

CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN WORKERS IN INDIA

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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, 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 tries to explain the real condition of Indian working women and also make an effort to clear main problems of working women. The present study undertakes to investigate the so far unexplored problem of Indian working women to balance their personal & professional life now a days. Studies have identified several variables like the size of family, the age of children, the work hours and the level of social support, etc.,

Keywords

Women Empowerment, Working women, Work-Personal Life Balance, Challenges, Problems, traditional, women workers.

Introduction

In the history of human development, women have been as vital in the history making as men have been. In fact higher status for women vis-a-vis employment and work performed by them in a society is a significant indicator of a nation's overall progress. There are many reasons and problems that forced Indian's women to work. The financial demands on the Indian families are increasing day by day. Cost of living, expenses on education of children, and cost of housing properties in India raised and these reason force every family in India to look for ways and means of increasing the household income. As a result, women in India who were mostly known as homemakers are forced to go for jobs and take up even careers that were considered only suitable for men such as working in night shifts. Working women i.e., those who are in paid employment, face problems at the workplace just by virtue of their being women. Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. The attitude which considers women fit for certain jobs and not others, causes prejudice in those who recruit employees. Thus women find employment easily as nurses, doctors, teachers, secretaries or on the assembly line. Even when well qualified women are available, preference is given to a male candidate of equal qualifications.

A gender bias creates an obstacle at the recruitment stage itself. When it comes to remuneration, though the law proclaims equality, it is not always practiced. The inbuilt conviction that women are incapable of handling arduous jobs and are less efficient than men influences the payment of unequal salaries and wages for the same job. But in most families her salary is handed over to the father, husband or in-laws. So the basic motive for seeking employment in order to gain economic independence is nullified in many women's case. Problems of gender bias set women in the industrial sector when technological advancement results in retrenchment of employees. Women workers in India are faced with a lot more challenges than their counterparts in the other countries. Besides so many efforts from past years, female section of society is deprived in compared to male section. They are not given first priority in social and economic decisions in her own family. According to United Nations Development Programmer (UNDP) report, women are involved in doing 67% work of world; still they are socially and economically deprived. They are receiving only 10% of the universal income and have 1% part in global assets. This discrimination also persists in their work place in unorganized sector. In informal sector, women workers don't get same wages for same nature of work for same hours done by men. They are exploited at workplace. They are some acts i.e. The Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008, Domestic workers Welfare and Social Security Act, 2010 etc. but due to their improper implementation, women workers are forced to work and live in miserable conditions in unorganized sector. In India mostly it is women who have to do household as cook, lean the house, do the dishes, wash clothes, care of children and men do not share on most of the household works. Men do that work that is to be dealt outside the house. Now a day there is increasing need for getting some income for the family then women have to work harder. Women workers have to handle Persecution's at their work place, sometimes just over look things to ensure that their job is not jeopardized in anyway. Many Indian families are still living as joint families along with the parents and in-laws. This adds to their stress further because they have to please all the family members of her husband. Listen to their complaints that they make against her and turn deaf ears towards them and so on. Overall, majority of women in India look towards or live in the hope that things will change.

Review of Literature

Review of related literature is an important research effort as it provides comprehensive understanding of what is already known about the topic.

Jyoti, Kiran, (1994) (6) in her book "Women Labourforce and National Product" emphasized on contribution of women employees in national development and growth. The book covers significant characteristics of women employees which make them more comfortable at job place. The author tries

to point out the participation of women employees at different level. The book explained adverse effect of gender based discrimination on the overall performance of women employees. It also stated the various problems faced by women employees are more practical and reliable.

Narasaiah, Lakshmi, (1999) (7) in her book “Small Scale Industry” has given detailed information about the procedure of small scale industrial unit. It has explained that small scale industries contribute significantly to the straightening of the industrial structure. It serves as seed beds of entrepreneurship. They serve the developing economy not only by their output of goods but also by functioning as a nursery of entrepreneurial and management talent. The book stated that the role of small scale industrial units is of decisive importance in any economy. According to Narasaiah Lakshmi such industries lead to the creation of employment opportunities as a dispersed basis not only in large cities and towns but also in smaller towns and far flung regions. The book covers various suggestions to remove problems of unemployment from rural as well as urban areas.

Nath, Madhuri, (2003) (8) in her book “Rural Women Workforce in India”, highlighted the role of women in rural transformation of India. Mrs. Nath has fully justified the inevitability of the effective use of rural women workforce in dynamics of development of rural India. The book covers various problems faced by women employees which will help in making women movement in India more effective and will be proved helpful for women welfare in transitional society.

Das, Divya (2010) (9) in her article work life balance of women professionals edited in Advance in management monthly journal illustrated the current workplace conditions and some of the reasons causing imbalances in work and life. The article covers life of working women and the hazards and problems they face at work and in family life. Factor analysis was performed on the survey and it was found that two factors namely psychological and cognitive factor and organizational climate factor are the causes of work life imbalances among women workers. The book covers a very intelligent conclusion which recommends that organizations may use the insights to mitigate voluntary turnover among women employees and increase the workforce diversity. Mitra (1997) analyses the causes and comes to some important conclusions: “Relationship between women and professions could be perceived as one of women in full-fledged professions, medicine, law, academics, etc and another in the semi-professions-like nursing, teaching, clerks etc.”

Okolo (1989) studied that another obstacle is the lack of role models of executive women due to their scarce presence in top managerial positions. Likewise, this study found out that there is no gender difference in organizational hierarchies when a woman has already gained access to them. “The lack of impact in women can occur because executive and managerial women have developed survival features becoming immune to the effects of men’s hierarchies. A hierarchy composed by men solely

may have an effect upon the election of a managerial board, and then its further influence is not very strong.”

Ronald J. Burke, Mustafa Koyuncu and Lisa Fiksenbaum (2010) examined the relationship of the perceived presence of organizational practices designed to support women’s career advancement and their work attitudes and satisfaction and their psychological well-being. Data were collected from 286 women in managerial and professional jobs working in a large Turkish bank, a 72 percent response rate. Five organizational experiences were considered: negative attitudes towards women, equal treatment, support, career barriers and male standards. Women reporting more supportive organizational experiences and practices were more engaged in their work, more job and career satisfied, and indicated greater levels of psychological well-being.”

Wentling (2003) showed that the twin roles of women cause tension and conflict due to her social structure which is still more dominant. In her study on working women in Delhi, she has shown that “traditional authoritarian set up of Hindu social structure continues to be the same basically and hence women face problem of role conflict change in attitudes of men and women according to the situation can help to overcome their problem.”

Sophia J. Ali (2011) “investigated the challenges facing women in career development. She found that most of the women employees were dissatisfied with career development programmers and women were discriminated against in career development opportunities. The study recommended that organizations should strive to ensure that career development programmers were set to enhance career development among-st women employees. Top management should also be committed to the career development of women, and organizations should also introduce affirmative action to urgently address career development of women.”

Objective of the study

To identify the problems faced by women workers in India.

To clear main problems of working women.

To identify the factors preventing women employees from aspiring for higher post and challenges & problems faced by women workers.

Methodology

The method used in this paper is descriptive-evaluative method. The study is mainly review based. It is purely supported by secondary source of data, i.e. books, journals, papers and articles and internet.

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'. 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-a-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.

India's economy has undergone a substantial transformation since the country's independence in 1947. Agriculture now accounts for only one-third of the gross domestic product (GDP), down from 59 percent in 1950, and a wide range of modern industries and support services now exist. In spite of these changes, agriculture continues to dominate employment, employing two-thirds of all workers. India faced economic problems in the late 1980s and early 1990s that were exacerbated by the Persian Gulf Crisis. Starting in 1992, India began to implement trade liberalization measures. The economy has grown-the GDP growth rate ranged between 5 and 7 percent annually over the period and considerable progress has been made in loosening government regulations, particularly restrictions on private businesses. Different sectors of economy have different experiences about the impact of the reforms. In a country like India, productive employment is central to poverty reduction strategy and to bring about economic equality in the society. But the results of unfettered operation of market forces are not always equitable, especially in India, where some groups are likely to be subjected to disadvantage as a result of globalization. Women constitute one such vulnerable group. Since globalization is introducing technological inputs, women are being marginalized in economic activities, men traditionally being offered new scopes of learning and training. Consequently, female workers are joining the informal sector or casual labor force more than ever before. For instance, while new rice technology has given rise to higher use of female labor, the increased work-load for women is in operations that are unrecorded, and often unpaid, since these fall within the category of home production activities. The weaker sections, especially the women, are denied the physical care they deserve(5). There is, thus, hardly any ability for the majority of Indian women to do valuable functioning; the "capability" to choose from alternatives is conspicuous by absence. 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.

Problems faced by working women in India

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. World Health Organization's (WHO) definition Occupational or work-related stress "is the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope."

Reasons of occupational stress

Imbalance between work and family leads to occupational stress. Imbalance between work and family life arises due to a number of factors. Various factors are following.

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.

No safety of working women while traveling

Typically, the orthodox mindset in the Indian society makes it difficult for a working woman to balance her domestic environment with the professional life. In some families, it may not be acceptable to work after six o'clock. Those families that do accept these working hours may experience considerable anxiety every day about a woman's safety while traveling. So many issues affect a working woman because she is closely protected or watched by her family and the society.

Lack of Family Support

Lack of proper family support is another issue that working women suffers from. At times, the family doesn't support women to leave the household work and go to office. They also resist for women working till late in office which also hampers the performance of the women and this also affects their promotion. Insufficient Maternity Leaves Insufficient maternity leave is another major issue that is faced by a working mother. This not only affects the performance of women employees at work, but is also detrimental to their personal lives.

Job insecurity

Unrealistic expectations, especially in the time of corporate reorganizations, which sometimes puts unhealthy and unreasonable pressures on the employee, can be a tremendous source of stress and suffering. Increased workload extremely long work hours and intense pressures to perform at peak levels all the time for the same pay, can actually leave an employee physically and emotionally drained. Excessive travel and too much time away from family also contribute to an employee's stressors.

Workplace adjustment

Adjusting to the workplace culture, whether in a new company or not, can be intensely stressful. Making oneself adapt to the various aspects of workplace culture such as communication patterns of the boss as well as the co-workers, can be lesson of life.

Maladjustments to workplace

Cultures may lead to subtle conflicts with colleagues or even with superiors. In many cases office politics or gossips can be major stress inducers.

Other reasons

It include Personal demographics like age, level of education, marital status, number of children, personal income and number of jobs currently had where you work for pay and Work situation characteristics like job tenure, size of employing organization, hours worked per week.

Conclusion

Now a day's women workers are improved and promote in their workplace and in technological work. Trade Union should try to improve the conditions for woman's workers in many parts for example maternity leave is easily give to women and help the woman for achieve higher post actually women's nature is promotion to gain high quality in every field but if the condition is not ready then the reduction of promotion and optimization in work will be occur and etc. Women workers are often subject to sexual harassment then the Government should put strict rules for these types of crimes, also public transport system sometimes danger for woman and Government should put more Inspection. Traditionally people think that men should only work and gain money and women should work as house hold, but the financial demands on the Indian families. Fundamental change is required in attitudes of employees, family members and public.

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