

## **The Impact of the "Glass Ceiling" on Women Employed in Florida Jails**

Alma R. Cornish

Gender inequity in the workplace is deeply ingrained, fueled by social orientation and societal expectations. Despite some progress, women still face major obstacles in such male-dominated areas as law enforcement and corrections and find it difficult to break into the ranks of management. This paper, in a review of related literature, found that women are denied training, lack agency-sponsored opportunities for networking and get stopped by traditional organizational behavior. Surveys show that more than half of the professional and support staff in jails are women, which means women hold the majority of nursing, counseling and secretarial positions. But women comprise just 22 percent of the total number of corrections officers and about 11.5 percent of senior managers, such as directors, captains and lieutenants. Even in the lower rank of first-line supervisor, women hold just 17 percent of the posts compared to men with 84 percent. Yet, by the year 2000, demographic studies show women will comprise 52 percent of the total population. They already are the majority in Florida. Thus, it is necessary, not from a feminist viewpoint but from a human resource perspective, to develop more women to take executive positions in the area of corrections. It is essential that the nation's jails not only make women officers welcome but nurture them and prepare them for leadership roles. The workplace must change organizational cultures that present subtle and not-so-subtle barriers to women managers.