

## Managing Gender Diversity: A Perception Based Exploratory Study on Women Career and Work-family Conflict

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Date of Submission: 27-08-2018

Date of acceptance: 27-09-2018

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### ABSTRACT

#### Purpose

- Manage gender diversity for sustainable economic growth by creation of level playing field
- Understand the term Women Career success and its facilitators
- Understand the conflict between work and family domain
- Measure the perception about the conflict between work and family domain as affecting women career and about facilitators of women career success
- Measure the impact of demography (Gender, marital status and age) on this perception
- Sharing best practices & recommendations for reducing this barrier and increasing facilitators

#### Research Question

Is there a bias leading to Glass ceiling with respect to women managing their dual responsibility of work and family?

#### Approach

Based on literature review, an explanation of challenges between work and family domains was undertaken. Thereby an understanding was built on the possible bias against women in corporations in India which might be affecting the facilitators for their career success. Primary data was collected from various sectors in Delhi/NCR. Responses solicited from both men and women with minimum five years of experience. Questionnaire administered with Likert Scale responses. Analysis by descriptive, t-test, one - way ANOVA, Regression and correlation. Henceforth comparison made on the basis of demography.

#### Findings

Surprisingly the facilitators of women career success tend to be adversely affected by the perception of conflict between work and family. Men (especially married) were more likely than women to consider it as a barrier. This perception was found to be more significant in the age group of 35-40 years.

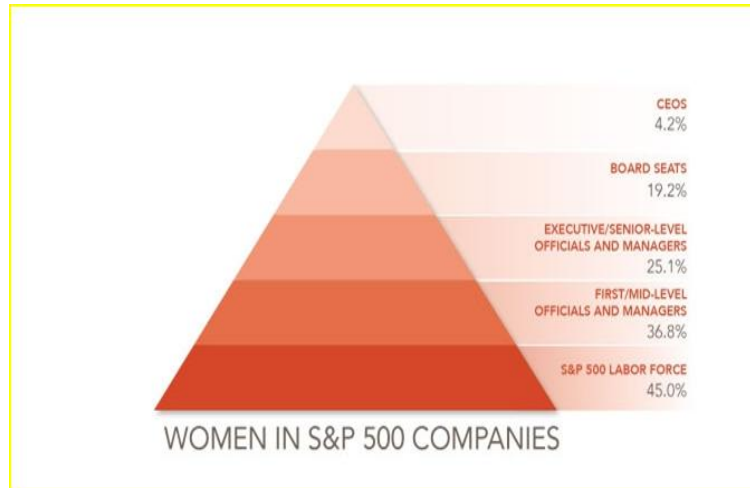
#### Value

This paper is unique as it fulfils an identified need to develop an understanding of conflict between work and family, a phenomenon that is likely to affect the career success facilitators of almost half of our population, that is - women. It is a holistic study measuring the perception of both men and women professionals. An understanding of this will be of value to policy makers in organizations, especially of developing economies like India. As the perception of conflict is threatening the career success of women than instead of putting the blame on women and making it as their personal limitation, organizations need to pitch in and help shatter the Glass ceiling built around it. This calls for an action. Present study tends to identify the existence of work and family conflict affecting Career success of women in the organizations. Henceforth, organizations can design measures to reduce the impact in their organizations.

**Keywords:** Glass Ceiling; work and family conflict; barriers; women career success facilitators

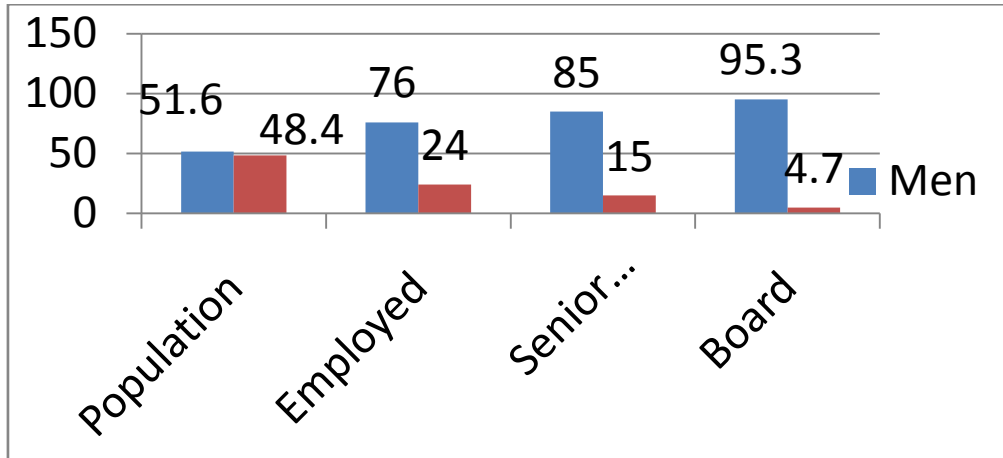
**I. Introduction:**

Globally women have become an integral part of organizations, may it be any domain. Their footprints are seen in Armed forces, Police Department, Manufacturing sector etc., and the interesting fact is that these were once considered male bastion. Research shows that organizations which have women, especially in senior roles, show better economic growth (Mckinsey, 2007). In spite of this understanding, women are still occupying a small percentage especially in leadership roles.



**Figure 1: Catalyst Pyramid: Women in S&P 500 Companies 2015**

The above data is global; however, back home in India the situation is no different. Women representation in senior leadership roles is much less as compared to men. This is depicted via a graph below:



**Figure 2: Catalyst, Women in the Labor Force in India, 2014; Women Board Directors. Census, 2015**

When it comes to naming some women leaders of the corporate world, names like Indra Nooyi, Sheryl Sandberg and Merissa Mayer come instantly to our minds in the global scenario. In India, we have established names like Kalpana Morpariya, Shikha Sharma, Chanda Kochhar, Naina Lal Kidwai, Vinita Gupta and Arundhati Bhattacharya. But these are only handful and if we keep aside the banking sector on the side, the list shrinks to almost a negligible number.

The modern-day landscape is changing dramatically with awareness level going up and more and more women competing with their men folks in education as well as at the work place. This coupled with the increasing inflation rate, makes dual income families a necessity. As more and more women join the workforce, they bring with them a plethora of varied ideas and add a different perspective to work. However, they also bring along a new set of challenges for which understanding these ‘Individual Differences’ becomes critical. It is imperative to say that there is a genuine need to sensitize the organizations about these specific challenges of women. We cannot just take mileage out of a new resource. One has to address their needs, especially biological. The fact that they will get married and have children eventually cannot be ignored and neither can

the tradition where they play a pivotal role in the elderly care especially in countries like India. At this juncture the conflict between work and family comes into picture. If this is taken care of, it would gradually lead to an ideal situation of work-life-balance. However, research highlights a contradictory view where this conflict turns out to be a barrier against the career progression of women as Glass Ceiling.

'Glass Ceiling' is referred to in literature as an unsaid, invisible barrier that prevents women from climbing the corporate ladder. This is a very interesting though sensitive phenomenon as individuals do not wish to openly admit and share their internal bias and stereotypes. Some of it comes from the deep-rooted family traditions and some from the environment, developed over centuries following certain cultures. It has plagued our organizations since the time it became popular in 1984(Chandra, 2014). It shows its expression in diverse forms. However, it is very challenging to understand if a particular barrier owes its existence to Glass Ceiling or there is something more to it. Women at the middle level, who are aspiring for senior roles, are mainly affected by this. Glass Ceiling varies across cultures. Research in India largely highlights the perception that women will be occupied with family issues even when they are at work. To add on to this, there is no single and scientific formula to combat it. Years and decades would be required to bring about this attitudinal change in perception towards women professionals. However, the situation is improving and organizations have started understanding the contribution women can make to a company's growth in spite of their family responsibilities.

Career of a woman has been compared with the game of snakes and ladders (Rajesh). She encounters snakes during her corporate career and also gets ladders to climb up. All through, the chances of being bitten by a snake and falling down, is pretty high. Definitely there are certain facilitators of career success which enable career progression. Some of them might be there while for others, one needs to understand the reason and also contemplate how these facilitators can be developed further. The journey might be treacherous but not IMPOSSIBLE.

If the government, the organizations, the policy makers and also women are roped in together, elimination of this conflict between work and family would not be very challenging. The ultimate goal is to have gender neutral corporate environment where meritocracy prevails over gender and women get equal opportunity to develop their facilitators, eventually leading to their career success.

Literature shows that there is impact of one domain on another, whether it is work on family or family on work. But the assumption or bias that it will adversely affect the work performance of woman is still under researched. Instead of creating a glass ceiling for them, measures should be taken to help strike a right balance between work and family. The boundaries between work life and home life have become blurred through this 21st century. Dramatic changes and challenges have been witnessed of late as there is increase in dual-earner couples and single-parent families and to add on, elderly care is also there. This means that they are continuously juggling between unpaid family work and paid work. This conflict between work and family is a common source of stress and has been linked to employees' health and family functioning (Almeida, Wethington and Chandler, 1999).

Not only in India but even globally the struggle has become so grave that few career women are postponing motherhood, freezing eggs and even opting for surrogacy. It is high time that organizations really come up with actionable agendas so that the women talent is capitalized to its threshold. Based on this, family friendly measures should be given more visibility rather than creating Glass ceiling.

This paper tends to understand the conflict between work and family as a deterrent to facilitators of women career success, hence the direction of the flow of conflict is immaterial for this research. In any case if there is a balance between work and family, it is likely to result in career success. Hence the aim is to create a synergy between the two where the conflict is reduced and balance increased.

In literature many studies use the terms work family conflict interchangeably with family work conflict or conflict between work and family or WFC (Foley and Hang-Yue, 2005; Ngo, Foley and Loi 2005; Reinardy, 2007; Balmforth and Gardner 2006). All of them point towards a discord between the two. In this study WFC would be used largely.

## **II. Review of Literature:**

A study by Byron, 2005, mentioned that family-related stress is likely to interfere with work roles. And Behavior-based conflict occurs when a particular type of a behavior is expected from a role which is likely to be a misfit for the other role. Suppose the role of a manager expects an aggressive behavior with a control on emotions and this does not match with the expectation from a family member where more of emotions and harmony is required.

A positive spill over from family to work was not reported much and reference for negative correlation was found in studies which strengthened the glass ceiling phenomenon. However, the expansionist theory argues that one role strengthens or enriches the quality of the other role, such as work-family enrichment, work-family enhancement, work-family facilitation, and positive spillover thereby establishing a positive correlation between work and family commitment. In fact, benefits are derived from processes such as "buffering, added

income, social support, opportunities to experience success, expanded frame of reference. Sometimes Gender bias (prejudice or discrimination based on gender or conditions that support gender stereotypes of social roles) crops in and the assumption spreads that women will not be able to contribute fully to their work domain (Baslow, 1992).

Another study, (Frye and Breaugh, 2004), measures the precursors and its consequences. Like if there are family-friendly policies, supervisor support, having childcare responsibility, the consequences would be seen in terms of both job and family satisfaction whether it is work-family conflict or family-work conflict. It was further established that these family friendly policies were predictive of work-family conflict. And also, childcare responsibility and supervisor support were found to be related to family-work conflict. Hence it was concluded that Work-family conflict was related to both job and family satisfaction.

In another study, the Role enhancement theory was emphasized. This theory states that “participation in one role is made better or easier by virtue of participation in the other role” (Frone, 2003). This clearly suggests that if some roles, which complement each other, are combined then it can affect the well-being in a positive way. The combination of certain roles has a positive, rather than a negative effect on well-being. In fact, according to this theory, involvement in one role makes the other much easier. It is only beyond a certain limit that work family relationship faces a distress, however, the central focus of this perspective is mainly on the positive effects of work and family relationship which becomes visible as enhancement of resource.

Another concept referred to as Spillover, is discussed in a study by Xu, 2009. It emphasizes the possibility of experience in one domain affecting the experience in another. And it could be both positive and negative spillover. Positive in the sense that, satisfaction in one domain draws satisfaction in another too. However, if it is negative, say difficulty in one domain, then it would bring the same in another domain. This is the most popular view of relationship between work and family and touches upon all the aspects, however there is also a contradictory segmentation theory which believes that people are capable enough to separate their feelings and can prevent one from interfering the other.

A study by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identifies three sources for conflict between work and family in terms of time, behavior and stress. According to them:

- time involved in fulfilling one role makes difficult to fulfill requirement of another role
- stress from participation in one role makes it difficult to fulfill requirements of another
- specific behaviors required by one role make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another

Conceptually, the conflict between work and family is bi-directional and defined as the inter role conflict where the participation in one role interferes with the participation in another

The study also emphasizes the Work Enrichment theory which is a popular model to explain the relationship between work and family. According to this model, experience in one role (work or family) will enhance the quality of life in the other role. In other words, this model tries to explain the positive effects of the work-family relation:



**Figure 3: Family-to-work conflict model(Ford, Heiner, and Langkamer, 2007)**

Afza and Newaz (2008) identified five factors responsible for glass ceiling effect which restricted women career progression at certain stage. Those factors were: work-life-conflict, perception of management,

work environment, sexual harassment and organizational policy. The repeated conflict between the responsibilities of work and family was assumed to create a barrier in the career development of women.

SHRM (2009) report shared the perspective on women in management in India. It highlighted that by just having programs for women development will do no good, rather there should be true commitment on the part of senior management. Issues like work and family conflict should be taken up. Perspectives of some Indian women professionals were also shared in the report. Family, education, social expectation, professional attitude and communication showed impact on career. Still the organizations in India do not see any benefits of diversity so genuine measures were found to be given a miss.

Hoobler, Wanye and Lemmon (2009) examined bosses' perception of family-work-conflict. It was found to be affecting the promotability. The boss perceives that the demands from family, spill over to affect work. So was the subconscious stereotyping that-think leader think male. Even the caregiving stereotype ascribed to women adds to the assumption. Hoobler et al mentioned that the traditional assumption that work and family domains were incompatible and in conflict, was problematic. Social role theory was stressed in this paper as women are unassociated with management effectiveness and associated with nurturing communal social roles. Importantly it was concluded that gender did impact upward mobility through manager's perception of family-work-conflict thus creating glass ceiling. For analysis, SEM was used and model fit obtained.

Simpson and Altman (2000), thereby classifying glass ceiling as time bound. It was conducted on male and female managers. They found that younger women (<35 years) got faster promotion as compared to men. Though both viewed salary, status, job satisfaction and marriage partner as important for career development. Older women with greater experience of career barriers, saw the organization as having negative attitudes towards women managers, unlike younger ones. The study mentioned the reason to be a punctured glass ceiling or relocated glass ceiling. It was also found that family commitments had little effect on career success but exclusion from male network was definitely a barrier for career success.

(Lawton and Tulkin, 2010) In this article family structures were compared with their experiences in work-family balance. This area of study was important because work-family conflict can have negative effects on both employees and organizations. At home, work-family conflict has been associated with a large array of problems: domestic violence, poor physical and emotional health following childbirth (Grice et al., 2007), excessive drinking (Roos, Lahelma and Rahkonen, 2006), decreased marital satisfaction and psychological health, low levels of life satisfaction and self-esteem. When the boundaries and definitions of work roles are unmanageable or unknown, conflict will enter family needs. It was found in this study that if people were overloaded with work, it increases work family conflict.

(Kelly et al, 2008) In this research article dramatic changes have been witnessed as there is increase in dual-earner couples and single-parent families and to add on they are taking care of elderly or infirm relatives too (Casper and Bianchi, 2002; Neal and Hammer, 2007). This means that they are continuously juggling between unpaid family work and paid work. This conflict between work and family is a common source of stress and has been linked to employees' health and family functioning (Almeida, Wethington, and Chandler, 1999; Frone, 2000; Greenhaus, Allen, and Spector, 2006; Grzywacz and Bass, 2003).

Career success has been understood as the objective outcome of performance resulting in career progression. Today a career can be seen as successful mainly based on internal feelings, however, we cannot deny the fact that external evidence like moving up the hierarchy ladder, high earnings, and gaining status and power are equally important factors of success for people. In literature career theory propagates career to be extremely traditional which has the interest of organization as the primary focus, though now an opposite and non-traditional view is gaining momentum. This could be owing to the fact that businesses are now becoming borderless.

Lyness and Thompson (2000) conducted a unique study to understand the perceived barriers and facilitators to career advancement and the barriers were: lack of culture fit, exclusion from informal network, lack of mentoring, difficulty obtaining opportunities for geographic mobility while the facilitators were reported as: good track record, developing relationships, credibility with your peers, career goal, mentoring and developmental assignments. As per them, same criterion applied for both genders when it comes to which facilitators help career advancement. The career success was found to be mainly impacted by/related to developmental assignments and breadth of experience. This study was carried on both men and women working in corporate to find out especially those factors which affect career success above middle management level. Lyness and Thompson (2000) mentioned the most important and unique finding of their study as the relationship between, importance of these facilitators and degree of career success. Hence it was established by them that there is a positive co relation between these facilitators and career success.

Gunz and Heslin (2005) re-conceptualized the career success and used 'success' as the antonym of 'failure' and success was labeled as the 'outcome' of one's career. Success was seen as how high up the hierarchy the person has climbed by a given age. They argued that there would be people who would be contended despite not appearing to have succeeded in life i.e. low objective success but high subjective success.

Also, there would be people who are indifferent to objective career success as their career progresses to higher echelon. However, they mentioned in their study that while interpreting career success, social context plays a very important role.

A study by Kuijpers, Schyns, and Scheerens (2006) identified the competencies required for career development thereby established the relationship between career competencies and career success. The results indicated a strong association of career success with networking and career control. The competencies identified for career success were: career reflection, motivation, career-actualization-ability, work exploration, career control, career planning and networking.

Halpern and Cheung (2008) in their study on 'How to Lead a Dually Successful Life in the male-centric corporate environment', emphasize the importance of Coaching, network building, and mentoring programs as effective means to nurture women's ambition and skills to climb the corporate ladder. Mentors helped by introducing the candidate to influential people who can actually catapult the career of a person. One of the interesting best practices was shared in this study – cross company mentoring program wherein potential women interacted with heads of biggest corporations in order to foster career progression. This study also stressed the role of Positive Attitude towards Work/ Motivation which would come only if people loved their work and found it meaningful.

Desai, Majumder, Chakraborty, and Ghosh, (2011) in their study established the effect of resourcefulness and marital adjustment on job and life satisfaction of working women in India. Their finding was that if the family shows positive attitude and organizations adopt practical family friendly policies, productivity of female workforce will go up. It was highlighted in their study that post globalization, acceptance of women at workplace has increased, thereby Indian women made their footprints in all spheres of work life.

Research study by Frail (2012) identified the career success drivers, enablers and facilitators for women. This study was unique because it clearly identified what individual must do and what organization must do. The key facilitators for career advancement were strong mentors, developmental assignments and effective feedback.

Study by Wang and Cho (2013) had Women working in universities as the sample for and it was analyzed whether there is a negative spillover between work and family domains. Career development in this study was described as the interactive progression of the resource to the role it takes. This study found that because of the discrimination that women face, their occupational expectations go down thereby creating a "self-fulfilling prophecy". They start considering themselves as secondary breadwinners and this perception influences their behavior. This study also highlights the human capital theory which suggests that women invest less in education and on the job training because they do not expect to engage as intensely as men do in the labor force. The statistical tools used in this were correlation matrix, structural equation modeling and factor analysis. This study found Work-family conflict to be one of the major barriers of women career development.

Srinivasan, Murty, and Nakra (2013) explored the career success and career persistence of women in India with respect to the belief in gender disadvantage. It was found that organizations should offer flexible work options and child care facilities if they want women to remain in their careers. This study identified career success as objective that is observable, measurable and verifiable (e.g. Pay, promotions and occupational status), while subjective career is only experienced by the person herself/himself. The Indian culture was found to be putting pressure on women to drop out of their careers post marriage or post child birth and even for elderly care. Family priorities were expected to prevail over work. Even highly ambitious women were judged for their commitment to work. Gender bias was also reported at the workplace by the respondents. Still a greater percentage of Indian women are reaching to top positions as compared to their counterparts in the world. Career was also found to be affected by geography and education level of the people under study. India being a diverse country is impacted by these parameters.

A study by Brown and Lewis (2005) examined the barriers to career advancement as glass ceiling. The barriers were studied as human capital, sociopsychological and systemic. Mentoring, job commitment and geographical mobility were identified as the potential facilitators to advancement.

A research by Afande (2015) identified the factors for career success and the barriers to that. While explaining career success in their study, it was argued that career development is affected by individual factors (like education, work experience), social factors (like support, encouragement) and organizational factors (like at organizational level). It was also found that Human Capital (individual skill and ability) greatly contributed to development still the role of career goals, line experience, highly visible job assignments, job commitment, networking and mentoring relationships as facilitators to women career success were very important.

## **2.1 Research Gap**

After a detailed review, some of the gaps were identified as:

- Very few studies measured perception of both men and women on conflict between work and family that women face, especially in India.

- Limited studies were found that measured the presence of career success facilitators in women, especially in Indian context.
- Most importantly scarcity of research was found in the area linking the conflict between work and family and facilitators of career success with respect to women. This was the major gap area which was underexplored in the Indian context too.

### III. Research Methods:

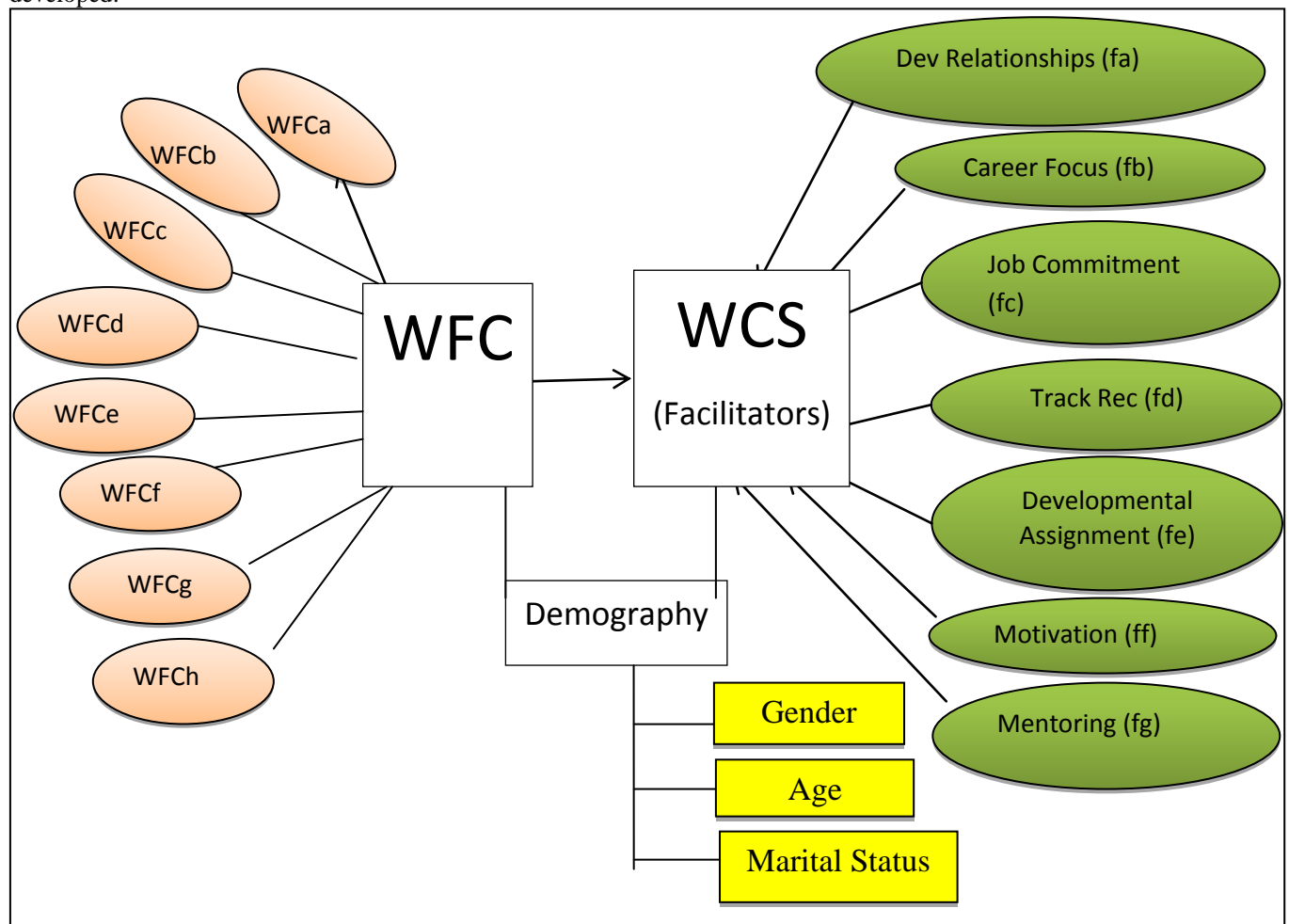
#### 3.1 The objectives of this study are:

- To measure perception of executives about the conflict between work and family (WFC)
- To measure perception of executives on the presence of facilitators of women career success(WCS), in women
- To find correlation between the two
- To understand how demography affects the perception of WFC
- Sharing best practices based on secondary data and recommendations for reducing this barrier and increasing the facilitators

For this, percentages, descriptive, t-test, ANOVA and correlations would be used.

The conflict between work and family was measured by eight variables that were picked from literature (Lyness and Thompson, 2000; Jain and Mukherjee, 2010; Buddhapriya, 2009). The facilitators of career success were identified as seven largely. They were from studies of Lyness and Thompson, 2000; Catalyst, 2012; Ragins etal, 1998.

After understanding the 8 variables of WFC and 7 facilitators of career success, a Theoretical Model was developed:



**Figure 4: Theoretical model**

**Table 1: Scale Standardization of Facilitators of WCS**

Scale standardization of facilitators: Item-Total Statistics				
Facilitators	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Fa	19.92	64.677	.578	.827
Fb	20.55	69.722	.514	.836
Fc	19.71	67.043	.501	.839
Fd	20.20	64.002	.658	.815
Fe	19.22	60.921	.727	.803
Ff	19.37	62.297	.681	.811
Fg	20.34	67.634	.552	.831

The value of corrected item total co-relation should be  $\Rightarrow$  0.5 to standardize the scale of facilitators. Above table indicates that all the values of facilitators are  $>$  0.5 so scale of facilitators is considered reliable.

**Table 2: Reliability of WFC variables**

Nomenclature	Variables	Item-Total Statistics				
		Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
WFCa	Women are not very keen to take up higher responsibilities due to long working hours.	26.78	21.392	.593	.576	.062
WFCb	Women are getting support from parents/in-laws which makes it easy for them to focus on their career progression	27.84	48.805	-.665	.597	.677
WFCc	Women are reluctant to relocate to pursue professional opportunities due to family reasons	26.34	21.633	.614	.681	.060
WFCd	Women are forced to take break in career due to child bearing and family responsibilities	25.86	31.078	.114	.529	.357
WFCe	Family responsibilities affect women's efficiency at work more than that of men	26.08	30.214	.115	.455	.359
WFCf	Women prefer a balanced life over a highly paid career	26.54	21.525	.587	.682	.067
WFCg	Motherhood is more important for most of the women than career development	26.54	22.148	.596	.677	.079
WFC h	A supportive spouse makes it easier for woman to achieve success in her career	28.83	38.216	-.287	.427	.501



The reliability was measured and Cronbach's alpha was 0.67, which is acceptable, after dropping one variable. After the standardization of the instrument, data was randomly collected from 600 respondents (executives who are working in private sectors in Delhi NCR) on a Likert scale of 1 to 6 where 1 stood for strongly disagree and 6 for strongly agree. After data cleaning 518 responses were available for analyses. Of these 308 were men and 210 were women.

#### **IV. Analyses and Findings:**

##### **4.1 Descriptive for variables of WFC and facilitators of WCS**

The responses to each significant variable was

1. (WFCa) Women are not very keen to take up higher responsibilities due to long working hours. While men agree with this largely (23.7% disagree and 76.3% agree), women are somewhat towards disagreement (59.0% disagree and 41.0% agree)

2. (WFCc) Women are forced to take break in career due to child bearing and family responsibilities. Both men (15.6% disagree and 84.4% agree) and women (48.6% disagree and 51.4% agree) agree that women are forced to take break in career. However, this perception is stronger among men respondents, which might be the reason behind their bias that women are not for top management roles. Male managers are biased and simply don't take them seriously. (Michailidis et al, 2012).

3. (WFCd) Women are reluctant to relocate to pursue professional opportunities due to family reasons. This perception is there among majority of men (13.0% disagree and 87.0% agree) and women (20.5% disagree and 79.5% agree).

4. (WFCe) Family responsibilities affect women's efficiency at work more than that of men. This perception is there among majority of men (16.9% disagree and 83.1% agree) and women (27.1% disagree and 72.9% agree).

5. (WFCf) Women prefer a balanced life over a highly paid career. Though women disagree (52.4% disagree and 47.6% agree) with this, majority of men respondents (19.2% disagree and 80.8% agree) agree that balanced life is a priority for women.

6. (WFCg) Motherhood is more important for most of the women than career development. Though women disagree (55.7% disagree and 44.3% agree) with this, majority of men respondents (18.5% disagree and 81.5% agree) agree.

7. (WFCh) A supportive spouse makes it easier for woman to achieve success in her career. (Reverse coding)

Both men (92.9% agree and 7.1% disagree) and women (84.3% agree and 15.7% disagree) agree in majority.

The responses to the seven variables of facilitators of women career success were:

- (Fa) Women lack the skill of developing relationships required for career development. (Reverse coding) 59.7% men of the total male population agree while 40.3% disagree but among women 49.5% agree and 50.5% disagree. Almost equal number of women respondents agrees and disagrees about the lack of this skill.

- (Fb) Women have job commitment required for career success and growth. Men (76.9% disagree and 23.1% agree) and women (65.7% disagree and 34.3% agree) both are disagreement side. This could be owing to the unsupportive organizational culture or discrimination which affects the commitment. Women have to impose restrictions and forced to reduce involvement in job owing to this work family conflict. (Bourne and Wikler, 1982; Buddhapriya, 2009)

- (Fc) Women have strong career focus/goal that is required for managing career. There is difference in responses of men and women respondents. While majority of men (64.3% disagree and 35.7% agree) are disagreeing with the statement, women are on agreement side (25.7% disagree and 74.3% agree).

- (Fd) Women receive developmental assignments in the organization. Majority of both men (62.7% disagree and 37.3% agree) and women (56.7% disagree and 43.3% agree) respondents disagree.

- (Fe) Women lack motivation. (Reverse coding) There is a difference in the opinion. While men (57.8% agree and 42.2% disagree) agree, women disagree (4.8% agree and 95.2% disagree) that they lack motivation to work.

- (Ff) Women have a good track record to take up leadership roles. There is a difference in the opinion. While men (59.4% disagree and 40.6% agree) do not agree that women have a good track record, majority of women (19.5% disagree and 80.5% agree) agree that they have a good record.

- (Fg) Mentoring is very less for women.

(Reverse coding) Both men (66.9% agree and 33.1% disagree) and women (68.1% agree and 31.9% disagree) respondents agree that mentoring is less.

**4.2 To measure if the perception about WFC varies with Gender**

**Table 3: T-test gender and WFC-Group Statistics**

Group Statistics					
	Gen	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WFC	Male	308	3.8999	1.13684	0.06478
	Female	210	2.6193	1.56435	0.10795

The mean values of WFC is 3.90 for males (SE= 0.065) and 2.62 for females (SE= 0.108).

**Table 4: Independent Samples Test (Gender and WFC)**

Independent Samples Test (Gender and GC Factors)									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means						
			Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
		Lower							Upper
WFC	Equal variances assumed	0	11	516	0	1.28057	0.11873	1.04732	1.51381
	Equal variances not assumed		10	355.253	0	1.28057	0.12589	1.03297	1.52816

The difference between the means is significant as  $t(518) = 0.000$  (Sig  $p \leq 0.05$ ) for WFC. That means two tailed value of  $p$  is lesser than 0.05 for WFC so males perceive more than females that there is Work and family conflict.

**4.3 To measure if the perception about WFC varies with Marital Status**

**Table 5: T Test Marital Status and WFC (Group Statistics)**

Group Statistics					
	Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
WFC	Married	431	3.4437	1.45475	0.07007
	Unmarried/Single	87	3.0688	1.49729	0.16053

The mean value for WFC for married is 3.44 and unmarried/single is 3.06

**Table 6: T Test Marital Status and WFC (Independent Sample)**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
WFC	Equal variances assumed	0.739	0.39	2.2	516	0.03	0.37491	0.17183	0.03734	0.71248
	Equal variances not assumed			2.1	121.019	0.034	0.37491	0.17515	0.02814	0.72167

The difference between the means for WFC  $t(518) = 0.030$  so is significant. (Sig  $p \leq 0.05$ ) That means two tailed value of  $p$  is less than 0.05 for WFC hence it can be concluded that there is significant difference between the means of the two samples (married and unmarried/single) for WFC. Married mean is 3.44 and 3.06 for Unmarried/Single so married respondents believe WFC to be a stronger factor of GC.

4.4 To measure if the perception about WFC varies with Age

Table 7: WFC and Age ANNOVA - WFC & Age (Descriptive)

Age	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
25 to 30	110	3.0102	1.54314	.14713	2.7186	3.3018	.68	5.07
30 to 35	137	3.4497	1.46884	.12549	3.2016	3.6979	.70	5.09
35 to 40	92	3.6712	1.29885	.13541	3.4023	3.9402	.59	5.13
40 to 45	114	3.4400	1.48318	.13891	3.1648	3.7152	.54	5.26
> 45	65	3.3473	1.44656	.17942	2.9888	3.7057	.64	5.01
Total	518	3.3807	1.46724	.06447	3.2541	3.5074	.54	5.26

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
Between Groups	23.993	4	5.998	2.826	0.024
Within Groups	1088.996	513	2.123		

The mean score of age group 35 to 40 years (3.67) was the maximum as compared to other age groups. Hence the influence of this age group is expected to be the maximum on perceiving WFC as the most significant barrier of GC. This was found to be statistically significant too. (0.024).

**4.5 Relationship between WFC and facilitators of WCS**

The relationship between the variables of WFC and facilitators of women career success was established through correlations:

**Table 8 : Correlation between WFC and WCS facilitators**

		Correlations						
		Fa	Fb	Fc	Fd	Fe	Ff	Fg
WFCa	Pearson Correlation	-.036	-.004	-.653**	-.009	-.568**	-.630**	-.050
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.417	.931	.000	.836	.000	.000	.261
WFCc	Pearson Correlation	.104*	.105*	-.582**	.178**	-.427**	-.498**	.081
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.016	.000	.000	.000	.000	.064
WFCd	Pearson Correlation	-.356**	-.525**	-.002	-.438**	-.127**	-.108*	-.508**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.964	.000	.004	.014	.000
WFCe	Pearson Correlation	-.485**	-.441**	-.045	-.489**	-.240**	-.171**	-.524**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.309	.000	.000	.000	.000
WFCf	Pearson Correlation	.067	.156**	-.582**	.112*	-.479**	-.536**	.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.128	.000	.000	.011	.000	.000	.733
WFCg	Pearson Correlation	.049	.102*	-.586**	.143**	-.513**	-.567**	.064
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.266	.021	.000	.001	.000	.000	.148
WFCb	Pearson Correlation	.186**	.433**	-.184**	.219**	-.011	-.089*	.341**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.805	.043	.000

**V. Discussions:**

Surprisingly, the conflict between family and work, a glass ceiling barrier, was explicitly visible in this study. Mindset of the Indian men was reflected in the assumption that child care issues, supportive spouse and in-laws play a major role and, in their absence, women would have difficulty taking leadership roles, hence they should not be promoted. More direct reflection of glass ceiling came in their agreement towards the perception that motherhood is more important than career, family responsibilities, long working hours, relocation issues and balanced life.

Studies have shown that in India spouse is not very supportive owing to sociocultural factors hence it is tough for women to handle the conflict between family and work. Hoobler et al (2009) have mentioned in their study that the boss’s perception about women facing family and work challenge, leads to glass ceiling. This reflects as male bias in Indian men, who are at influential positions in organizations, against women that they should not be promoted to senior roles as they would not perform in the absence of supportive spouse (Buddhapriya, 2009; Kumari, 2009; Ramu, 1989).

Men believed more (mean=3.90) than women (mean=2.62) as in table 3, that women have conflict between their work and family. A similar finding was discussed in a study in 2006 where 46% of men anticipate this conflict (Sandberg and Scovell, 2013) and thought it as a barrier in the job performance of their female colleagues too. This might be one of the reasons why they would not want women in leadership roles.

Married and Unmarried/Single respondents perceived this conflict differently. Married managers considered this conflict to be higher (Mean=3.44) than unmarried/single managers (Mean=3.07). (Table: 5). Married managers significantly perceived work and family conflict as a GC barrier may be because of their personal experience and societal norms where gender roles are defined. Organizations should not ignore this perception and rather craft family friendly work policies. In fact, being married does not come in the way of career development (Sandberg and Scovell, 2013). If the decision makers understand this, then WFC would no more be a GC barrier.

In another analysis it was found that the managers specifically in the age group of 35-40 years (Table: 7) were more in agreement to the work and family conflict as a GC barrier. They have gained enough experience to understand the demands of senior management jobs which come with higher responsibility thereby leaving one with less time for family responsibilities. This is a very crucial period because along with child care, in India elderly care also gains momentum, thereby increasing the struggle between family and work. While the managers themselves are at the middle management level by this age, their career focus is also high owing to increased competition as one strives for senior management roles. Because of the struggle between increased family demands and pressure of career progression, the stress level also goes up. As a result, women who actually cannot turn their backs to family responsibilities, especially in India, bear the brunt more and compromise on their career. If only some extra support is extended both by the family (mainly the husband) and the organization at this juncture we can be assured of having a talented pipeline of women leaders. At this phase of life, they also assume higher conflict between family and work demands, thereby considering it the major barrier of GC. On the contrary, managers in the lower age bracket have framed their opinion on here say so they rate WFC as any other barrier of GC. However, managers in the higher age bracket do not consider it much stronger than any other barrier of GC because they might be in favor of the positive spill over phenomenon (Hoobler, Hu, and Wilson, 2010) where challenges in one domain positively affect the role performance in other domain.

The correlations were established between the WFC variables and facilitators as seen in Table 8.

WFCc, WFCd, WFCe, WFCh were significantly related to 'developing relationships' (fa). Contrary to the available literature, the findings suggested that the perception that women may struggle to manage work and family, did affect the skill of developing relationships in a positive way. Their family responsibilities, career breaks and reluctance to pursue professional opportunities affects their networking. Possibly, the ill effects of this perception, forces women to go an extra mile and build relationships to cover up for this gap. However, a supportive spouse makes it easier.

WFCa, WFCc, WFCf, WFCg, WFCh were significantly related to 'career focus/goal' (fc). Literature suggests that there is a positive spillover which means that where ever WFC is a well-established criterion and has its visibility; women ensure that they make extra efforts in depicting career focus for more than covering up for the perception. They are sensitive to the fact that child bearing and family responsibilities take up time and are seen as time wasters by the organizations, so they ensure that their actions and activities are directed at proving a higher level of career focus and attitude towards work. For the presence of the career focus in women, men disagreed significantly. Since predominantly men have a much larger population in the decision-making pool, their strong disagreement on this facilitator is likely to affect their decision of hiring women for senior leadership roles. Such a contrasting perception of men and women is also an indicator of a bias against women, thereby creating a non-conducive environment in the organization for career success of women.

WFCc, WFCd, WFCe, WFCf, WFCg, WFCh were significantly related to 'developmental assignments' (fd). Work family conflict results in women losing out on regular learnings from their day to day jobs. As the latest trend is to move away from the class room trainings and rely more on 'OJT' (On the job trainings), hence in order to compensate on this gap of in role learnings, women might be seeking development assignments to come at par with their men colleagues.

WFCa, WFCc, WFCd, WFCe, WFCf, WFCg, were significantly related to 'motivation' (fe). In today's work environment, women are well aware of their gap areas and work towards bridging these. Literature shows that it is not difficult to balance both work and family together and women can lead a dually successful life (Halpern and Cheung, 2008) as it increases their motivation even if there is work and family conflict.

WFCa, WFCc, WFCd, WFCe, WFCf, WFCg, WFCh were significantly related to 'track record' (ff). Since women were not found to perceive work and family conflict as a barrier, they continue to pursue their career with full grit and determination. In spite of their family responsibilities, they are keen to take on assignments that showcase their mettle. This could be one of the reasons to affect their track record.

WFCd, WFCe, WFCh were significantly related to 'mentoring' (fg). Mentors are generally senior leaders who are not directly line managers of the individuals. Mentoring is not a full-time job and is an additional duty which is performed over and above the regular role. Under these circumstances, the perception that women are having work family conflict, discourages the mentor to spend more time on mentoring as it would be considered a waste of time and efforts. Thus, higher the perception of this conflict, lower the chances of getting a mentor.

## **VI. Conclusion:**

This exploratory study could establish a significant relationship between the work family conflict and facilitators of career success. Demography did have an impact on the perception of WFC. As compare to women, men felt that this conflict was a barrier. Married people and those in the age group of 35-40 years found

this conflict more significant. Gender was found to impact the Women Career Success Facilitators such that men were more likely to perceive that facilitators were less in women.

Now what is desirable is that a positive spillover of both family and work on each other, be created. Conflict should become facilitator. A satisfied employee can really contribute meaningfully to the growth of the organization. For this the biological needs of females cannot be negated neither can their caregiving roles. The skills they learn from family domain can contribute meaningfully in their work domain and vice versa. Instead of creating a Glass ceiling, as found in this study, a right balance between Family – Work is required with due support from the organization. This would be a step forward in making them competent with all seven identified facilitators and ensuring career success.

## **VII. Recommendation to reduce Work Family conflict:**

At the root of Work Family conflict is the clash of the priorities between official work and personal responsibilities of women in the Indian society. In order to reduce this conflict, one would have to reduce the interdependency and also to ensure that an environment is created where both of these co-exist without cannibalizing on each other. The criticality of this conflict is not just due to the time share factor which makes women compromise on the expectations at both ends, it is also associated with the guilt that women carries on account of not being able to do justice to both. This is equally important to address and relatively easier to rectify, given the fact that it needs a change of perception and creating awareness alone, while in the other case, we'd need to make concrete changes in policies regarding the work pattern and the work expectations.

Based on the findings of this study, relevant recommendations have been enlisted that helps reduce this conflict. Some of the best practices coming from the western world and slowly seeping in the Organizations in India are worth considering here. Work from home option is one of the most favored policies which address the work family conflict as it gives women the power to take work at home and operate full time from the comfort of their home. This can be permanent or need based, with most of the organizations practicing this, facilitates this with some basic infrastructure and recurring cost to ensure that women can work with equal efficiency from their home. Women in such cases rely on skype, screen-share, video calls etc. for routine discussions and participate virtually in most of the office meetings using technology. This dramatically improves the productivity and the job commitment of women.

Another good initiative is flexible timings wherein women are given a time range, 08:00 to 09:00 in the morning to come to office and same way a time range to go back in the evening. They are supposed to put in eight hours of work per day and depending on when they came, they can work for eight hours and go back. This ensures they take care of their family priorities as and when they arrive, which in most cases comes unexpectedly.

Another one is of time share, wherein two women jointly work for a particular role. Each does three days in a week and this gives them ample time to meet out the family responsibility and work guilt free. The fact that this arrangement comes with a cut in salary is generally preferred for exceptional cases like post-delivery or during some prolonged child/adult care etc.

Organizations are getting more and more liberal and sensitive to the fact of post-delivery care and the number of paid leave given to women and also to men is increasing. It's gone as high as a year to generally 6-9 months in most of the multinationals. Tata Teleservices in India is one of the spear leaders in this range having increased the maternity leave to six months with full pay and another six months with half day-half pay concept. They plan to double their women workforce by 2020.

With the concept of business zones, commercial complex etc. more and more offices are coming up in one area and with this the viability of opening a crèche is becoming more realistic. Majority of the more liberal and women centric organizations in the western world have a crèche in their vicinity, at times in the same building. This takes care of those cases where women would want to come back to work post the maternity leave is over. They are free to go and check their babies during the work hours. This also takes care of the guilt of neglecting the baby while at work and improves the career focus of women as their mind is away from child care. Something of the sort is catching up in the metros though a lot of progress can be made in this space.

While there is a plethora of such ideas and initiatives which our organizations need to pick up and implement, another critical work stream can be to make women guilt free. Guilt, coming primarily from the fact that they believe, they are compromising their work and personal life trying to balance both. For this few organizations are running awareness sessions and inviting successful women to spread the message that taking care of their loved ones is equally important and that the organizations are sensitive to this fact. It is being established in these organizations that women have their unique strength and that the organization clearly acknowledge the fact that women have an equal responsibility towards their family and home. The expectations are so designed that spending an extra hour at home or taking occasional personal calls at work is not seen as a crime. This has made quite encouraging perceptual changes in the women of such organizations and it is

something to be seriously looked at in the organizations in India. However, in the developed economies too the conflict is visible, may not be of the same intensity

With the upsurge of millennial generation, where dual income families are very common, this perceived conflict is likely to be reduced. Organizations are also coming up with Flexible timing, work from home, paternity leaves, crèches and feeding rooms.

This paper has not only discussed the status quo of factors influencing women's career success, but also provided insights as to how these might change, which developments will induce this change.

Surprisingly, this perception is visible in the developed economies like that of Europe too. Wherein it marks its presence as glass ceiling. The biases persist that women career is negatively impacted because of the conflict between work and family.

Chung (2011), while studying WFC across 28 European countries, suggested that job demands do pose a challenge sometimes but with women friendly work policies, this is no more a hindrance. Even the government policies have to be more in line with the changing demands. However, country like Sweden which has very friendly state policies, also could not change the perception. Still few years down the line with more millennials occupying senior roles, the thought process is likely to witness a favorable change.

A report says "Companies with three or more women directors have outperformed those that have had less...and having women on boards, could improve understanding of customer needs, leading to more informed decision-making". (NSE CECG report of July 2015 on Gender Diversity in Boardrooms by N Balasubramanian and Nirmal Mohanty, member secretary. [www.nseindia.com/research/content/res\\_NSE\\_CECG.htm](http://www.nseindia.com/research/content/res_NSE_CECG.htm)). Now is the time for paradigm shift in the traditional mindset which stereotypes women as compromising on work due to family responsibilities.

### **VIII. Suggestions for future studies:**

This research raises more questions than the answers it provides. In this VUCA world the dynamics are changing at a very fast pace and the same is likely to be seen in the stereotypes attached to working women who have families too. This is just the beginning of a long journey to assure women a successful career irrespective of the fact that she equally needs to attend to her family. Once a mutually beneficial co-existence is established and accepted, the journey becomes result oriented. This paper has been unique in establishing a statistical relationship between the identified aspects of work and family conflict and the career success of women.

Further studies can be undertaken to understand whether men also come across the issue of conflict between work and family and how it affects their career. It can also be explored whether the popularity of paternity leave will enhance sensitivity of men towards their women colleagues and reduce glass ceiling.

A comparative study can also be made about the productivity of a motivated and guilt free women with that of women who is under guilt of always trying to balance the two fronts.

Also, comparative studies can be undertaken discussing the specific developmental aspects in India in the next few years in line with what has already happened in the developed European climate.

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Dr. Shikha Chandra. "Managing Gender Diversity: A Perception Based Exploratory Study on Women Career and Work-family Conflict". *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)* 20.9 (2018): 61-75.