

# Influence of Glass Ceiling on Women Lawyers

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## ABSTRACT

*Women have moved up the ladder and have placed landmarks in all spheres of life. But there are many problems and issues that need to be addressed which will hinder the development process for them. In the legal paradigm there have been many women advocates and their entry is on the increase in the recent years. But a disparity is that there are very few women representatives at top levels of the legal profession. This article provides an understanding into the factors that are concerned in identifying gender differences that exist in this profession. The main causes for inequality of women in the legal profession can be stated as, harassment, discrimination work life balance, stream work with public and personal treatment, From survey of literature it was found that women encounter inequality in all fields and therefore effects the satisfaction of women lawyers. Therefore it is a real necessity to take measures to increase the participation level women lawyer by minimizing the gender related issues.*

**Keywords:** Women empowerment, lawyer, gender differences, discrimination, basement.

## Introduction

Women's path in the legal profession can be described as a process of a challenge. Many changes have been set aright especially regarding the states of women. The involvement of feminist movements and women activists and the increase of welfare measures by the government for women have made it easier for women to excel in almost all fields. But inspite of developments and achievements women face a number of issues. Social changes demands have made it to look into avenues that are deeper for the development of women to address the problems and formulate ways to achieve sustainable development.

The legal profession is a vital branch of the machinery for justice and truth. If this profession is not well organised then the courts would not be in a position to manage justice successfully. The parties filing the suit cannot be organised properly, facts will not be able to be represented and the best legal opinions in support or against the case cannot be put forth in the court of law. If the judicial administration needs to be well organised it postulates a prepared, efficient and well equipped Bar, well regulated profession for pleading causes which is a great desideration for the quality of justice delivery. In India, legal practice is male dominated and has moved forward to keep in pace with the globalised legal work spaces which thereby calls for a gender neutral legal fraternity.

Anna Chandy was the first women judge of India from Kerala in 1937. She was promoted to the Kerala High Court in 1959 and the first women judge to make it to High Court. Despite the widespread

presence of women in the legal profession, they are yet to achieve and increase in power and opportunities. The legal system should have a database on the information about women lawyers and take initiatives in areas such as promotion, leadership, opportunities, compensation, alternative work schedules, satisfaction levels and harassment. Gender discrimination not only exists in legal profession but starts from law school and has a under spread impact among the law school students during their legal education period. Hence, inequality starts during their graduation. It calls for an unrelated effort to focus on the elimination of issues that pave way for gender differences.

The main differences are vividly seen in the issues related to career progression, pay gap work life balance and gender discrimination. It has adverse effects on their career progression and patterns. The awareness should start at law school and the students should be aware of various barriers faced by women legal professional. Most studies have found out that really quarters of lawyers want to quit the profession due to the stress and long working hours. All professionals and people undergo stress but it is more stressful for legal professionals due to the pressure of competition, horrible professional interactions and never ending deadlines. This paper aims at identifying the possible gender hindrance which stops the women legal professionals and some suggestions that are made which shows the gender differences and glass ceiling faced by the women professionals.

### **Strategies for advancement of women in legal profession**

Research highlights and gives evidence of women being at a disadvantaged position in the legal profession. Changes in policies and advancements are slow and have not produced the changes needed to ensure that women contribute maximally to all facts of the profession. The Indian legal system is not proactive at providing a work atmosphere that enable women to function efficiently in the fundamental sector of the system. The implementation of policies that are gender friendly and which make provisions for both parental leave and flexible work schedules for mothers is much needed. Department policies and procedures regarding issues on recruitment and promotion should be made transparent. A more focused agenda should be made for provisions for female lawyer's progress. Provisions should be made for an increase in the representation of females in the decision making committees. It is essential that women more than men require professional help. The representation of females in decision making committees should be increased. Therefore it is essential for leadership positions that women should be given for equal distribution and development of women in the legal system. Sustainable human development founded on equity, justice, unity and independence is necessary for the development of culture and harmony in a society.

Most research studies has found out that women legal professionals are sharply increasing which shown the mind set of society. The increase is however quantitative and not qualitative. Women lawyers do not get enough cases and consequently have low earnings which are a disturbing fact. Satisfaction with job in these conditions puts the question of entry of women into the profession and it more than just putting up a

brave front and most of them would not prefer their children to join the profession. Marriage and family-rising are the biggest hurdles for women legal practitioners. Although many women join the profession as a matter of choice but many of them opt out immediately or soon after marriage. Family pressures after marriage are depriving women legal professionals to come out even after putting hard work during the initial years in the profession. Gender discrimination at workplace is a serious issue which includes harassment of all forms which includes sexual harassment. It is evident that the profession which provides justice to everyone is not free from discrimination and harassment meted out to the women fraternity. The fact that insecurity and suspicion towards men is felt by women which stops them their entry is do the profession which is considered as one of the most powerful and prestigious profession.

### **Conclusion**

There is an immediate need to take action to ensure that truthful participation of women in legal profession entails qualitative improvement in the participation of women in legal profession to ensure that enough number of cases and financially rewarding carrier for them. The family pressure to opt out of marriage should be addressed and should ensure that once they have chosen their profession it is their right to work with dignity and free from the large family bondage. The increase is the number of cases and earning would go a long way in changing the attitude of husbands and in-laws. Gender discrimination is a widespread problem and not specifically for legal profession alone. Just like teaching profession which is considered safe for women, more strict and stringent anti-harassment provision in law will also help make this profession more conducive to women and this problem will be resolved only with a quality improvement in the practice of women lawyers.

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