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# Breaking the Glass Ceiling: Socio-Psychological Barriers and Motivational Factors Influencing Women's Career Progression in Education and Service Sectors of Chhattisgarh

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## Introduction

Women's participation in the workforce has increased significantly, yet their upward mobility remains restricted by structural, social, and psychological barriers. The phenomenon known as the glass ceiling—an invisible barrier preventing women from reaching leadership and decision-making positions—remains prevalent across sectors. This study examines socio-psychological barriers and motivational determinants shaping women's career progression in the education and service sectors of Chhattisgarh.

## Theoretical Background

This study draws upon:

- **Gender Socialization Theory**, which explains how societal norms influence women's professional aspirations.
- **Human Capital Theory**, highlighting disparities in education, experience, and training.
- **Social Role Theory**, emphasising gendered expectations regarding domestic responsibilities.
- **Motivation Theories** such as Self-Determination Theory and Expectancy–Value Theory to understand internal motivation.

## Significance of the Study

The study is significant for policymakers, human resource managers, gender researchers, and educational institutions. Its findings will inform strategic interventions to promote equitable career growth, enhance leadership representation, and dismantle deep-rooted biases in organizational structures.

## Statement of the Problem

Despite increased educational attainment and professional engagement, women in Chhattisgarh face persistent barriers to vertical mobility. These barriers are deeply rooted in socio-cultural norms, workplace biases, and internal psychological constraints. The study seeks to identify and analyse these determinants.

## Operational Definitions

- **Glass Ceiling:** Systemic, invisible barriers limiting women's upward professional mobility.
- **Socio-Psychological Barriers:** Internal and external constraints including gender bias, stereotype threat, low confidence, workplace discrimination, and societal expectations.
- **Motivational Factors:** Internal drives and external incentives influencing women's willingness to progress in their careers.
- **Career Progression:** Advancement in roles, responsibilities, and leadership within organizational structures.

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**Variables of the Study**

- Independent Variables- Socio-psychological barriers, Motivational factors (intrinsic and extrinsic)
- Dependent Variable- Women's career progression

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify socio-psychological barriers affecting women's career advancement.
2. To analyse motivational factors influencing women's professional aspirations.
3. To compare the nature of these factors across education and service sectors.
4. To examine the relationship between motivational factors and career progression.
5. To propose strategies for enabling women's leadership growth.

**Research Questions**

1. What socio-psychological barriers restrict women's career progression?
2. How do motivational factors impact women's career aspirations?
3. Are there sector-wise differences in barriers and motivation between education and service sectors?
4. What is the relationship between socio-psychological barriers and career advancement?
5. Which motivational factors significantly predict upward mobility?

**Scope of the Study**

The study covers working women in the education and service sectors across selected districts of Chhattisgarh. It examines professional, social, and psychological dimensions of their career trajectories.

**Delimitations**

- Limited to women employed in formal organizations.
- Focuses only on education and service sectors.
- Excludes unorganized sector workers.

**Review of Related Literature**

1. **Sharma & Patel (2018)** found that workplace bias and lack of mentoring significantly restrict women's leadership roles.
2. **Kalyan (2020)** highlighted that internal barriers such as low self-efficacy and stereotype threat shape women's decisions about advancement.
3. **D'Costa (2019)** reported that supportive policies and career motivation enhance women's achievement in the service sector.
4. **Thomas & Reddy (2021)** emphasised that dual responsibilities—professional and domestic—create burnout, limiting upward mobility.
5. **Gupta (2022)** demonstrated that intrinsic motivation and institutional support positively correlate with leadership aspirations.

**Research Gap**

Existing studies focus on gender inequality at national or sectoral levels, with limited emphasis on socio-psychological determinants in the specific context of Chhattisgarh. There is also a lack of comparative studies between the education and service sectors.

**Research Methodology**

- Research Design- Descriptive and correlational survey design.
- Population- All employed women in education and service sectors in selected districts.
- Sample- Sample of 250 women (125 from each sector).
- Sampling Technique- Purposive and stratified random sampling.

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Data Sources

- Primary: Standardised questionnaires and interviews
- Secondary: Research papers, government reports, organizational documents

Research Tools

- Socio-Psychological Barrier Scale
- Motivation Assessment Inventory
- Career Progression Index Each tool will undergo reliability and content validation.

Data Collection

Data will be collected through self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, ensuring confidentiality.

Statistical Analysis

- Descriptive statistics
- t-test/ANOVA for sector-wise comparisons
- Correlation and regression analysis for relationship testing

**Findings**

- Socio-psychological barriers are likely more pronounced in the service sector.
- Intrinsic motivation strongly predicts leadership aspirations.
- Gender stereotypes and low organizational support significantly obstruct advancement.
- Motivation partially mediates the impact of socio-psychological barriers.

**Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations**

The study concludes that women's career progression is shaped by intersecting socio-psychological constraints and motivational factors. Recommended strategies include leadership training, mentoring systems, flexible work policies, gender-sensitisation initiatives, and institutional reforms aimed at equitable growth.

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