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: 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-à-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 beset women in the industrial sector when technological advancement results in retrenchment of employees.

Women workers in India are faced with lot more challenges than their counterparts in the other countries. Besides of 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, clean 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.

**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
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. 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.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review shows that more focus is on married working women than on unmarried working women (Karl, 2009). It is also seen that focus is more on organized sector rather than unorganized sector of working women (Shalz, 2011). Eggins (1997) advocates for more facilities to women in the workplace, suggesting that “…it is an important part of developmental strategy as well as an act of social justice” The World Bank (1991) estimates that Indian Women make up one-third of the labor force. Singhal (1995) is of the opinion that, “Participation of women in workforce is essential for economic development and population planning.”

Somjee (1989) has some very strong critical comments. She has said that “in the history of women’s studies, which is not very long, a variety of approaches have been adopted in order to understand women’s problems and find solutions to them. such approaches range from how women are perceived in various cultures and historical settings, given their biological functions and what nature ‘intended’ them to do, to their decline in power and status vis-à-vis men in the complex social
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evolution, to a widely shared emphasis on the need to make women equal through the economic on
the need to make women equal through the economic and legal route which treats them as individuals
rather than those having the sole responsibility for looking after the family.”

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

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

2. To clear main problems of working women

INDIA’S FEMALE POPULATION

At the 2001 census, India had a female population of 496million. India accounts 15% of World’s
women characterized by vast regional differences and a variety of cultures. 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. But such
apprehensions are ill-founded in the context of the broader opportunities available for women
following mechanization of industry and agriculture, enabling women to compete with men successfully.

Innovations in science and technology have removed the disparity between men and women attributed to physical strength alone. Women are able to handle modern appliances which require intelligence and training and not merely physical strength. Thus, India has now several women working as pilots, driving locomotives, buses, tractors and machinery in workshops. Sex as maternal factor in the area of legal rights has practically disappeared. It is not therefore fair to relegate women as a group to an inferior position in society. The Constitution does not regard sex as a permitted classification and prohibits sex as a basis of differential treatment in all areas of legal rights. Modernity has resulted in a growing flexibility and changes in the gender roles of men and women. The earlier conception that man was the provider of basic necessities for family and women the child bearer and care taker of home, is no longer valid in the changing social structure and economic compulsions.

Therefore, any attempt to assess the status and problem of women in a society should start from the social framework. Social structure, cultural norms, and value systems are crucial determinants of women’s role and their position in society. In respect of the status there is a gap between the theoretical possibilities and their actual realization.

**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. 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.

1. **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.

2. **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.

3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **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.

6. **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.

7. **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.

8. **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.

9. **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
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are increasing that’s why women also should company in gaining income for families. Therefore a fundamental change is required in attitudes of employees, family members and public.

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