

**Labor Rights: Gender-Based Discrimination against Women in the
Workplace: Glass Ceiling
Final Report**

Summary

Research aims to identify hurdles in women's rise up the organizational ladder through the epistemic concept of the glass ceiling phenomenon. The secondary aim is to determine how the glass ceiling effect results in women's failure to secure equal representation in high-ranking executive positions in comparison to males. In Armenia, gender-based discrimination exists in many areas, including the area of labor rights. The topic of glass ceiling has been chosen to carry out the research, as there is a problem with the glass ceiling in Armenia and it is poorly studied. It increases the responsibility and importance of this fact Finding Project for showing that glass ceiling is an important issue in Armenia. The project aims to increase awareness about women's rights issues related to labor rights. The purpose of this project is also to illustrate issues that women face in their work regarding glass ceiling issues and to collect facts to prove that gender-based discrimination exists and to draw the state's attention to this issue.

Methodology: Participant observation has been a major method strategy of the Fact-Finding project. The in-depth interviews with duration of between thirty to sixty minutes were carried out with experts, victims of the glass ceiling and witness. Interviews were conducted face-to-face between the researchers and a single expert, victim or witness, so that interviewees could freely express their attitudes about the issue. Participants of the interviews have preferred to be anonymous avoiding possible risks in their workplace. Interviewees got equated with the main aim of the research - to make their voices listened and make a change in the society by the way of advocacy. The Fact-Finding project was implemented making the ground methodology of the research.

Findings and Conclusions: The private sector companies appoints only men to senior management because there is a deeply rooted belief that women are incapable of managing, not smart enough, and unable to do so. The fact that in the company generally leadership positions belong to men grounded on the stereotypical thinking about women and not on the professional values, there is a violation of the rights under ICESCR Article 7.

Men are appointed to leadership positions because men in Armenian society are more respected and their speech is weightier. Women are subjected to unequal treatment in the workplace. Women have to make the extra effort to make their voices heard, unlike men who don't need it. Employers want to see men in high positions because they think that men have leadership skills and can rule the office and other employees.

It is widely accepted that a woman should spend a lot of time with her family and children, which would hinder her professional career. The lack of time for women to have a family and pursue a career is simply the result of the stereotypical mindset of a patriarchal society. Employers use women to attract male customers using their feminine look and sexuality. This proves, that employers emphasize the importance of women's appearance, and they use women to attract clients not prioritizing their professionalism first. Here too, we see unequal treatment and unequal opportunities for women.

Educational qualification is not the most important condition to get the promotion. Men with a lack of experience and qualification get promotion much easier than women. There are no equal conditions for competition, which leaves women out of the competition. In the company, promotions are implemented without announcements about the vacancy.

ICESCR Article 3 and 7, CEDAW Article 11 and General recommendation No. 13, and ILO Convention Article 1 apply to these violations. The research shows that state failed to fulfil its obligations at 2 levels - protect and fulfil the rights of women that are enshrined by conventions signed by the state.

Recommendations: The state should provide fair and transparent monitoring in the private sector. To this end, a special body should be set up to oversee the private sector and cooperate with non-governmental organizations. The state should create a pattern and break the glass ceiling by the way of emphasizing women's importance in responsible positions and decision-making processes. The government should make strict rules and regulations to check glass ceiling, reports should be

collected from organizations regarding promotions and its basis. Awareness programmers regarding the glass ceiling should be conducted for women. For that purpose the state should provide training for female employees and raise awareness related to gendered discrimination.

The scope of the study has been narrowed to study it in more detail and in-depth. Violations of women's rights in the workplace are interconnected and stem from one another. Glass ceiling is a part of the prevailing situation in the field of women's rights in the country, so the research reflects the general situation at the private sector in Armenia. The project succeeded because the main goals that underlie the project were achieved. The concrete cases of glass ceiling were revealed and their reasons have been studied. The survey was conducted in one organization but reflects the situation in a number of other companies operating in the field. Drawing on the perspective of the social role theory, the research identifies the main causes of the glass ceiling phenomenon in the Armenian context. The results show the presence of glass ceiling, particularly characterizing its effects on the selection and promotion of the female candidates and their effectiveness. The research found that the glass ceiling was negatively related to both female effectiveness and selection and promotion.

Methodology

Participant observation has been a major method strategy of the Fact-Finding project, involving a combination of informal interviewing data being collected in a relatively unstructured and flexible manner. During the interviews with experts, were discussed possible areas that women are mostly discriminated and vulnerable. Due to these interviews and discussion were found out how glass ceiling finds its reflections in Armenia and what kind of difficulties women meet during their career and activities at work. Moreover, during the interviews were discussed possible risks that 'victims' of this Fact-Finding project will face in their workplace and how to protect them from such risks.

The in-depth interviews with duration of between thirty to sixty minutes were carried out. Interviews were conducted face-to-face between the researchers and a single expert, victim or witness, so that interviewees could freely express their attitudes about the issue and questions. Also, some of them were audio-recorded with permission. Participants of the interviews have preferred to be anonymous avoiding possible risks at their workplace; however, they agreed to mention the name of the company that they are working in. All interviewees preferred to meet in public places rather than in

the workplace or their home. We have chosen not crowded public cafes to maintain atmosphere to let them express their stories freely. They were informed that all shared information will stay confidential.

To introduce manifestations of the glass ceiling in Armenia was chosen private sector as Bank sector (VTB). To ensure the objectivity of the research and to prove that there is a violation of internationally binding obligations; interviews were implemented with employees working in different branches of the company avoiding the subjectivity.

During the Fact-Finding project, the main obstacle has been the absence of previous Armenian patterns regarding Glass Ceiling, like statistics, Data, research and so on, which could help us to consider other researchers' experience and make our research more valuable and practical. Nevertheless, to implement reliable and practical research were held meetings with experts dealing with gender-sensitive issues as NuardMinasian (Human Rights Defender) and GoharShahnazaryan (Co-founder of Women's Resource Centre NGO). Experts were very motivated to share their experience on this issue because this topic is not introduced in Armenia.

However, another obstacle was mistrust of 'victims' about the research and its influence on further resolutions. To overcome this obstacle they got equated with our previous research about gender-sensitive issues that women face on working in the service sector. Taking into consideration that in Armenia, not only men but also most women do not realize that they face discrimination at their workplace and other areas because of gendered stereotypes accepting such issues 'normal', during interviews were not used definitions as glass ceiling or gendered discrimination to be understandable. Interviewees got equated with the main aim of the research - to make their voices listened and make a change in the society by the way of advocacy. Interviews were held in the immediate environment and participants expressed their desire to share the name of the company on the purpose of making their "step to change anything and establish justice".

Background Context

The glass ceiling is a metaphor in the labor market which refers to an informal barrier through which it is hard to realize the upper limits in corporations and organizations, above which it is difficult or

impossible for career advancement of women. According to business dictionary, glass ceiling is an invisible but real barrier through which the level of advancement can be seen, but cannot be reached by a group of deserving and qualified employees. According to the monitor of UNDP Armenia implemented in August of 2019, on average, women hold 19 percent of management-level jobs in the Armenian public administration sector, whereas at administrative levels they occupy the majority of positions (56 percent as of 2016).

The Republic of Armenia is a country with quite traditional views. In Armenia, gender inequality forms part of stereotypical thinking and discrimination exist in many fields including labor market. Moreover, there are hardened gender roles that limit women's full enjoyment of their rights. Underestimation of women in society, their relatively low social status, and stereotypes about the lack of leadership qualities are the main obstacles to their leadership positions. According to another widespread opinion in Armenian society “A woman should spend more time with her family, children, and career will disturb her”. So, this shows that women are underestimated, they face additional obstacles, and as a result, they are treated unequally.

This traditional way of thinking comes from the earliest times and is still exist. Thus, there are unjustified reasons to justify a hierarchical system that is a gross violation of human rights. Over time, there have been some positive changes, but the index is still low. The perception that women's and men's gender roles are different in society and their abilities are different still exists. Women face several obstacles in the path of a successful career and compete in unequal conditions. Additionally, this is the stereotypical attitude of society towards senior position holders.

There is also the issue of political involvement: women are not sufficiently involved in the decision-making process, which makes it even harder for their voices to be listened.

Armenia is a member state of many International Covenants that provide equal rights and opportunities for men and women in the workplace, however, men continue to occupy high positions. It means that Armenia does not implement its internationally accepted commitments and obligations regarding women's labor rights and, women face gendered discrimination in their workplace and gender-based glass ceiling exists in Armenia.

Three International Human Rights Frameworks include Labor Rights and Gender-Based Discrimination against Women in the workplace which Armenia obligates: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979), International

Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966) and International Labor Organization (ILO).

CESCR

Article 3 states: the States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the present Covenant. According to ICESCR Article 7, member states should provide equal opportunities for everyone to be promoted in his/her employment.

The general comment no. 20 states the “equal and inalienable rights of all” such as, inter alia, the right to work, just and favorable conditions of work, trade union freedoms, social security, an adequate standard of living, health and education and participation in cultural life.

CEDAW

According to CEDAW Article 5 States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women.

According to CEDAW Article 11, member states should eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace and should provide equality of men and women. Armenia, as a member state of CEDAW, is obligated to take positive measures to provide the same opportunities and the right to promote women in the workplace. CEDAW, on the contrary to ICESCR, contains concrete provisions about gendered discrimination regarding the promotion of women.

The General recommendation No. 13 adopted by the CEDAW recommends to the States parties to the Convention that:

2. The state should consider the study, development and adoption of job evaluation systems based on gender-neutral criteria that would facilitate the comparison of the value of those jobs of a different nature, in which women presently predominate, with those jobs in which men presently predominate, and they should include the results achieved in their reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

ILO Convention

Article 1 states: The said policy shall aim at ensuring that there is freedom of choice of employment and the fullest possible opportunity for each worker to qualify for, and to use his skills and endowments in, a job for which he is well suited, irrespective of race, color, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin.

Women's rights are also enshrined in domestic law.

So there is a right but it is not fully realized, there are violations of women's rights, there is discrimination, unequal treatment and opportunities, and lack of appropriate conditions for exercising the rights.

Findings and Analysis

- Almost all leadership positions in the company belong to men; meanwhile, operator cashiers are exclusively women. The company appoints only men to senior management because there is a deeply rooted belief that women are incapable of managing, not smart enough, and unable to do so. "I have applied for promotion for a position of Deputy Director of the branch many times, but I have got the same results, men have been elected. Professionalism, education, experience and skills are always in the second plan, the main criterion for choice is sex." Over the past 7 years, the victim has applied for the promotion five times and has been rejected five times, despite being a trusted and experienced employee of the company. The fact that in the company generally leadership positions belong to men grounded on the stereotypical thinking about women and not on the professional values, there is a violation of the rights under ICESCR Article 7, which states that States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work. There is no opportunity for women to enjoy their rights to not be discriminated and treated equally. There is also a violation of CEDAW Article 11, according to which States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights. In this case, state failed to fulfil its obligations

at 2 levels - protect and fulfil the rights of women that are enshrined by conventions signed by the state. According to CEDAW article 5, States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices, customary, and stereotyped roles for men and women.

- Men are appointed to leadership positions because men in Armenian society are more respected and their speech is weightier. Women are subjected to unequal treatment in the workplace. Women have to make the extra effort to make their voices heard, unlike men who don't need it. Employers want to see men in high positions because they think that men have leadership skills and can rule the office and other employees. Moreover, in Armenian society “the word” of men are considered more reliable than women’s. “One man opened the door of the bank and asked something related to the conditions of credits and I answered. He listened, and asked me whether there is a man employee who can explain to him about that”. In Armenia, there are rooted stereotypes because of which women cannot feel valued in their workplace. There is a violation of ICESCR Article 3 about equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the Covenant. The Covenant also explicitly mentions the principles of non-discrimination and equality with respect to some individual rights. The state failed its obligations on the third level, fulfilment of women's rights. According to ILO Convention Article 1, the term discrimination includes any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of sex, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation. Thus unequal treatment violates that right and state failed the protection and fulfilment of rights.
- Family life is also a problem. It is widely accepted that a woman should spend a lot of time with her family and children, which would hinder her professional career. "My colleagues always say ‘Why do you need a promotion, after all, if you have no family, you will not succeed.’ Family life will not hinder my career, especially given the fact that as a Loan Officer I work harder to deal with thousands of people than if I were a Deputy Director of the branch.”The issue of maternity vacation and free time is regulated by domestic law. The lack of time for women to have a family and pursue a career is simply the result of the stereotypical mindset of a patriarchal society. Therefore, women are discriminated against

on the basis of their sex which violates the right under ICESCR Article 3 and 7 and CEDAW Article 11 regarding the elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment and CEDAW Article 5.

- Employers use women to attract male customers using their feminine look and sexuality. Mainly in the service sector employees must have a good-looking appearance to attract customers. “In our central branch are working very beautiful girls, like models, because their customers are very influential and rich clients and are very important for the bank-business, but in the other branches of the company are working women in the middle ages, however, if you want to work in the central branch you must be very beautiful, young and clever”. This proves, that employers emphasize the importance of women’ appearance, and they use women to attract clients not prioritizing their professionalism first. Here too, we see unequal treatment and unequal opportunities for women. ICESCR Article 7 states: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work which ensure, in particular: Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence. Therefore, when women are selected on the basis of their appearance and are not able to make a career, this violates their rights.
- Educational qualification is not the most important condition to get the promotion. Men with a lack of experience and qualification get promotion much easier than women. “You cannot find male employee working in the service sector, we are all girls. Men are working in a higher position, for instance, in the credit department or in the back office and so on. But it does not mean that they have higher education than women working in the service sector. There was one guy who had a bachelor’s degree and after three months of internship he started to work in the back office, but most women working in the service sector have master degree and five or more years’ experience in this sphere but cannot get a promotion, because in the credit department, or other departments, where employees get more salary are working mostly men”.

According to ICESCR Article 7, equal opportunities should be provided for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence. Generally, according to ICESCR Article 7, member states should provide equal opportunities for everyone to be

promoted in his/her employment. Despite the fact that this article does not include concrete provisions related to the elimination of gendered discrimination during the promotion in the workplace, however, the legal elements of this article create a ground for the elimination of any kind of discrimination regarding the promotion in the workplace, because this article applies for everyone. This pattern shows that women and men employees do not enjoy their rights equally and men are prioritized in the workplace. Women with 5 and more years of experience and highest education work in the service sector but men get promoted easily. In Armenia, generally, only 26 percent of high positions are occupied by women. This shows the gap of proportionality, however, the state does not take appropriate measures to ensure equality between men and women in the workplace. As a member state of ICESCR, Armenia has failed to protect women's rights from the third party and create an environment where professionalism, experience and educational qualifications will be valued rather than gender stereotypes and gender roles given by the society.

- In Armenia, men are supposed to earn more money because they are considered as home takers. This is discriminatory not only for women but also for men. Women that have a successful career are criticized: in Armenian society, women's role is negated because of rooted patriarchy. According to the national Armenian traditions 'Armenian women' should stay home with their family. These kinds of stereotypes shape public opinion regarding women's role and their abilities. Moreover, when a woman is successful no one believes that she achieved all herself. She is considered as one's 'lover' or 'daughter' or 'wife'. Because of the state's failure to implement its obligations and ensure equal opportunities for both men and women, women face discriminatory treatment during their career which has its reflection in their personal life, too. Because of the glass ceiling, most women face economic violence by their partners, which is one of the types of domestic violence.

Glass ceiling is one of the main reasons women cannot leave their violent partners because women do not have economic independence. The glass ceiling is one of the main reasons why women are less independent than men economically. But even in this situation, the Armenian government has no public policy strategy or research aimed to resolve this issue and achieve equality between men and women that will provide women equal opportunities. According to the general comment no. 20 adopted by the committee on economic, social and cultural rights the forty-second session Geneva, 4-22 May 2009, the principles of non-discrimination and equality should be provided by the state with respect to

some individual rights. Taking into consideration presented findings and patterns, the state does not implement its obligations making the ground gendered discrimination and gender-sensitive issues. The state must take into account that women are more vulnerable and protect the rights taking into consideration individual factor.

- “When a female employee makes a mistake it is problem and our manager usually makes a harsh reprimand, but when male employees make something false manager gets a bit scared to make reprimand and they resolve the problem with the joke or somehow forget about the mistake”. This pattern shows that male employees are more respected in the workplace because of gender roles that society has given them. Female employees are considered more tolerant and sometimes employees with high positions use their office to self-confirmation, but they do not treat with male employees in the same way, because men are considered stronger and resistant.
- There are no equal conditions for competition, which leaves women out of the competition. In the company, promotions are implemented without announcements about the vacancy. Moreover, if the company announces the vacancy inviting experts working in that position, in such cases it just has formal character. Often employers choose the candidate from the employees working in the company prioritizing male workers for high positions. It is discriminatory not only for women but also for job-seekers that do not have the opportunity even to compete for the vacancy. “In last month we had a vacancy of Senior Legal Counsel. Our HR specialist had placed an ad on different websites about the vacancy but they did not consider anyone because they had already chosen the candidate. They chose the lawyer of the company (male employee)”.

According to CEDAW Article 11 (b), state parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular-the right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment. So, according to CEDAW Article 11, member states should eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace and should provide equality of men and women providing equal selection criteria. Armenia, as a member state of CEDAW, is obligated to take positive measures to provide the same opportunities and the right to promote women in the workplace. CEDAW contains concrete provisions about gendered

discrimination regarding the promotion of women. This pattern shows that employers had chosen candidates for responsible positions and all ads regarding vacancy are just formal. Due to this Fact-Finding project it was found that in the VTB bank company other candidates, job seekers and company members do not have equal opportunities to compete for the position. In this case, the state has failed to implement its obligations to maintain just and fair application process for selection.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions: Being a member state of international treaties, Armenia undertakes to implement its provisions. Two International Human Rights Frameworks include Labor Rights and Gender-Based Discrimination against women in the workplace which Armenia obligate: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR, 1966). Armenia has joined these two Covenants in 1993. The State is obliged to carry out its duties at three levels: to respect, protect and fulfill those rights. Interviews and studies with experts, witnesses and victims shows that women's rights are violated and the state is not taking any steps to protect women's rights at the labor sector by allowing the private sector to violate women's rights. To conclude through the findings of Fact-Finding project aimed to introduce the private labor sector, the glass ceiling is existing in Armenia and the state has failed to fulfill its obligations at two levels: protect and fulfill.

- The fact that in the company generally leadership positions belong to men grounded on the stereotypical thinking about women and not on the professional values, there is a violation of the rights under ICESCR Article 7, which states that States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work. There is no opportunity for women to enjoy their rights to not be discriminated and treated equally. State violates its obligations under CEDAW Article 5 according to which States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of

conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices, customary, and stereotyped roles for men and women. There is also a violation of CEDAW Article 11, according to which States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights. In this case, state failed to fulfil its obligations at 2 levels - protect and fulfil the rights of women that are enshrined by conventions signed by the state.

- The patterns show that there is a violation of ICESCR Article 3 about equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights set forth in the Covenant. The Covenant also explicitly mentions the principles of non-discrimination and equality with respect to some individual rights. The state failed its obligations on the third level, fulfilment of women's rights. According to ILO Convention Article 1, the term discrimination includes any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of sex, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation. Thus unequal treatment violates that right and state failed the protection and fulfilment of rights.
- The lack of time for women to have a family and pursue a career is simply the result of the stereotypical mindset of a patriarchal society. Therefore, women are discriminated against on the basis of their sex which violates the right under ICESCR Article 3 and 7 and CEDAW Article 11 regarding the elimination of discrimination against women in the field of employment.
- ICESCR Article 7 states: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of just and favorable conditions of work which ensure, in particular: Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence. Therefore, when women are selected on the basis of their appearance and are not able to make a career, this violates their rights.
- In Armenia, generally, only 26 percent of high positions are occupied by women. This shows the gape of proportionality, however, the state does not take appropriate measures to ensure equality between men and women in the workplace. As a member state of ICESCR, Armenia has failed to protect women's rights from the third party and create an environment where

professionalism, experience and educational qualifications will be valued rather than gender stereotypes and gender roles given by the society.

- In Armenia, generally, only 26 percent of high positions are occupied by women. This shows the gape of proportionality, however, the state does not take appropriate measures to ensure equality between men and women in the workplace. As a member state of ICESCR, Armenia has failed to protect women's rights from the third party and create an environment where professionalism, experience and educational qualifications will be valued rather than gender stereotypes and gender roles given by the society.
- The patterns show that male employees are more respected in the workplace because of gender roles that society has given them. Female employees are considered more tolerant and sometimes employees with high positions use their office to self-confirmation, but they do not treat with male employees in the same way, because men are considered stronger and resistant.
- According to CEDAW Article 11 (b), state parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular-the right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment. So, according to CEDAW Article 11, member states should eliminate discrimination against women in the workplace and should provide equality of men and women providing equal selection criteria. Armenia, as a member state of CEDAW, is obligated to take positive measures to provide the same opportunities and the right to promote women in the workplace. CEDAW contains concrete provisions about gendered discrimination regarding the promotion of women. This pattern shows that employers had chosen candidates for responsible positions and all ads regarding vacancy are just formal. Due to this Fact-Finding project it was found that in the VTB bank company other candidates, job seekers and company members do not have equal opportunities to compete for the position. In this case, the state has failed to implement its obligations to maintain just and fair application process for selection.

Recommendations: *Armenian government should accept that glass Ceiling issue exists in Armenia and take steps to find out the main reasons and obstacles of the state to overcome gender based*

discrimination in labor market. The state should implement internationally enshrined obligations and take steps to introduce private sector aimed to find out the mechanisms to protect women's rights.

- The state should overcome inadequate reporting systems that address the glass ceiling and make public policy strategy aimed to provide fair and transparent monitoring in the private sector and should keep the third party accountable in case of women's rights violations to prevent further infringements. To this end, a special body should be set up to oversee the private sector and cooperate with non-governmental organizations.
- To overcome the glass ceiling issue the state should contribute to women's participation in decision-making processes.
- The state should provide financial support for research to measure the effectiveness of various organizational strategies to retain, develop and advance women. The state should increase financial support for academic programs to increase the representation of women in 'non-traditional' fields and positions.
- The state should create a pattern and break the glass ceiling by the way of emphasizing women's importance in responsible positions and decision-making processes. The state should follow the provisions that provide gender equality in the workplace and break gender-based stereotypes which will change the 'national' thinking.
- The state should encourage NGO sector and women unions should be formed to raise voice against the glass ceiling. The government should make strict rules and regulations to check glass ceiling, reports should be collected from organizations regarding promotions and its basis.
- Awareness programmers regarding the glass ceiling should be conducted for women. For that purpose the state should provide training for female employees and raise awareness related to gendered discrimination. The state should draft and implement accountability programs and successful planning to achieve gender equality and overcome gender-based glass ceiling. Due to the education people should have the opportunity to be equated with human rights, gender equality and sexuality aimed to prepare the person for responsible life in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of genders

Appendix A & B: Informed Consent Statement, Questions, Summaries of Testimony

Experts

Interviews with experts helped to identify in which areas women are more targeted, how to protect victims from risks and experts helped to find some valuable data for the study. During the interviews, the experts commented on the background of the problem, helped to understand the nature and source of the stereotypical thinking and how gender roles affect women's labor rights. Based on interviews with experts, it was decided to choose the rights of women working in the private sector. According to the expert, the private sector is more discriminated, as private companies themselves employ staff and are often lead by discriminatory tendencies. They also assisted in the selection of organizations that could provide assistance to victims if needed.

Victim 1

After receiving a bachelor's and master's degree in economics, M. A. began working at VTB Bank, where she worked for 11 years. After 7 years of service as a Loan Officer, years of experience and skills, she wanted to move forward and develop her career. However, five years of experience have been unsuccessful, as men have been appointed to higher positions despite insufficient experience and abilities. Their lack of professional skills is proved by the fact that they often asked the M. A. to do work instead of them since they were not able to carry out their duties. Thus, having sacrificed all the necessary skills, experience, and skills for eleven years, she worked as a credit specialist and failed to develop a career and at least step up to become a Branch Manager Assistant. whereas men were appointed to that position, who were professionally inferior.

Victim 2

S. H. has worked in the same company for 7 years in the same position (customer service department). She has not applied for promotion because she thinks that she will not be chosen. To the question of why she thinks so, she answered. “In Armenia, it is hard to find work. I am happy that I work and have income, I do not need problems, and maybe one day I will be fired because of that. I try to maintain good relationships with my chiefs”. S. H., aged 32 years old, is not married and lives with her parents. “Now I do not need to ask for money to my parents, it would be worse if I did not have work and income. My neighbors, parents and relatives do not lose the chance to remind me that I should marry and create my ‘own’ family”. S. H. is afraid to lose her job because of many reasons, that's why she does not apply for promotion and does not complain about the unfair things that she mentions in the workplace (these incidents are mentioned in the findings).

Victim 3

S. H. (victim 2) helped researchers to maintain contact with the K. T. who left work after working in the same position for 9 years. K. T. is 34 years old and got her Master degree in Finance and Marketing. She has participated in international trainings and has got the qualification of a trainer as a Marketing specialist. “It was very offensive to see that people who don't even know how to manage their work were working in higher positions and were earning 2 times more salary”. K. T., in contrast to S. H. (victim 2), has applied for promotion to become a senior Marketing specialist in the company twice. “I was in good relationships with my colleagues and it was very difficult for me to quit my job, but I was offended when I was rejected twice. So, I decided to quit my job. If the candidate is more experienced and qualified I would accept that and I would understand, but they chose employee who was asking me how to work”. K. T. told that she was not chosen because she was married. “In this position, employees have business trips during the year two or more times. I

was in the birthday party of my colleague and spoke with our manager about the new employee, and the manager started to explain to me that maybe my husband would not agree to let me go to that business trips and they needed to find male employee”. Now K. T. does not work and tries to find a more reliable company to work.

Witness

Participants of the interviews are working in different branches of the company, additionally, to introduce the strategy of the company regarding promotions and candidate-selections, interview with the witness was held with an assistant of HR specialist of the company, to find out the general strategy of the company regarding this issue. To make the facts provided by victims more credible meeting with the witness was very important to finalize the phenomenon of the glass ceiling in Armenia in the private sector. “When there is a need to find employees not in high positions HR specialist is independent. For instance, every day we have interviews with job-seeker for a position like in the service sector and HR can choose the candidate for the internship. After 3 months of internship, they start to work in the company”. The witness did not mention concrete positions, but she noted that in case of hiring employees for high positions HR specialist cannot act independently and should discuss the results of interview with the chief of the bank. “The final decision is made by the chief. Sometimes, there is no point to look through all papers and CVs of the candidates, because commonly, if we need to hire specialist for responsible positions the chief has favorite candidates for the post”. Speaking about gender-sensitive issues witness mentioned that they consider social and family status of the candidate. To the questions whether family status is important both for men and women she mentioned that social status is important when they consider female candidate because sometimes if the candidate is a newly married woman and plans to have child, it means that she will quit the job from 1 year or more. “When the company hires employee they start to work better after one or more years. We cannot change employees often if we want to achieve good

results in work”. The witness mentioned that very often students do their internships and after that, they get a job in the company in junior positions. But if a newly married woman applies for the job they consider her social status.

Discussing promotion and candidate-selection processes the witness mentioned. “We write reports about our monitoring regarding employees and their achievements, but very often we get informed that employee got the promotion and our only duty is to prepare appropriate documents”. She told, that for high positions they get mostly CVs of male candidates. “To apply for high positions one should have career achievements and experience, but sometimes women cannot overcome the first step and make their career line to apply for such high positions”.