and white.

8.4.2 Leadership from the Top

To bring gender sensitivity in policy making presence of women at top positions is required. Strong political will is essentially to foster this culture in public places. For example, since independence no democrat has occupied the post of the Cabinet Secretary

of India. The present political leadership can break jinx for femocrats and lead by example by. Only then they can work as a catalyst of change. Ultimately it will result in a gender balanced top leadership.

8.4.3 Updating Operating Software of Mind: Changing Culture

Existing indoctrination of mind sets has resulted in gender biasness. As a result women find it difficult to move towards top level posts. To increase women's presence at top positions, need of the hour is to emphasis on removal of conscious and unconscious biasness. For example, earlier women were restricted to non combat roles but recently women are inducted into combat roles like as a fighter pilot in Indian defence forces.

8.4.4 Painting Pink on the Wall

Discrimination faced by women in both public and private sphere is highly systematic. This needs to be challenged by increasing the presence of women in recruitment boards. For instance, conscious efforts should be directed to make civil selection board as well as the appointment Committee of Cabinet more inclusive and representative for both sexes.

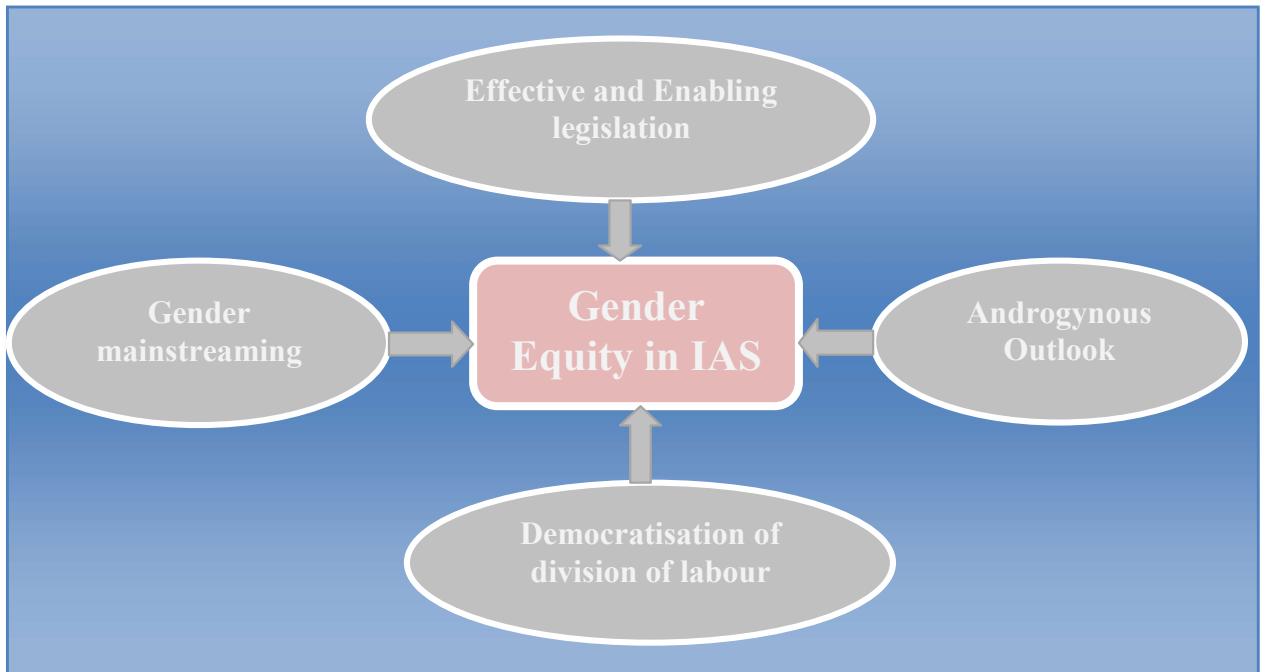
8.4.5 Supporting Women

The need of the hour is the establishment of peer groups who help deserving women to reach at top positions. Another important requirement is mentorship, sponsorship and easy access to power echelons is required. A bond of strong sisterhood can help women to achieve success in power structures.

8.4.6 Government should tame public patriarchy

Government should create congenial environment to include feminist flavour through gender mainstreaming especially in education system and work place so that prevailing stereotypes can be mitigated. Paradoxically prevailing laws are not gender neutral in fact they are engendering public patriarchy. For example, the Maternity Benefit Amendment Act 2017 has increased the duration statutory of paid maternity leave available for women employees in India from the existing 12 weeks to 26 weeks. However, the Maternity Benefit Amendment Act reinforces the already deeply entrenched social norms of child-rearing being left exclusively to the mother, effectively reliving the father of responsibility. This act indeed, has flavour that infer, “men leave childcare to their wives and glorify motherhood”. In other words, this act will promote patriarchy as almost whole responsibility of child caring is on the mother's as per this amendment. Government has not announced any statutory paternity and or child care leave for fathers.

Figure 8.2: Ideals Conditions for Gender Equity in IAS



The following figures highlights mandatory changes to confront and transform prevalent gender disparity in public administration especially Indian Civil Services.

8.5 Towards Gender Equity - Way Forward

In this study, I have explored the factors that affect women visibility in public institutions in managerial positions especially in Indian Administrative Service. The following table concludes the major findings and results of this study along with agenda to enhance women's visibility in positions of leadership in public administration.

Table 8.1: Summary of the Study

Variables	Ideal Conditions	Present Scenario	Way Forward
Socio-Cultural	Gender equality and equity	Masculinity, stereotypes and gender discrimination	Democratisation of gender based division of labour
Access to Resources	No gender based discrimination and Egalitarianism	Male-centric Patriarchy	Effective implementation of existing laws
Male Model of Manager	Agentic and communion	Rational, decisive and agentic	Affirmative orientation towards feminine values
Social Frame of Reference	Androgynous outlook	Virile and masculine	Deconstruction of gender and manliness
Political Discourse	Strong political will rather than tokenism	Lack of backing from politicians to enforce compliance	Gender mainstreaming

8.6 Implications for Future Research

This study has explored the main factors that have been affecting gender equity in civil service especially in IAS. Besides, the study attempted to map the phenomenon of glass ceiling in Indian Administrative Service. It would be beneficial if future research is carried out to investigate more cases studies for larger generalization. This would lead to the development of a comprehensive framework for the understanding phenomenon of glass ceiling especially in the Indian context. There are many promising avenues of research into gender bias and leadership. Besides, plethora of new vistas are available to

explore and understand female leaders' response to biasness and stereotypes faced by them in administration. Similar study may be conducted for Indian Police Service (IPS) to test the findings of this study to expand its scope, and generality.

8.8 Contribution of this work

Despite recent progress in increasing gender equality, hierarchies remain male-dominated in most political and business domains. For example, across the world, only 21.8% of members of parliament are female (IPU, 2014), and of the 196 nations across the world, only 22 are led by women. Women are also underrepresented in the business domain, a trend that tends to increase as we consider higher levels of the hierarchy. For instance, although women comprise 47.3% of the US labour force, the percentage of women occupying top leadership positions, such as Fortune 500 CEOs remains quite low – 5.2% (Catalyst, 2014)

8.7 Final Thoughts

The study concludes that socio-cultural factor play significant role in fostering gender equality in public places in gender and higher positions in administration in particular. The study revealed that formal factors such as competency and performance of individual, experience, expertise facilitate procedural equality in the race for the top positions. In other words, these prerequisites are sine qua non to be an applicant for empanelment for higher assignments in IAS. In addition the study highlighted that informal factor such as networking and mentorship work as catalyst to accelerate feminists and bureaucrats pursuit of greater achievement and advancement in IAS.

Specifically prevailing phenomenon of glass ceiling as well as gender inequity in IAS could not be exterminated as long as sociology of gender is reconceptualised. Because presently gender based indoctrination, segregation and discrimination is dominant paradigm in the allocation of public goods especially power and decision making positions.