Gender – Based Discrimination and Factors of Subtle Encounters of Glass Ceiling By the Women Lawyers

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Abstract: The study has been conducted upon 60 women lawyers in the Calcutta High Court. The detailed narratives collected from them focused on their common obstacles due to their gender roles which they hardly want to give up. The dual role of a professional and a home-maker is a challenge for a lawyer to balance. The societal obligations has been responsible for the women lawyers to experience the effects of glass ceiling today more silently. The acceptance of the women in the profession is still not uniform. The study locates the causes of this gender-based discrimination.

Introduction.

The legal profession has been mostly denoted as a ‘male profession’ for years. The gendering of the profession is not determined by the incompetency of the women in the field. It is often due to the generalization that women need to look after their families and children whether they can become a ‘good’ lawyer or not. Their domestic work is a mandatory task for them. The legal profession is a very lucrative profession today across the world. There is a huge faith associated with this profession and this earns the lawyers a different place in the society. The belief is when all other things fail in this world, one can still recourse to the legal profession. The women in the profession do not enjoy an important place even when the profession is so very much valued. The women were devoid of the opportunities to flourish in her career and specifically in this profession. It is true that the women’s participation is quite on rise but with time they are victimised by the self-perpetuating cycles of gender bias that leads to the decline in numbers of the women lawyers in the hierarchy of the profession. 2009 report by the National Association of the Women Lawyers mention that women are still in the level of underrepresentation in the leadership roles of the legal profession.

Gender stereotyping and women’s positioning in the legal profession.

Several narratives gathered confirm that in many cases they have not been allowed to pursue their choice of field in their respective profession. Their major hindrance was never their professional colleagues but certainly their families who restricted their mobility in the profession. Later in life, at times family commitments and especially their spouses obstruct their movement within the profession. A narrative from a 33 years woman lawyer has commented that “My husband does not want me to go. What’s the point fighting on this?” It was in reference to the professional tours that she misses for her husband’s decision. She accepts it and makes the professional growth restricted. The numbers of years the profession gave varied experiences for the women lawyers. Like in this respect, the narrative from a woman lawyer of 62 years of age mentions that “We did not get equal opportunities to study. Many families get their girls married off early; many do not want girls to work. In our times, it was difficult. My many friends were good in studies, but could not continue.” This implies that their families used to restrict them and over the years their movement and choices about profession has grown but is not unlimited like their men. Ideally a qualified graduate is always eligible to get the enrolment to practice law today. Till 1916 and the passing of the Removal of Sex Discrimination Act enrolment was a problem. After that the enrolment was viably possible, subtle discrimination towards the women did not end in reality. Today the situation has changed but in the upper strata of the legal profession, women are comparatively more in number but it is still a negligible proportion in the whole profession.

Regarding the choice making, one is not free to make the choice as well. Narrative from a competent respondent of 32 years of age on asking about the type of cases about her choice of practice said, “....Not criminal matters, else all are fine. I guess they are just not for women.” This shows the choice of cases is often harnessed on basis of gender stereotyping over the years even for the professional female lawyer. Choice of career is solely not dependent on which type of cases she deals with daily. At times it refers to choice between individual practice and job. On asking about the unequal sex ratio at the workplace, a 42 years old, woman lawyer said, “Many ladies study law but do not practice. The profession is very time-taking. Some, who marry...
from the same profession, leave it and take up job. I myself did it so that we do not end up having clashes.” This again talks about the sacrifice that the women make in their professions due to their subtle barrier created by their families. A similar experience was encountered by another lawyer from Rishra of age 36. She said, “Many do not like the women coming to the criminal practice. If they are married it becomes more difficult for the women.”

Another narrative from a respondent mentions a serious concern about the possible reasons behind the unequal sex-ratio at the workplace. She said “working outside home was itself a challenge and I guess women were not guided well so that they don’t work and certainly not practice. We need space for library, so we need money and the family doesn’t guide in many cases. Like my Attorney father was my major hindrance in this case. He was no help to me. In later life we need co-operative husbands and in-laws else it becomes difficult to remain in this profession. All women are not lucky always. So I think the sex ratio is lower for women.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Women Lawyers interviewed</th>
<th>Initial Choice of Profession</th>
<th>Presently in Practice of their choice</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>39</td>
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The above data reaffirms that 35% of women professionals had to give-up their preferred area of practice in this study over 60 women lawyers in the High court at Calcutta, India. In most instances they were forced to leave criminal practice due to several inhibitions created initially by their family and later on by their male counterparts at their workplace. Several narratives exhibit the real social reality existing in this profession. In this connection it is right to say that dealing with the police and the criminals is the biggest challenge to the women lawyers. It is true that through the various emotional unfoldings in the criminal trials, the women lawyers have often found the criminal practice to be more alluring and exciting. Choice of cases was restricted to women because the work place ambience has not been much supportive to the women even till date. Absence of washrooms for the women in the courts imply that women were never expected in the courts and even when the women’s influx is growing today in the profession, even then the number of washrooms have not been built in the courtrooms. The implication is that in spite of several renovations and constructions in the various parts of the various courts, the acceptance of women lawyers has not grown. Retd. Justice Leila Seth said how a musty store room has been designated to a women’s washroom in Patna High Court. Seth mentions how life is for the women lawyers when they are so less in number and so is it for the women judge in the legal profession (Makhija and Raha, 2010).

India happens to be the second largest country that has approximately one million lawyers with a huge population graduating every year. It is interesting to note that women in nineteenth century of legal practice adapted to the position of the absence of the women lawyers. Mossman explains it to be the opportunistic situation for the young women lawyers in the time to come. They have survived in the fringes of the profession in tokens opening up opportunities for the women lawyers today. Such an instance is Sorabji who was the first Indian woman to study and practice law in Great Britain. She later pleaded in India as an advocate from behind a purdah. The initiation must have been so very difficult for a female in those years. Automatically the career choice has been questioned by the guardians of the women lawyers in the contemporary period and the 16 even in its later time. The women’s capability was hardly tested because of the prejudice once developed. The women lawyers have tried to cope up with male exclusivity in the legal profession which is very important for the survival and then the growth of the women in the profession. This is exactly what that happened to the women lawyers in India and worldwide. So choice of career and then choice of the type of cases in the legal profession has often been influenced by others in case of a woman lawyer.

Changing patterns of women in the legal profession.

The scenario of the Indian women lawyers is better today than their Western colleagues. The visibility of the women lawyers in the Indian Bars is much higher compared to the London city or New York Wall Street colleagues (Kanz, Chauhan, 2010). There are instances where the seriousness towards their work has been questioned. It has been concluded that inspite of several senior counsels, only 6 percent of the women are found as women judges in the High Courts across the country.

The reality for the talented women lawyers have often been similar in cases of the responses collected from the respondents and also from the secondary sources. It has been quoted that by the Amarchand Mumbai partner, Vandana Shroff, “It pains me the most are women who are brilliant and then ‘suddenly comes the baby’ and off they go.” She has complained that there were nights when she had to keep her daughter in her lap and prepare for the next day’s suit where her child was running temperature. She also had to leave her sick child on the next day for the matter at the court. The experiences are likewise for the women lawyers who are mothers.
Narrative from another lawyer of 42 years of age, mentions that, “.....I feel bad as a mother.” Again it has been noted from another respondent that, “I felt guilty, I couldn’t give much time but on holidays I am fully with him.” The idea of compensation is visible here where both the narratives show how the women lawyers are unsatisfied with the given situation. They feel it is necessary for them to balance their time between the wants from the children and their workload, else they feel ‘guilty.’ They accept the absence of their husbands from the children but cannot adjust with their own, because a mother is supposed to be always there in need of the child and it is the most common idea the society has socialized us with. The deviance from it upset the mothers in most of the cases.

Table 2: Women lawyers and the rearing practices of the children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of women respondents who have been interviewed</th>
<th>No. of respondent s who have children</th>
<th>No. of respondents who are guilty/upset for giving lesser time to their children</th>
<th>No. of respondents who feel they are managing well</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
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The above table signifies how the women lawyers at maximum possible situations are upset with the way they are bound to give lesser time to their children. Some of the responses show how the women are working well with time presently. It is solely possible because their children are grown –ups but the scenario was similar for them too like the ones who have the small children now. This implies the situation and the societal expectations remained the same for years. The stereotyping of the gender roles is not new. It is existing in the society for years.

The workplace ratio shows lesser women participation than the men’s. The reasons are varied. A 50 year old respondent stated, “Women don’t get the family support. When they try to do something in life, they are married off. We got married at much early age, not like now. New life, new adjustments took away most of our important years. I myself left practice and later joined a legal company.” Later senior and experienced women lawyers of 55 years mentioned that, “Women do not consider career to be that important to them ever. Families did not let them consider that also. But these days young girls, their dedication makes me happy. The numbers are growing.” The two narratives give a picture where none of them negate that progress in the career for the women in the legal profession is certainly a challenge. There are various factors that have affected the lives of the women and their career in different ways across the country. At times, the economic conditions or the religious traditions or even the thinking patterns of the people affect their lives. With the growing acute pressure of economic necessity, today women have extensive opportunities. Inspite of this they have not been able to ignore the tug of war between her family and her work.

In many cases it has been supportive in-laws, parents, husbands and house helps have been treated as resources to the Indian women lawyers which are mostly unavailable to the women practitioners in the Western countries. In this respect Madhurima Mukherjee has been quoted by Chauhan, where she mentions jokingly, “In the US or the UK, if a woman has to become a partner you pretty much not have children or get divorced.” This suggests how the family planning affects the women in the profession. The Western families have small and nuclear families without the availability of house helps. The women in India can seek the help from them financially and emotionally and this really helps them get over with their responsibilities at the household at quite a few levels.

Table 3: Household chores and the dual responsibilities of the women lawyers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of women lawyers dependent on house-help</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers dependent on husbands</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers dependent on parents or in-laws</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers who needs to manage on her own</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
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Traditional practices, customs and rituals in many cases have made the girl child a “lesser child” in many cases. This is responsible for their limited opportunities in their growth and development for several generations. The above table suggests that this form of socialization leads to their internalization of the gender roles. The responses from all the respondents show that not a single woman is free from her duty of taking care of her household chores. There are cases of help from many of them through their house helps, or their other family members but in all the cases she is either found to manage that herself or she has to supervise about it. In this connection, it was noticeable that the participation of their husbands in order to help these professional women in managing their households was very limited. A professional man is excused in this case if he does not perform any household chores but the gender roles have made it mandatory for the women to always be responsible for it. In case she fails to perform her duties as a mother, a wife, a daughter-in –law or even a daughter, she herself feels guilty in it. She accepts it to be her prime
responsibility even when all of these women are working in the legal field.

This is apparent from the narrative collected from another legal practitioner, where she states that at her 48 years of age she said, “I manage as much I can before I leave for court, rest my mother supervises my maid.” Again a single woman lawyer at the age of 45 years mentioned that, “I do before I go and after I come back. My parents are sick. The nurse helps but I can’t ask her to do my household chore everyday.” The narratives show how every woman faces a dual pressure in handling her household chores and her profession because both of her ends have expectations associated with her. So in this case, it might also be noted that her marital status is also not pertinent.

The Indian Constitution supports the equal rights and opportunities to all her citizens irrespective of one’s sex. The achievement for Indian women is certainly their growing percentage in the independent country but that does make the equal representation of women still in the legal profession. One can not deny that the women’s participation in the legal profession is a huge societal progress leading to gender equality but the holistic picture in the profession is yet to change.

It is certainly mentionable that when in spite of women’s entry in huge numbers have increased in the legal profession, the scenario is still yet to change. The very slow pace of changes make it seem as though the ceiling is not so much glass as impenetrable concrete,” mentioned by the paper in Standford Law School. The study also mentioned about the lower bills after the longer hours of work in comparison to the men. This is true as per the study made in the Calcutta High Court as well. It mentions that women lawyers in maximum do not plead in front of the bench. They do the drafting or prepare the briefs and work behind the senior male advocate. This explains that their presence is not experienced in the forefront. The women are restricted from generating business. Women lawyers after the work hours in the court often do not attend the parties etc which happens to be an important part of the rainmaking. The informal networks are consequently limited to the women.

<table>
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<th>Table 4: Women lawyers and their professional tours.</th>
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<tr>
<td>No. of women lawyers interviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of women lawyers who travel in professional tours</td>
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<tr>
<td>No. of women lawyers who refuse to travel in professional tours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women lawyers who have refused to travel for professional requirement</td>
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The above table marks the other edge to the issue. It shows how the women lawyers travel rarely in professional tours. It is not true that most of the women get offers to travel far and appear for cases in other states but that might be true even for a male counterpart who successfully works in the local court. The cases from other state court exhibit the extent of the lawyer in developing his/her faith on his clients. The narrative collected from the ones who refuse to travel usually either have their husbands who do not like them travelling outside the city alone or they often sacrifice their professional growth due to their children because they do not want to leave them or their families. The weightage of responsibility is severe upon the women whether they work or even if they do not. In this respect, a woman lawyer of the High Court At Calcutta said, “I can’t leave my son, I have to sacrifice. I do not want such money.” Apart from such a narrative due to their responsibility towards their sick parents or if they have their family members too very dependent on them they have refused to travel.

Women lawyers have marked themselves different even in the way they handle the relationships with their husbands. a respondent in this regard said, “My husband does not want me to go, why to fight unnecessarily.” This is similar to other women lawyers as well. The spontaneous acceptance to travel on professional tours is rare and is visible only in 9 out of the whole sample size of 60 women lawyers who were interviewed. Thus experiences might be varied but the way the women professionals restrict their flexibility shows the restrictions they encounter with every passing number of years in their profession. With age they succumb to their gender roles which reinforce them to divide the time between their family requirements and career requirements. They cannot forgo their responsibility towards their families which often the male lawyers have ignored. The society has permitted that to the men if they are financially supporting the family. The most striking part of it is that, the women inspite of their financial contribution towards their families are expected to perform as expected by the society from the given gender. So the dual pressure upon the women professionals is immense to cope up with the demands in both the situations. They need to take up the role of the most successful ‘lawyer’ who is usually a male as aggressive, rigid and outright whereas the women needs to perform her role as a soft and flexible mother, wife, daughter-in-law at home.

On asking about the varied experiences of the women lawyers in their legal profession, most of them admitted that the pathway to success in the legal profession is different for the men than the women. Another legal practitioner remarked, “I know there are many reputed counsels in the Calcutta High Court who do not take female juniors still. It is very difficult to start your individual practice.” This particular narrative suggests how the women lawyers...
are lack of mentors. They need to rush to a senior counsel for guidance who is usually a male and who often do not encourage young women to become their juniors. This shows how the gender discrimination dependent upon certain stereotyping regulates the upward mobility of the women lawyers. Another narrative mentions that “…..it is a male-dominated profession. Families also restrict the girls in some cases…….your senior fixes an appointment at 11 pm and the family might not allow the girls to go out then. Automatically, their profession suffer and the men succeed.” This narrative from no.1 mentions how it gets difficult for a female to flourish in their career.

Women lawyers second battle after managing to study law.

Apart from not having adequate support from their families, women lawyers struggle even outside their homes when they have managed to study law. The late night conferences, informal meetings all usually are held after the court hours and mostly at late hours at night. This becomes often difficult for the women lawyers to manage with that. It is not only because they are women and are discriminated at their workplace but also because they find it difficult to travel at night for her safety reasons. This affects their career as their availability is doubted at night. Many challenging cases are handed over to their contemporary male counterparts. This generalization further affects those women who want to prioritize their career over their family obligations. It is because they do not get challenging cases for the other women.

The senior counsels play an important role in the lives of the solo legal practitioner. The initial years of practice for the young lawyer are regulated by the senior counsel. He or she handle only those cases that the senior wants them to. The senior decides on his or her understanding about which matter to be discussed with which of his juniors. It is totally upon his discretion.

It is important to mention that most of the women lawyers have tried looking for a senior counsel on basis of their previous acquaintance. They have showed that their families have felt more comfortable with the fact that their seniors are known to them. The preference for a female counsel was also noticeable on the part of their family members. Narrative from one of the respondents, mentioned that she had to work under her father’s friend. She said, “I had to take up civil cases else I would have not been allowed to practice.” There are narratives that state the struggle the woman lawyer had to make to reach a position where she could study law even when she had someone from her family in this profession. There are instances collected in this study about how another respondent mentioned her own reason to study law. She said, “People said I was a good orator. My English teacher, Ramzar Ali encouraged me along with my mother. My father was dad against “women’s choice” and coming home late.” This shows that with time and generation, the path has grown easier but for many the obstruction was very much embedded within their own families which she had to break to reach the platform. So she again starts her next phase of struggle. This is where again she is assessed differently and by people who are outsiders. The fight gets tougher for these women lawyers in all circumstances then. In a similar situation it was another woman lawyer who said that her choice of type of cases was criminal but she could not pursue that. She said, “My father said not to do criminal cases, else he would not let me do criminal cases. He would not let me practice.” This again shows how a women’s decision is this field was regulated by her family members who was himself from the same profession. It is not always that it is always because of their family pressure. There are cases when a woman junior is refused by the senior counsels to supervise. A respondent in this regard said, “She was a lady advocate I knew, else I would have not been taken by any. I approached many men. They did not want to take a young lady junior.” This shows that the competent young female junior has a dual obstacle to meet. Even after her degree she struggles to find a place to implement that.

There are senior counsels who are choosy about assigning tasks to their juniors. The choice is dependent on their gender bias. The biasness is pre-established in the minds of the senior advocates irrespective of their gender.

The seniors are at times biased in placing briefs to their juniors on basis of gender. For the security reasons the male seniors have been found to put their male junior into more challenging cases because the conferences at late night are unsuitable for a female junior according to him. It was amazing to note the response of a respondent where she had planned and joined her senior. She apprehended how she might...

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Table 5: Women lawyers and their means of professional support.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>No. of lawyers interviewed who are into solo practice</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
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</tbody>
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have to take a career break in the time to come in her later life, specifically to perform her expected gender roles. She said so on asking about her choice to select her senior counsel. She said, “I joined my father-in-law because he was my father’s friend. He wanted me to learn and be a part of their family since then, so that I never have to leave the chamber even after marriage.” This marks the apprehension in a women lawyer right before she joins the profession. The profession demands time and that often becomes more difficult for a woman to accomplish after performing her role as a committed lawyer to her clients and then work as a ‘woman’ completing all her gender roles at home.

Response collected in this regard mentioned that, “Men have so much of facility. They do not need to look after anything after they return from home. But for us, we need to look after everything.” This explains that Indian women lawyers admit their requirement to perform well with the help from their in-laws and if she has domestic help.

Table 6: Lack of nomination and absence of women judges.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of lawyers who were interviewed</th>
<th>No. of lawyers who feel that lack of senior female counsel is due to lack of nomination</th>
<th>No. of lawyers who feel that women are still incompetent to become judges or senior female counsel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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The above table signifies the lumpsome absence of women lawyers in the upper strata of the legal profession. It implies the absence of the women lawyers in the decision making. The noteworthy thing in the latest studies determines the huge number of entry of women in the legal profession. The concern is they are visible in negligible numbers. The growth in the numbers might be inspiring and promising today but the changing pace is extremely slow. It might be a very genuine reason to locate the absence of women judges or senior counsels in the Supreme Court and the various High Courts due to the shortage of nomination made by the other Bar Association Members. The nomination gets automatically gender biased. One of the many factors of the women senior counsel is the seniority in the profession and the absence of women lawyers to choose from because often they take long career breaks or quit the profession unlike their contemporary male colleagues. This becomes mentionable because sources show that there might be news of rise in women appointment as judges in the High Courts and the Supreme Court but at what interval, which is important to mention. Till 2013, out of more than 200 senior advocates in Delhi and Mumbai, only 3 are women. So the absence of women should have been a news inspite of no limitation from the Court or the Indian Constitution for years but that never dragged any attention. The sudden visibility of the women lawyers pulls all to the fact that the situation for Indian women lawyers is changing very gradually. So the presence of women lawyers signify them as marginalized minority. It might be referred as progress for the women but in reality the women’s position in the legal profession is almost invisible. It is solely because the women lawyers are not growing as the litigators in comparison the numbers of female students who are graduating every year.

The initial years of practice for a lawyer are always difficult. There are several senior counsels who flaunt the fact that they were never paid a respectful amount in their first year of practice. The patience required is very high. The women lawyers find the salary paid in the law firms to be higher and stable. It automatically becomes an alternative to the women lawyers more often. The women have a tendency to get them settled only because before they get married they wanted to be sure about their footing. On the other hand, their male counterparts usually invest this time in gestation which later awards them in the later time in their career. The men reach stability in their profession after their subsistence in the profession usually because the society accepts them when they devote time to their profession. While on the other side of the profession, the women lawyers are in a hurry to prove and economically settle them before they get married. In the Indian culture, marriage involves several obligations. The way the women are socialized in India makes them mostly accommodate her duties of being married along with her careeristic expectations.

Table 7: Gender bias and acceptability of the women lawyers amongst their clients.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of women lawyers who experienced gender bias from their clients</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers who did not experience gender bias from their clients</th>
<th>No. Of women lawyers who found the shift of their clients from her other male colleagues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>24</td>
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competent women lawyers. The biasness originates from the root of the society because the clients are the people from the society only.

In this context the women lawyers in a study feel that clients refuse to give the lawyer their rightful fees whereas the male colleagues often claim them rightfully. More of women lawyers have shown their interest in litigation matters. It is because the absence of rigidity in the system and structure, allows the women to manage with their household chores even from home. It is still true that the work place is not favourably designed for the women lawyers. Specifically for the lack of the crèche facilities a women employee mentions, “For about a year and off after the baby I was in court only when I was needed due to which there was a perception that I was not serious about the practise.” This assumption really affects the professional women. This curbs the clients to appoint the women lawyers to look after their cases. It is disbelief upon the ability of the women lawyer. They are more concerned about one’s gender than identifying them as legal practitioners.

Table 8: Preference for women juniors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of women lawyers who were interviewed</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers who have only female juniors</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers who have both male and female juniors.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
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The above data mentions that all the women who were interviewed do not keep the bias while choosing their juniors. In many cases a fresher is permitted to practice law only when she finds a female senior advocate. The competency or potential becomes a second priority for the families of many young, new women lawyer. As the importance of decision making is bestowed upon the families of senior women lawyers in the initial years of practice, they are forced to take up the available guidance available to them. In such a situation else they would not be able to pursue their profession of choice like the way the women lawyers had to forgo their area of choice in many cases. A senior advocate on record at the Supreme Court, Manisha Karia mentions that she quitted working in a reputed law firm after marriage and started devoting all her time in the chamber of her father-in-law who later became her senior counsel. This particular case is striking, when in most of the cases of the data collected and the other secondary sources, it has been found that the women have chosen the law firms over the solo legal practice because it makes them arrange the time after the office hours for their families. The legal profession have been repeatedly remarked as a male-dominated profession in several case studies. Senior lawyers tended to avoid the women juniors in the Madras High Court in 1980s. The particular trend has changed with time. The help and cooperation from the senior counsel is most expected and desired for a fresher and if she is a female. With time that has changed and a narrative from respondent no. 1, she said about her junior that, “Girls can do anything anytime. On requirement, I give them my car at night. Only thing I have told them you should know to drive and not meet an accident. Cars are very important for us. They are not luxuries at all.” This shows the relationship the woman senior advocate nurtures with her junior woman lawyer and the faith she exhibits about her female juniors shows the difference in her attitude in comparison to the other senior advocates irrespective to their sex.

Table 9: Senior women counsels and the junior acceptability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of women lawyers who have juniors working under them</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers who are strongly influenced by gender before assigning task</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers who are less strongly influenced by gender before assigning task</th>
<th>No. of women lawyers who are not influenced by gender while assigning tasks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
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</table>

The above table denotes that gender has played a role in assigning tasks to their junior fellows. Outright acceptance of the bias was in negligible proportion. The acceptance was not there in many of the cases but to most of them they are apprehensive about the level of performance after their marriage. A senior counsel has commented on having a male junior working under her, she said, “I have no tension. However late it might get, no one will call from him house. I hear from my colleagues, if they are working under me, they are my responsibility. So work has to be curtailed.” This shows the general assumption that the concern majorly for the female juniors is late night movement outside chamber even for work like in case of attending conferences. Another narrative from a pertinent respondent mentions that, “If I would have had a male junior, I would have sent him in late night conferences.” Another respondent on the other hand said her experience was not very good, working with her senior. She said, “I had to struggle. He never seemed to have faith in me. He kept saying, ‘study more.’ I needed money also, so that was very difficult.” This marks the trend amongst the senior advocates. They tend to carry on with all the practices and ways of mentoring they have received from their seniors. So automatically the older gender biases were more severe which is still experienced by the
contemporary juniors but less effectively. Some respondents have said that they are keen to find the dedication in their work and do not bother whether they are male or a female junior to her. Even then there is a different trend from another narrative collected from respondent (7) mentions about the change in performance of her junior advocate immediately after her marriage. She said, “One of my juniors is a Muslim girl. She was efficient before her marriage. But now she has become unpunctual and incompetent also. She comes late to the chamber and goes back early. She says else her in-laws will not let her work. We have matters every evening to settle for the following day. These days she can hardly finish her work by the evenings and automatically does not plead well in the next morning. So I have become choosy in assigning tasks.” So this shows how a competent woman is losing her place in the profession and in the eyes of the senior advocate. This is all due to the age old practices of the society for the women which constrain the woman to grow in her career even when she was at par with her male colleagues before her marriage.

Conclusion.

It is important for the women to survive in the profession to counter the challenges that come her way. The challenges that doubt her ability. The adaptation in the court premises, working with the male colleagues and then finally getting accustomed to the demands that the profession makes towards the women lawyers. The data reveals the certain change in the system. Although the system has changes but it cannot be said that the women are not experiencing any form of discrimination in any way. The discrimination is getting more silent and subtle with time today. The attitude of the educated women is gradually towards the balancing of her tasks and not outrightly negating her gender roles. The tendency of the male colleagues to disregard their female counterparts are more silent now. This has helped the women ignore many things that used to be ‘once’ uncomfortable in of their colleagues. Inspite of this, the experience of glass ceiling is slowly penetrating in the lives of the competent women lawyers even now. It would probably take longer to change the way the people look at women in this profession.

Gender stereotyping is the facilitator of glass ceiling. If a woman is unable to flourish in her professional skill, it is often due to the inclination of domestic workload upon the women. Again, this discrimination is reinforced as that is held as the cause for the women to not be able to devote time and effort in their workplaces. This is often used as excuse to deprive women from the upper echelons of the various offices. Therefore, a woman is dually discriminated in the public as well as the private sphere. In private if she is unable to meet up with the expectations of the domestic requirements. So it is the cultural and social attitudes that make ‘male’ or ‘female ‘ jobs and it is the gender inequality in education and training which streams the women into different professions. This refers to horizontal occupational segregation but when females exclusively start experiencing the vertical occupational segregation, it becomes a concern in the name of glass ceiling.

The feminists acknowledged glass ceiling as a problem prevalent in various forms with various intensities in the varied nations. The legal, religious and the economic factors are particularly discriminatory towards women and the opportunities are unequally shared right from the grass root level, so question of the glass ceiling does not arise in many of the developing nations like in India. Still the struggle of the handful number of women is persistent to make their place at the peak which can certainly make a difference. Therefore, women are growing in number in the professional world. Often the women have to work harder than men to get the same recognition. The reason behind this is the societal pressure and the familial duty upon the women. However, the incidents of breaking the glass ceiling are in the newspaper reports. It is a as a popular debate today but not in form of the systematic studies. This problem of glass ceiling is bleachable only with increased awareness and empowerment of the women leaders of tomorrow.

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