

WORK PLACE CHALLENGES AND CAREER GROWTH FOR WORKING MOTHERS

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Abstract

The world is changing very rapidly, and this change is happening in every direction. Educated women are now stepping out of the confines of their homes and entering the world of work. In the changing social and economic circumstances, women are getting opportunities for education and employment. But as women move from their homes to the workplace, their difficulties are increasing. Due to the conflicting demands of home and work, working women are facing many problems while fulfilling their dual responsibilities. The main objective of this research is to identify the mental, emotional, and physical problems of working women. For this study, 50 middle class working women were selected from Dayalbagh area of Agra. Based on the results, it was found that 82 percent of the women have nuclear families. 72 percent of the women are mentally affected due to their dual responsibilities. Most women are facing emotional problems. Also, working women...Their physical health is also being deeply affected. All these problems stem from factors such as the nuclear family structure, lack of support systems, and the inability to meet basic needs. In the context of working women, there is a need for women, their family members, and organizations to come together and provide support to address their problems.

Introduction

Working mothers is generally used to refer to a woman who works outside the home. Currently, women are venturing into various fields in addition to managing their homes and families. They are no

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longer limited to working in schools, colleges, or offices, but are also employed in industries, factories, courts, administration, politics, and other professional sectors. While employment has brought about a change in the status of women, it has also increased their problems. The term “working mother” is generally used in the context of employed women, that is, women who are regularly engaged in economic and professional activities outside the home. The term “working woman” is used for women who are engaged in paid work. Working not only means performing tasks oneself but also includes supervising and directing the work of others. Today, when the term “working woman” is used for Indian mothers, it is no longer limited to women working in schools, colleges, or offices in a simple and straightforward manner, but their work sphere has expanded to include industries, factories, and various businesses. Currently, women are entering fields that have been dominated by men for centuries. Today, women are working in courts, hospitals, schools, colleges, industries, administration, political fields, and the arts. The term “working women” is a combination of two words: “kaam” (work) and “kaaji” (one who is engaged in work). In English literature, the word “working” is used for this, which refers to any work done to earn a livelihood using intellectual and physical abilities.

Working mothers lead a double life. They have to manage responsibilities both at home and outside. Therefore, their difficulties are also doubled. If a working woman is the mother of a new born child, her responsibilities increase threefold. According to a report, 27 percent of women in the country, are working women. Women in rural areas are more likely to be working than women in urban areas. The plight of a middle-class woman working in metropolitan cities is nothing short of a punishment. Rushing through household chores in the morning, working all day in the office, enduring crowded buses, listening to obscene remarks in the crowd, facing physical harassment, and then managing household responsibilities again in the evening. The work that working women do outside the home is visible to everyone. But the domestic work they do goes unnoticed, or the work they do is not appreciated. Domestic work is not valued. The work women do at home is invisible labour. Working women face significant

difficulties in balancing family and career. Although their usefulness and importance in society have been acknowledged, most working women are still deprived of the family support they need.

Rationale of the Study

Women are the backbone of the social system. They are the foundation of the nation. Therefore, it is crucial for them to remain healthy, as only a healthy woman can build a healthy nation. Due to their dual responsibilities, working mothers are being affected mentally, emotionally, and physically. Therefore, the primary objectives of this study are to identify the various problems faced by middle-class working women due to their dual responsibilities, to raise awareness about their health, and to encourage family members and those working at work to support them. With these considerations in mind, this topic was chosen to explore the types of problems working women face and the measures they take to address them.

Keeping the above aspects in view, this study was taken up with the following.

Objectives -

- To investigate the impact of working women's mental, emotional, physical health on their lives.
- To collect information about the problems faced by working women in government services.

Literature Review

T.S. Papola (2002), K. Saradamini (2005), Pramila Kapoor, Neera Desai, etc., have provided details regarding the factors related to women's entry into the workforce and the problems faced by working women. L. Dubey and R. Patwari (2006) have presented an analysis related to the family structure of working women and the family's attitude towards these women. Studies by Deepa Mathur (2007), etc., are also important in relation to the role of the family or other studies. Women entering the workforce have to perform a dual role.

Sudhir Kumar Srivastava (2015), in his study titled "The Role of Women in Women's Empowerment," stated that women can only be empowered when awareness is brought about through education. Nirpendra Kumar Sinha (2012), in his study on "Women's

Participation in Panchayati Raj,” stated that women’s participation in Panchayati Raj is not possible through legislation alone. Meenakshi Vyas (2020), in her study on “The Family Status of Middle and Lower Class Women,” stated that attention must be paid to removing gender-related obstacles in the education, health, and employment of women, and ensuring their full participation in democracy.

A.S. Altekar’s (2016) study focused on “The Position of Women in Civilization.”Altekar studied the status of Indian women from prehistoric times to the present and pointed out many problems for which a satisfactory solution could be found. The main issues he focused on in his study are: the problems of childhood education for Indian women, the many complex problems of women’s married life, the status of widows in society, religious status, women’s property rights, and the place of Indian women in society. He shed light on these topics and also presented appropriate suggestions. The United Nations declared the International Women’s Year and made many efforts towards their upliftment. At the United Nations Women’s Conference held in Copenhagen, it was acknowledged that women constitute half of the world’s population.

Around this time, the Government of India also took steps .The report titled ‘Towards Equality’ has successfully provided valuable information regarding the status and role of Indian women. This report has not only been helpful in discussing the efforts made towards the upliftment of women and their current situation, but it can also serve as a guide for new thinking and research in this area.

All the studies mentioned above are related to women. However, studies related to women from middle class and lower class who are working in government services have not yet been published, even though such studies are extremely important. This is because if women from the lower strata of society, who have been exploited and oppressed for centuries, are entering government services, it will have far-reaching consequences. Therefore, there is a crucial need for studies on these women currently working in government services. Thus, a study of such women seems important. It is also equally important to know whether these women are able to establish their place in this changing environment. Are they caught in a dilemma

between their own community and mainstream society? Furthermore, it is important to understand what changes have occurred in their perspectives after joining government services, and how much the society's perception of these women has changed. The difference will also become clear through such studies. In this competitive environment, women are performing at their best and presenting themselves to society, establishing their image as intelligent women.

Methodology -

A total of 150 women are employed in various government establishments. Of these 150 working women were selected with the help of multi stage random sampling from Agra dayalbagh, of these 50 belong to the middle and lower class. Of these, 25 had permanent post and 25 had temporary post. Therefore, a total of 50 working women were selected for the unit of investigation using purposive sampling. In the light of above objectives, a self-structured open-ended questionnaire was used for data collection.

Result & Discussion -

A present study was undertaken to find out the challenges towards working women in unorganised sectors. Keeping the major objectives in view, a research procedure was developed and carried out.

Data obtained from the study, using the questionnaire was tabulate, interpreted, and discussed for analytical purposes. The details of the results obtained are presented under the following major headings.

Table: 1- Distribution of employed women across different departments

S. No.	Position in the Department	Frequency	Percentage
1	Teachers	12	24
2	Doctors	16	32
3	Fourth class employees	22	44
Total		50	100

The above table clearly shows that the highest numbers of Scheduled Caste women are employed as Class IV employees (44 percent). This is followed by doctors in the health department (32 percent), and then teachers in the education department (24 percent). The main reason for this is that Scheduled Caste women are less

educated; therefore their participation in higher positions in employment is low.

Table: 2- Savings made by women from their own income.

S. No.	Source of Income	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	28	56
2	No	22	44
Total		50	100

The above table clearly shows that a large number of women 56 percent save a portion of their income. However, 44 percent of women are unable to save from their monthly income. The main reason for this is that these women do not have a good financial situation because of their temporary post, and other family members are not employed. Like men, women also have to leave their homes and families to work in other places, and sometimes even live there. This compulsion to live away from home often gives rise to many problems. Due to their specific physical structure, it is natural for a woman to feel insecure when alone. Furthermore, it is extremely difficult for married women to leave their homes, families, and children to work in another city.

Table: 3- Regarding employed women leaving home for their jobs.

S. No.	Leaving home for a job	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	10	20
2	No	35	70
3	Can't say	05	10
Total		50	100

The above table clearly shows that the largest number of women 70 percent are those who cannot leave their homes for their jobs, and 10 percent of women did not answer either yes or no to this situation. They simply stated that they could not say anything about it and had not even considered it. While 20 percent of women clearly stated that they can leave their homes for their profession or for promotion. This was confirmed by the women who had been transferred.

Table: 4- Changes in the Status of Employed Women in their Jobs.

S. No.	Change in Status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	32	64
2	No	18	36
Total		50	100

The table clearly shows that most 64 percent of the employed women experienced a change in their status due to their jobs, while

36 percent denied this. According to the women who acknowledged a change in their status, their jobs and professions led to an improvement in their economic condition and also expanded their social network. They also stated that their jobs helped them save for the future. In contrast, 36 percent of the women reported that their jobs did not bring about any significant change in their status. It is observed that working women have to balance responsibilities both at home and at work, which leads to stress. After childbirth, a woman becomes physically very weak. Due to her weakened physical condition, it is not always possible for her to perform all the household chores, but as the central figure of the family, she is still responsible for the well-being of her family. This doubles her stress and fatigue. Sometimes, her family life affects her work life as well. A woman's professional life, while distinct from her family life, is not entirely separate from it. Even today, family responsibilities are considered an additional burden on a woman, beyond her primary duties. Therefore, it is clear that family problems affect women at the workplace, and working women often face difficulties in juggling their dual roles, with their work performance being impacted by family issues. This situation was more prevalent in families where women had young children or elderly relatives who needed care, and there was no one else at home to look after them.

Table: 5- Impact of Family Problems on Working Women's Jobs.

S. No.	Impact of Job	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	35	70
2	No	15	30
Total		50	100

The table clearly shows that 70 percent of working women experience the impact of family problems on their jobs, while 30 percent of women gave a negative response. This indicates that working women face difficulties in balancing their dual roles, and their work at the workplace is affected by family problems. This situation was more prevalent in families where women had young children or elderly dependents and there was no one at home to take care of them. It is often observed that when working women have a double burden of responsibilities and no one to help them, this situation becomes extremely serious.

Table: 6- Behaviour of Colleagues towards Scheduled Caste Women in the Workplace.

S. No.	Behaviour of Co-workers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Good	24	48
2	Very good	21	42
3	Bad	05	10
Total		50	100

It is clear from the above table, that the behaviour of colleagues towards working women in the workplace is generally good. 48 percent of women reported that their colleagues' behaviour was good, while 42 percent reported it as very good. It is evident that despite belonging to a particular caste, women receive good treatment from their colleagues (both male and female) in the workplace. Change is the eternal law of nature, and with the passage of time, the restrictions placed on women are gradually easing. With the spread of education, women are striving to stand as equals to men in every field, but no matter how much the family perspective has changed; women in our society still do not have the freedom to choose their desired field of work independently. In the changing environment, with rising inflation, there is a growing need for women to contribute to the family income and lessen the financial burden.

This is leading to women coming forward for jobs. Due to rising inflation, the needs of the family can often not be met by the income of one person. In such a situation, the female members of the family have also entered the world of earning. The decision for women to earn an income is usually made with the consent of both the woman and her family, to a greater or lesser extent. Women often work for two main reasons: economic necessity and the desire for financial independence. Thus, while in the first category of women, the need to earn money to fulfil family and social responsibilities and personal aspirations is strong, in the second category of women; psychological factors are relatively more active.

Conclusion

The above study clearly shows that even today, most Lower class women are illiterate or have low levels of education. Consequently, they occupy a small number of high-ranking positions.

These women are still not in a position to leave their homes and families for employment. The primary reason for this is the lack of safety outside the home. The parents and brothers of these women have played a major role in their progress. These women consider the role of reservations important for bringing about change in the economic and social status of women. Due to their employment, the economic and social status of these women has improved.

Since working mothers have to fulfil roles both at home and outside, their workload increases, and their work is affected both at the workplace and within the family. This dual role also contributes to their fatigue. Since most working mothers do not have family members to help them at home, they require domestic help. These women face problems such as sexual harassment, discrimination, and insecurity at the workplace. While economic necessity is the reason for most women to work, many also work for financial independence and to create their own distinct identity.

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