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WORKING WOMEN: CHALLENGES AND RISKS

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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. Women are playing a vital role in the economic and social development of the nations all over the world. Working women have a whole set of problems involving both family and professional lives. Women have to play their role as a wife, a mother and an earner. They have to manage their career while maintaining traditional roles. Indian culture with regard to career development of women is undergoing rapid changes due to the increased pace of urbanization and modernization. Indian women belonging to all classes have entered into paid occupations. In this paper the problems faced by working women have been explored.

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INTRODUCTION

At the present time, Indian women's exposure to educational opportunities is substantially higher than it was some decades ago, especially in the urban setting. This has opened new vistas, increased awareness and raised aspirations of personal growth [1]. This, along with economic pressure, has been instrumental in influencing women's decision to enter the work force.

The economic need is considered to be the first criteria for married women to go for work in India. Working women's employment outside the home generally has a positive rather than negative effect on marriage, the effects of family life on women's job performance and work attitudes. [2] The result revealed that women with children were significantly lower in occupational commitment relative to women without children; contrary to expectation, women with younger children outperformed women with older children. The significance of the work-related stressors was evidently greater than that of the stressors associated with the family function, although the relationship between family functioning, stress and well-being was also significant.

India's Female Population

At the 2001 census, India had a female population of 496 million. India accounts 15% of World's women characterized by vast regional differences and a variety of cultures [3]. But, social discrimination and economic deprivation on the basis of gender is common to all, irrespective of religion, cast, community, and State. Empowerment of women, gender discrimination, and violence against women, which have become serious subjects of sociological research in contemporary times, was hitherto neglected. While contemporary social changes have exposed women to unprotected socio-economic, cultural and political environment, there are no corresponding protective social systems and institutions of social justice to safeguard their interests. There are many who are skeptical about women's ability to exercise equal rights with men and about their capacity to play equal role with men.

Professional Women in Multitasking

Rather than following a transitional sequence from one role to another, women are required to perform an accumulation of disparate roles simultaneously, each one with its unique pressures [4]. Multiple role-playing has been found to have both positive and negative effects on the mental health and well-being of professional women. In certain instances, women

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with multiple roles reported better physical and psychological health than women with less role involvement. In other words, they cherished motivational stimulation, self-esteem, a sense of control, physical stamina, and bursts of energy. However multitasking has also led to lots of issues in women's health like mental and physical health, frustration, depression and stress.

Work Life balance

Work-life balance (WLB) is considered to be the prime factor as now a day's people getting deviated from their goal is becoming a common criterion. External environment temptation is making them to lose their basic culture and common sense which they are supposed to have as human beings. An increasing number of articles have promoted the importance of work-life balance[5]. This highlights the current concern within society and organizations about the impact of multiple roles on the health and well-being of professional women and its implications regarding work and family performance, and women's role in society. Role strain experienced because of multiple roles, i.e., role conflict and role overload. Work Life Balance means the competence to schedule the hours of an individual Professional and Personal life so as to lead a healthy and peaceful life. It emphasizes the values, attitudes and beliefs of women regarding their age to work in organizing and balancing their work and personal life.

The following variables influencing the experience of WLB were identified while reviewing the various literatures.

- Work Family Conflict and Family Work Conflict
- Women in various roles
- Career Advancement
- Work Stress
- Child care

Work Life balance is not something that just happens. It involves the efforts of a number of partners: the employee, the organization for which the employee works, the family with whom the employee lives and the society in which all are embedded. [6] It involves mutual understanding and respect between all of these players.

Work-life balance is the maintenance of a balance between responsibilities at work and at home. Work and family have increasingly become antagonist spheres, equally greedy of energy and time and responsible for work-family conflict. These conflicts are intensified by the "cultural contradictions of motherhood", as women are increasingly encouraged to seek self-fulfillment in demanding careers, they also face intensified pressures to sacrifice themselves for their children by providing "intensive parenting", highly involved childrearing and development. Additional problems faced by employed women are those associated with finding adequate, affordable access to child and elderly care.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An effective WLB is a major issue for employees and the organizations deal with this issue by implementing WLB practices. Since women are entrusted with the responsibility of developing healthy family environment, their efficiency and quality time in both places, i.e., personal environment and work

environment becomes significant and it has an impact on the happiness of the family and family members and also on smooth functioning of an organization.[7] A working woman is indeed an invaluable asset for developing the standard of living of family as well as nation. Most of the studies have been done on Work life conflicts and WLB practices. However, most of the researchers have given emphasis on working Hours, work load, job satisfaction, workplace issues including managing change, overlap of work and other dimensions of life, stress and burnout, ill-health, marital conflicts, productivity, etc. The reviews collected for this research are summarized as follows. Preethi Vijaimadhavan and D.Venkatrama Raju (2011) argued that the concept of work-life balance is based on the notion that paid work and personal life should be seen less as competing priorities than as complementary elements of a full life. The way to achieve flexible working hours is to adopt an approach that is "conceptualized" as a two way process involving a consideration of the employees and employers. It is concluded that work life balance helps the organization to reduce labour turnover, increase pride and overall job satisfaction. And also helps the employers to offer part time, casual and telecommuting work.

Prerna Patwa (2011) found that the parameters for measuring the work-life balance are the number of working days in a week, daily working hours, travelling time to workplace, time spent with the family daily, botheration for work, bringing work home, feeling about work, measures taken to relieve stress out of work etc. The study concludes that, the governments are promoting the business and health benefits of work-life balance and have developed programs, policies, legislation and resources to address the needs of workers, to improve productivity, and to reduce the work-life conflict. In almost all the industrial countries, employers are offered to provide these work life benefits.

B. S. Kadam (2012) studied the work life balance of women bus conductors in the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation found that 57 percent of women bus conductors are able to balance personal and work life and they expect that an employer should be sympathetic towards employees needs by providing work life balance policies and flexible working arrangements. It has been suggested that Women bus conductor should plan, prioritize and schedule as efficiently as possible for effective work life balance.

Manisha Purohit (2013) examined the organizational policies and provisions regarding work-life balance of the employees, which was carried out among a cross-section of leading corporate entities in Pune representing equally the four industrial sectors, namely, Manufacturing, Information technology, Educational and Banking sector. The results reveal the commonalities and differences in work-life balance provisions across the four sectors. There is inequality in the distribution of opportunities for work-life balance both within and across workplace.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study about hindrances faced by working women in their career development
2. To study about how working women balance their work and family.
3. To know about their organizational satisfaction.

Problems Faced By Working Women in India

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.[8] They deal with home and family issues as well as job stress on a daily basis. World Health Organization's (WHO) definition on 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 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.[9] Working in such conditions inevitably puts strain on women to greater extent as compared to men, thus making them less eager in their career.

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.

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.[10] 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.

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. [11] 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.

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.

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.

Recommendations and Suggestions

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

1. Education campaign for women employees about their rights.
2. Training for managers and others in workplaces including acceptable and professional workplace behavior, and diversity training.
3. Forming a complaints committee, this will keep the privacy of the employee complaining and investigate the complaint independently.
4. Creating appropriate work conditions to ensure that there is no hostile environment.
5. Ensuring participation of women at all level of management.
6. Providing safe pickup and drop facility in odd hours.
7. Providing adequate maternity & paternity leaves.

8. Providing day care facilities for working mothers.

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.

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