PREFACE

The concept of glass ceiling has been used as a metaphor 20 years now to describe the apparently invisible barriers that prevent more than a few women from reaching the top levels of management (Linehan and Walsh, 1999). This phenomenon exists even in the 21st century when globalization and technological advances have brought about 360 degree changes in all walks of life. Though women are being included in the workforce to add diversity in the work culture, the evil is still prevalent manifold. The lion's share of leadership positions throughout the world remain a male preserve as an invisible barrier prevents women from reaching the highest corporate levels. "There is a glass ceiling in the middle of the ladder leading to the top, and it cannot be seen, but when women run into it they bump their heads and cannot move beyond it" (Mc Cormack, 1985). Compared to formal barriers to career advancement such as education or experience requirement, the glass ceiling barriers are less tangible hindrances- frequently anchored in culture, society and psychological factors - that impede women's advancement to upper management or other senior positions. Evidence of the glass ceiling has been described as invisible, covert and overt. At the root of the glass ceiling are gender-based barriers, commonly cited in the literature and noted anecdotally. While glass ceiling as a barrier has been studied extensively in the western context, this remains largely an under researched area in the Indian scenario.

The objective of this study is not only to explore if glass ceiling really exists in the Indian civil services but also to understand the male psyche; the factors they feel are responsible for impeding women's career advancement in the Indian civil services. The study is significant as it attempts to study the glass ceiling phenomenon in the Indian context and in the process examines ways of breaking the mould.

The purpose of this study is to provide an insight into an ever relevant gender diversity issue in organizations. It also focuses on cultural biases, gender stereotypes and what organizations should do in order to have a diverse senior management.