

Working Women and Their Professional Life in Modern Society

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ABSTRACT

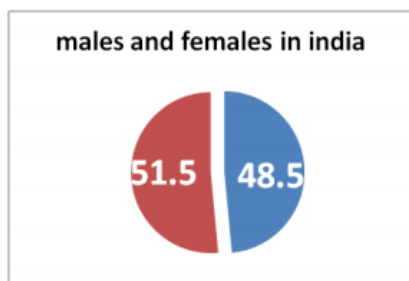
India is a traditional country and there is diversity in religions, culture and customs. Role of the women in India mostly is household and limited to domestic issues. In some cases women can find employment as nurses, doctors, teachers the caring and nurturing sectors. But even if well qualified women engineers or managers or geologists are available, preference will be given to a male of equal qualification. The present study investigated to identify the factors preventing women employees from aspiring for higher post and challenges & problems faced by women workers. Further the study try to explain the real condition of Indian working women and also make an effort to clear main problems of working women.

Keywords-- Women Empowerment, Education, Health, Socio-Economic Status. Crimes Against Women, Policy Implications

Major parts of Indian women are allowed to work; still they face some problems in workplace and family. The problems faced in their work place are Indian working women do not get the respect from their male colleagues in the workplace. In case of married working women is they are not allowed by family members to go for business tour. Gender discrimination is another problem faced by women in case of pay. In some companies women employees are paid less salary than men. Even women professional are in high position in their office, they have to return from office in correct time, cook, clean and look after their family affairs. This makes them more stress and leads to some health problems. Another most difficult problem faced by working women who have small children is they forced to leave their child in daycare or in hands maid on whom they have little faith. This creates more tension in them and less concentrate on their work. Although working women hired maid to do their household work they have to give more pay. Working women are not able to attend family function due to lack of leave and also not able to give proper care to family members. This research is to find out more challenges faced by working women.

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, women represent over 40% of the global labour force. Approximately 70% of women in developed countries and 60% in developing countries are engaged in paid employment. Worldwide, more women than ever before are completing higher levels of education. Better job opportunities have increased many women's independence and resulted in a new status and role in their families and society. In India, women's are becoming educated at very fast speed, and also doing different kinds of jobs in different fields. Following is some statistics of women in India. As per Census 2011, the final population of India is 1210.57 million comprising 587.45 million (48.5%) females and 623.12 million (51.5 %) males.



Source : Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Government of India

II. BACKGROUND

While a majority of the women still face discrimination and gender bias, in the last few decades, the number of women successful in politics, technology and business etc. is definitely on the rise. Society has started seeing women in a different perspective. They work as lawyers, nurses, doctors, social workers, teachers, secretaries, managers and officers etc. There is no profession today where women are not employed. However, it is true that working women have to face problems by virtue of their sex. For centuries women have been subjected to exploitation and torture, physically, sexually and mentally. There are innumerable challenge and problems faced by them both at home and workplace. What we generally see today, in addition to various media and journal reports is that in the workplace women generally face mental stress, sexual harassment, discriminatory practices, safety and security issues etc (Martin, 1989). India's patriarchal society thinks of women only as homemakers and sexual objects and is generally subjected to exploitation and torture (Dube, 2001).

III. EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR WOMEN IN INDIA

The increase in the number of women in the labor market signifies an important trend regarding women's employment. This has been occurring alongside increases in labor force and workforce, especially for urban women, although rural women workers predominate in terms of participation rates and overall magnitude. The increasing share of women's participation in the labor force and its significant contribution to household income as well as GDP require some policy attention be paid to the gender dimensions of employment. The eleventh Five Year Plan document for the first time in the history of Indian planning recognizes women not only as equal citizens but as 'agents of sustained socio-economic growth and change' (GOI, 2008, p. 5). A multi-pronged approach is emphasized to address issues concerning women workers, such as provision of basic entitlements and strengthening of institutional mechanisms.

The increase in the growth of employment appears to be much higher for female workers compared to male workers. Even where the proportion of working women as reflected in the female work participation rate may be low, the absolute numbers have significantly increased, given the rate of population growth over time. The increase in work opportunities during the early years of the new millennium has been to the tune of 9.3 million jobs per annum (from 1999-2000 to 2004-05). This acceleration in employment growth from 1.25 per cent per annum (1993-94 to 1999-2000) to 2.62 per cent per annum in the period 1999-2000 to 2004-05 (GOI, 2008) has been beneficial to women's participation as well. Of the 46 million job opportunities created from 1999-2000 to 2004-05 (compared to 24 million in the earlier period, i.e., 1993-94 to 1999-2000), nearly 15 million women joined the workforce. Urban areas

almost doubled their number of women workers, while in rural areas women workers increased from 9 to 12 million. Are these signs of a gradual but definite wind of change with more women entering the labour market? This positive change is noted more forcefully in the urban context where requisite educational inputs and modern thinking vis-à-vis women's work is increasingly becoming noticeable. Rural agriculture is increasingly drawing women's labour supplies, with over four-fifths of the women in rural areas working in agriculture. This gains significance amidst the declining share of male workers (from 74 per cent in 1993-94 to 66 per cent in 2004-05). Thus it seems that women in rural areas are finding it harder to shift away from agriculture. Involvement of women in agriculture is largely as cultivators/farmers as well as agricultural laborers. However, there has been a slight decline in the share of women as agricultural laborers, while their share among cultivators has increased. In urban areas, women have achieved substantially higher growth of employment in manufacturing and have been able to increase their share, especially after 1999-2000 (from 24 per cent to over 28 per cent in 2004-05). Thus, in urban areas, the share of female workers in manufacturing has increased substantially while that of male workers has not. Even in the services sector, women have gained in terms of employment, especially in the domestic and personal services category.

IV. PROBLEMS FACED BY WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA

Work and family are the two most important aspects in women's lives. Balancing work and family roles has become a key personal and family issue for many societies. There are many facets in working mother's lives that subject to stresses. They deal with home and family issues as well as job stress on a daily basis.

Table 1: Perception of prevalence of sexual harassment or underestimation on the basis of gender (in nos.)

| | No. Of Respondents | % |
|-----|--------------------|----|
| Yes | 40 | 47 |
| No | 35 | 53 |

Inference: According to the above information 53% of females agreed that sometimes they felt hesitant to work with male colleagues and 47% said that they were not comfortable with male colleagues. The reason for such high percentage of women not feeling comfortable working with their male colleagues could be their lack of self confidence, or the inherent distrust for men in our society, reinforced

down the years by negative experiences and general awareness.

Most women in India work and contribute to the economy in one form or another, much of their work is not documented or accounted for in official statistics. Women plow fields and harvest crops while working on farms, women weave and make handicrafts while working in

household industries, women sell food and gather wood while working in the informal sector. Additionally, women are traditionally responsible for the daily household chores (e.g., cooking, fetching water, and looking after children). Although the cultural restrictions women face are changing, women are still not as free as men to participate in the formal economy. In the past, cultural restrictions were the primary impediments to female employment now however; the shortage of jobs throughout the country contributes to low female employment as well. The Indian census divides workers into two categories: "main" and "marginal" workers. Main workers include people who worked for 6 months or more during the year, while marginal workers include those who worked for a shorter period. Many of these workers are agricultural laborers. Unpaid farm and family enterprise workers are supposed to be included in either the main worker or marginal worker category, as appropriate. Women account for a small proportion of the formal Indian labor force, even though the number of female main workers has grown faster in recent years than that of their male counterparts.

Occupational problems as stress:

In women Occupational stress is stress involving work. Work and family are the two most important aspects in women's lives. Balancing work and family roles has become a key personal and family issue for many societies. There are many facets in working mother's lives that subject to stresses. They deal with home and family issues as well as job stress on a daily basis.

Mental harassment

It is an age old convention that women are less capable and inefficient in working as compared to men. The attitude which considers women unfit for certain jobs holds back women. In spite of the constitutional provisions, gender bias creates obstacles in their recruitment. In addition to this, the same attitude governs injustice of unequal salaries for the same job. The true equality has not been achieved even after 61 years of independence. Working in such conditions inevitably puts strain on women to greater extent as compared to men, thus making them less eager in their career.

Sexual harassment:

Today, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. They face sexual harassment on way on transports, at working places, educational institutions and hospitals, at home and even in police stations when they go to file complaints. It is shocking that the law protectors are violating and outraging modesty of women. Most of the women tend to be concentrated in the poor service jobs whereas men are in an immediate supervisory position, which gives them an opportunity to exploit their subordinate women.

Discrimination at Workplace

However, Indian women still face blatant discrimination at their workplaces. They are often deprived of promotions and growth opportunities at work places but this doesn't apply to all working women. A majority of working women continue to be denied their right to equal pay, under the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 and are underpaid in comparison to their male colleagues. This is usually the case in factories and labor-oriented industries.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The first objective of this paper i.e., to study and analyse the problems faced by working women in Haryana. The important dimensions were considered from the literature survey for the problems faced by working women. Those are: Hesitation, Gender Discrimination, Salary, Insecurity, Family Support and Stress. Each dimension was measured nearly four to five variables using Likert scale 1 to 5. The data was collected using questionnaire for the sample of fifty working women in Haryana. The sample size was restricted to fifty due to feasibility, ease and involvement of cost. The reliability test or Cronbach's Alpha was conducted for the above said dimensions. This test is generally used for internal consistency of data collected using the questionnaire. The reliability test was conducted using SPSS (Software Package for Social Sciences) version 14 and results are shown in the below table:

| Dimension | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Hesitation | 0.67 |
| Gender Discrimination | 0.62 |
| Salary | 0.65 |
| Insecurity | 0.71 |
| Family Support | 0.69 |
| Stress | 0.66 |

Consequences of Problems Faced by Women

| Physical | Psychological & Behavioral |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches • Stomach problems • Eating disorders • Sleep disturbances • Fatigue • Muscle aches & pains • High Blood Pressure • Heart disease | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serious depression • Inefficiency in work • Suicidal behavior • Domestic violence • Anxiety • Irritability • Low morale • Depression • Alcohol & drug use • Feeling powerless |

Initiatives taken to reduce working stress By govt. (ministry of labour and employment)

VI. CONCLUSION

The solution of the problem of occupational stress in working women in India lie in the change of traditional mind- set of the society that male are the bread winners and females are the house- keepers. So there is a need to change the attitude of the employers, policy makers, politicians and family members. They should provide the tension free environment to working women at place of work as well as at home. Women in India have an important role to play as far as economic development of country is concerned. The government has increased the importance of women by adopting various schemes and programs. Women should also be encouraged to take the benefits of policy measures introduced by the govt.

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