

## GLOBAL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING SCIENCE AND RESEARCHES A STUDY ON PROBLEM AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING WOMEN

Neetu Anand\*

\*Asst.Professor, Department of Computer Science, Maharaja Surajmal Institute, New Delhi

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### ABSTRACT

As we all know role of working women has changed throughout the world due to sometimes economic conditions and social demands too. This has resulted in a scenario in which working women have terrible pressure to develop a career as robust as their male counterparts. As we all know that women are born multitaskers, they always increasing working pressure in taking a toll on the working women leaving them with less time for themselves. In today's the increasing responsibilities on the personal front with the technological blessings like mobile phones, notepads, etc, it keeps their personal life integrated with work life and it also creates a stress on personal and professional fronts. This affects the person's physical, social and emotional well being, it is necessary to balance the life between personal and professional to have a good quality of life. Different women had different motives for working, different dreams and aspirations, different perceptions of the future, different support systems and different hurdles, however, there was also a deep rooted commonality. Looking beneath the surface many common themes and trends emerged for women with different backgrounds, different personality types and varied levels of education, seniority and experience. This paper is an attempt to explore the world life balance between personal and professional life of working women and to management of professional or working life of women. The tool used for the study is the manual on problem faced by working women in their professional life, are examined in the study. Data were subjected to Descriptive statistics, and it was found the problem faced by working women in different types of peoples in terms of work life balance.

**Keywords:** women security, Working women, generation of women.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The industrial revolution in part was fuelled by the economic necessity of many women, single as well as married, to find waged work outside their home. Women mostly found jobs in domestic services, textile factories, and piece workshop etc. They also worked in the coal mines, for some the industrial revolution provided independent wages, mobility and a better standard of living.

For the majority, however factory work in the early years of 19<sup>th</sup> century resulted in a life of hardship; women in India have come a long way after Independence from just skilled homemakers but being at par with their male counterparts. From the tentative beginnings made by the pioneer women in the fifties we saw the emergence of the Y2K women - ambitious, confident and more in control of their destiny. These findings were based on our experiences in teaching, research, numerous workshops and case studies. We will explore this theme further by discussing a survey conducted by the authors specifically for the purpose of receiving firsthand the views of working women of different generations who lived through the development phases explored earlier. This is the new generation of women, who wants to pursue their dream carrier. But this type of life is not a bed of rose for all.

More conflicts arises with the working mother too. One has to fulfil the demand at work followed by various demands at home. In today's scenario the husband and wife both work together creating a balance with their work life as well as at home with their children. But it is still different for women as she has to pay multiple roles of a look, a family maid, a tutor, a nurse as well as later to the demands of office works. This can leave a working women stressed and anxious, more so the family is not supportive.

To achieve the objectives we conducted a survey of different women, whom were met personally for interviews each lasting for approximately 2 hours. The objective of the survey was a qualitative assessment and therefore candidates were chosen and interviewed in considerable depth and detail. Rather than asking people to fill out a form and analysing the results thereafter, we chose a different approach. Each participant was requested to present their thoughts and views using a common frame. The participants were sent a brief outline describing the type of information we were seeking 3 prior to meeting with them. We asked for their personal and educational background, influences of role models and their dreams and aspirations during their formative years.

## II. UNIQUE CONFIGURATION OF WOMEN ACROSS THREE GENERATIONS

### 1. First Generation Women

Awareness among parents of the need to bring up their daughters in a manner that they can stand on their own feet. [1]

- Women had educational opportunities although there was some discrimination compared to male siblings.
- Parents over protected and sheltered the female child. The child struggled for freedom.
- Female children looked to their fathers for professional guidance and to their mothers for softer values.
- At the workplace the first generation women had only male role models - Boss, Professors, etc.

### 2. Second Generation Women

- Many women had working parents. Grand parents assumed importance in child rearing. Some women had working mothers and the first female role models emerged.
- Mothers increasingly encouraged their daughters in terms of education and in terms of pursuing a career.
- These women had open minded parents and gradually gained opportunities for overall development. They often asserted their right to choice.
- In their fathers they admired ambitiousness and qualities of the support and encouragement given to them from early age. In mothers, the art of balancing two roles –house and work, the power of acceptance and adjustment were some of the qualities they looked for.
- Both male and female role models were now possible at home and at workplace. However the mentors were primarily men and were usually projected as the father figure [2,3]. Encouraging husbands started becoming the norm rather than exception. However the hangover of a male dominated system persisted in extended families as well as at the workplace. Male colleagues at the workplace had yet to come to grips in relating with working women and usually tried to relate to them using social frames i.e., as father figures, brothers, etc.

### 3. New Generation Women

- These women had unprecedented opportunity to learn and grow. They had significant exposure to the world due to media, travel and IT[4].
- Expectations of parents and society from female and male children were not as different as in the past.
- Parental influences continued to be important. However, these women had early exposure to other sources of inspiration and ideas. They are children of the information age.
- Admiration for qualities in people of being self-made, independent, ethical and fair were prominent in these women. Parents of these women were open-minded and sensitive to the needs of their children.
- At the workplace enabling technologies and more flexible attitudes within the organisation facilitated the professional progress of these women. The shift in business towards services and the growing importance of knowledge workers created new opportunities for working women.

#### Objectives of the study

- To study the status of working women in India.
- To study the problems faced by working women in India

### III. METHODOLOGY

The status of Indian women has undergone change. Through Indian women are far more Independent and aware of their legal rights , such as right to work , equal treatment , property and maintenance . There are other factors that affect their quality of life such as age of marriage, extent of literacy, role in the family and so on.

Indian women face discrimination at their work place. A major problem faced by working women is sexual harassment at the workplace. Women employees working in night shift are more vulnerable to such incidents.

### IV. MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY WORKING WOMENS

1. Health problems
2. Family related problems
3. Psychological problems

#### 1. Health Problem

World Health organization (WHO, 1946) defines “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”. It is true that a healthy woman builds a healthy community. Woman’s multiple roles affect not only her own health and well being but affect the overall health and well being of the family.[5,6] The heavy stress and strain they face while combining the outside work and domestic work, child care, care for elderly make her more tiresome and she gain less leisure. . It is clear from the interviews conducted with the sales girls and those belonging to elementary occupations revealed that they face back pain and related problems which mainly formed due to the nature of work they performed. Similarly the plant and machine operators mainly face the problems related to lung diseases that is about seventeen percent revealed that they face such problems. Regular physical exercise has significant influence upon the health of every person especially in the case of working woman. But turning to the case of legislators, professional and associate professionals in spite of their busy life schedule, they consider the significance of regular exercises and they try to adjust their time span for this too. Thus they try to solve these problems to a great extent. It is a known fact that poor nutritional and growth status of the mother often shows a reflection of her own health status. Working women belonging to agricultural works and those belonging to elementary occupations face problems related to the intake of nutritious diet. While considering the health problems faced by working women across different occupational categories, 13 per cent of sample women revealed that they suffer from permanent health problems and about 87 per cent revealed that they do not face any permanent problems related to health. An examination of lung diseases, caused by the traditional methods of cooking (with the use of wood, dry cow dung etc), 92 percent of sample women are in a much better health situation through increased use of LPG rather than traditional methods of cooking, those working women with no time to practice regular physical exercise, their frequency is 360. And those working women who do not take nutritious diet daily, their frequency is 165. It is quite well known that those working women who have no time to practice regular exercises also fall in the group with no time to take nutritious diet daily.

#### 2. Family Related Problems

family constitute the most fundamental and basic unit where the seeds of love and care are sown and brought up[7]. A similar idea related to child care and role of woman is disintegration of joint families and development of nuclear families often put heavy stress on the time allocation of working women. Working women with preschool children often pose a heavy strain on their time allocation and to solve this problem is to give more attention to parents and grandparents and thus it will lead to a shift in favour of joint families. Full-time working mothers still do a second shift at home, and they have less free time than their husbands. As the survey revealed that nearly one third of the interviewed working women face some problems basically in relation to family support to participate in income earning activities outside. Whatever be the occupational status, the presence of children often has a significant impact on the time allocation of woman. It reveals that nearly half of the sample women expressed that if they had Main Problems Faced by Working Women in Their Time Allocation Allocation of Time of Working Women. A Comparative Study across Occupations 212 children with age less than 15 years, they had to spend more time to look after them. If the working woman is not living with her husband, it also creates problem in her time use even

though such constraint is only less felt (less than 8 per cent) across different occupational classes. Traditionally caste and social barriers had profound influence on the educational as well as occupational life of women.

While examining the problems related to the gaining of family support to participate in income earning activities outside revealed that those families with high level of education and employment status provide more support for women to work outside.

### **3. *Psychological Problems***

Mental health is described by World Health Organisation as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. Good mental health is essential for the wellbeing of individuals, their families, and the community. Mental, physical and social health is interdependent. (WHO, 2005). People living with mental problems may experience poorer health—placing individuals at an increased risk of chronic disease. The status of women is directly connected with their economic position, which in turn depends on opportunities for participation in socio-economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as one of the main indicator of society’s development.[9] The World Health Report (2001) stated that women face so many physical and mental illness including behavioral disorders and these are the result of a complex interaction between biological, psychological and social factors. Shift work (those work which is scheduled after the normal daylight hours like 9-5) often create so much stress upon women working in such work schedules. Such shift in day and night work adversely affects working women both physically and mentally. It will also have adverse effects on their concentration, memory, alertness etc. A much better mental health status can be found turning to different occupational groups, those working women belonging to elementary occupations like door to door service workers, domestic servants, sweepers, cleaners etc face such constraint most followed by professional’s basically medical professionals including gynecologists, computer engineers and so on .

#### **There Are Some Other Problems Too**

##### ***i. Safety of Working Women***

The “nosey questions factor” aside, there is still the concern for safety of working women who need to travel on official business [8]. Women travelling out of their home city for work trips are considered vulnerable and an easy target to fulfill the lewd intentions of their chauvinist male colleagues.

Checking into a hotel alone is one of the problems faced by working women, even if the trip is purely official. Many hotels refuse to allot a room to a single woman (under strange pretexts) because of their own safety concerns or if a woman decides to stay alone, she is viewed with suspicion.

##### ***ii. Unequal Pay***

One of the raging topics of discussion in the context of problems faced by working women (not only in India, but also in many other nations) is that of equal pay[9].

Legally, a woman is entitled to get the same salary as their male colleagues for the same kind of work done by them. However, gender discrimination is rampant as many companies still do not adhere to these guidelines and pay women less than their male colleagues.

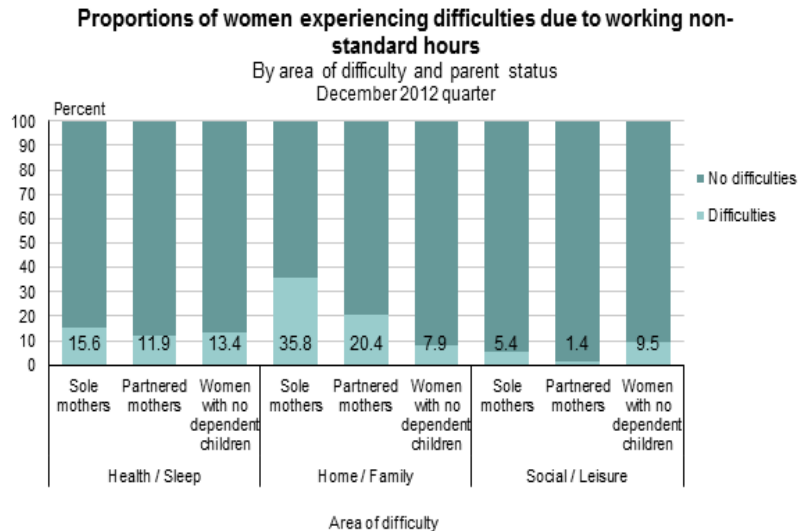
##### ***iii. Balancing Work-Family Life***

No matter how high their position or designation is in the office, women in India are still viewed as the family manager back home. They are expected to return home at a certain time, cook, clean and take care of family affairs. In fact, men who help out around their house are often the butt of jokes by their male friends. This makes life extremely stressful for women who have little help around the house and have to do it all.

iv. *Acceptance as Working Professional*

Most Indian men are yet to come to terms with the fact that women are also capable of working with them, shoulder to shoulder, in any field or professional sphere. They still visualise women as individuals who should be in charge of the kitchen and other domestic affairs.

Work is either seen as a temporary evil for women whose husbands do not earn enough, or the domain of women who do not “know their place.” As a result, Indian working women do not get the respect they require from their male colleagues in the workplace.



Source: Statistics New Zealand

*Fig1: Area of difficulty of working women*

## V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- As our study is based on particular organization and not the region, many more problems would come across if we take response from other organizations too.
- Time span is one of the main constraints to the study.
- Thirdly respondents are bit hesitant to provide the actual information.
- Higher authorities have not given the sufficient time to provide the information due to excessive work pressure.
- As per the ministerial level is concerned, they are unaware of HR policies and are not familiar about the questions we are asking, so the information provided by them is less useful for our research study.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS & SUGGESTIONS

Following are the general recommendations and suggestions adopting of which can make a big difference in a woman's life [10].

- Education campaign for women employees about their rights.
- Training for managers and others in workplaces including acceptable and professional workplace behavior, and diversity training
- Forming a complaints committee, which will keep the privacy of the employee complaining and investigate the complaint independently?
- Creating appropriate work conditions to ensure that there is no hostile environment towards women.



- Ensuring women do not work late hours, except in secure situations
- Ensuring participation of women at all level of management.
- Providing safe pickup and drop facility in odd hours.
- Providing adequate maternity & paternity leaves
- Providing day care facilities for working mothers

## VII. CONCLUSION

Thus, while discussing the issues and concerns about working women, the main emphasis should be on the 'opportunities for women', as it is of utmost importance. Like every human being, a woman has a 'natural desire for the expression of her inborn knack and abilities'; even a small baby shows his natural guts through his actions and movements. So, if a woman learns something, she craves for expressing it in some way. It is quite encouraging that nowadays, women have much more opportunities and prospects for the assertion of their individuality and talents. The services sector has increased the chances for women with its comfortable environment, where they can actively participate and excel, even from a distant place. Hence, if the focus is right, this issue will, hopefully, find its way towards a positive solution.

In short we need revamp in all round corners with respect to working women's lives. We need to help each other, join together in chorus to raise our issues, put them in a proposal to government for new legislations angled at improving working women's lives.

A couple of visibly clear steps the government can take to improving working women's lives are:

- Give higher interest in all bank deposits to women
- Give 30-50 Per cent discount in all Rail/bus/plane fares to women
- Legislate strict laws against sexual harassment in offices
- Setup special courts for handling complaints of working women against their employers
- Legislate leeway for special leaves needed by working women
- Legislate laws to curb inequality.

Women's suffrage was a long and very difficult battle for women. There are several challenging factors for women and society as a whole. When their rights were finally given, many more opportunities opened and changed. With gaining different perspective from participating in your individual role, I hope we can understand the importance of women's right not only for women, but for everybody

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