



PROBLEMS AND CONSTITUTIONAL SOLUTIONS OF WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA - A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY

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Abstract:

Women constitute nearly one-half of the Indian population, but they are placed at various disadvantageous positions due to gender discrimination and bias. In the male dominated society, women have been victims of violence and exploitation. India being a tradition bound society; women have been socially, economically, physically, psychologically and sexually exploited for centuries

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.

This article based on secondary data. This article tries to explain the real condition of Indian working women and also make an effort to clear main problems of working women. A women's work is not merely confined to paid employment she has to almost always shoulder the burden of household chores as well. A woman could still bear up with these problems if she had control over the money earns. But in most families even now her salary is handed over to father, husband or in-laws. So the basic motive for seeking employment of getting independence is nullified in many women's case.

Key words: Human Development, Gender discrimination, Household income



1.1 Introduction

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 overlook things to ensure that their job is not jeopardized in anyway.

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 this reason force every family in India to look for ways and means of increasing the household income. 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To understand about the problems and challenges faced by working women in the workplace.
2. To identify the socio-economic pointers contributing to women's status, safety and security
- 3 To understand the Important Constitutional Provisions and Constitutional Privileges for Women in India.

1.3 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 includes 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.

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1.4 Important Constitutional Provisions and Constitutional Privileges for Women in India

Constitutional Provisions

The Constitution of India not only grants equality to women but also empowers the State to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women for neutralizing the cumulative socio economic, education and political disadvantages faced by them.



Fundamental Rights, among others, ensure equality before the law and equal protection of law; prohibits discrimination against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and guarantee equality of opportunity to all citizens in matters relating to employment. Articles 14, 15, 15(3), 16, 39(a), 39(b), 39(c) and 42 of the Constitution are of specific importance in this regard.

Constitutional Privileges

- (i) Equality before law for women (Article 14)
- (ii) The State not to discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them (Article 15 (i))
- (iii) The State to make any special provision in favour of women and children (Article 15 (3))
- (iv) Equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters relating to employment or appointment to any office under the State (Article 16)
- (v) The State to direct its policy towards securing for men and women equally the right to an adequate means of livelihood (Article 39(a)); and equal pay for equal work for both men and women (Article 39(d))
- (vi) To promote justice, on a basis of equal opportunity and to provide free legal aid by suitable legislation or scheme or in any other way to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities (Article 39 A)
- (vii) The State to make provision for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief (Article 42)
- (viii) The State to promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and to protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation (Article 46)
- (ix) The State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people (Article 47)
- (x) To promote harmony and the spirit of common brotherhood amongst all the people of India and to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women (Article 51(A) (e))
- (xi) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging



to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Panchayat to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat (Article 243 D(3))

(xii) Not less than one- third of the total number of offices of Chairpersons in the Panchayats at each level to be reserved for women (Article 243 D (4))

(ix) Not less than one-third (including the number of seats reserved for women belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes) of the total number of seats to be filled by direct election in every Municipality to be reserved for women and such seats to be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Municipality (Article 243 T (3))

(x) Reservation of offices of Chairpersons in Municipalities for the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and women in such manner as the legislature of a State may by law provide (Article 243 T (4))



1.5 Recommendations and Conclusions

Related to the challenges and problems faced by working women drawn from the analysis of responses:

1. Professional women feel isolated and burdened by the simultaneous demands of their new aspirations on one side and the traditional way of life on the other.
2. Women are discriminated against in all walks of life.
3. Women are subjugated, dominated and exploited both at work places and home.
4. Women are generally unable to give proper and quality time to households, kids and family.
5. Working women generally face workplace sexual harassment, mental pressure, and safety issues.
6. Females are also highly judgmental about other female colleagues and try to put one at any given opportunity.
7. Women face problems leaving kids at home and going to office early in the morning.
8. Child rearing problems are always faced by working women.
9. People make particular perception or draw conclusion about characters of working women.
10. The social system cannot accept the new roles of women who end up feeling misunderstood and distressed.



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