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Stress and Challenges Faced by Working Women in India

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Abstract: *Work is Worship seems to be gone now a day because of the reason of stress. Stress is a crucial word in organization in the present scenario. Stress is a fundamental component of life, the modern world which is to be a world of achievements and world of stress. The main objective of the study was to understand the problems and issues faced by working women in India. The objectives also included identifying the key socio-economic attributes contributing to women's status, safety and security, and to study women's involvement in various activities/ organizations for improving of family, community and society. Women have been treated as second class citizen since time immemorial. Discrimination faced by women at the workplace includes unequal pay for equal work, sexual harassment, lack of adequate sanitation facilities, unsafe roads and transportation, denial of promotions, inadequate work-life balance and so on. Hardship of woman in each and every phase of life is always tough to classify as she is the only existence in the world, is facing such kind of changes in her life like birth as a girl child, becoming wife and finally becoming mother. The results of the study showed that different age group of working women have different kinds of problems and challenges and different categories as married, single, divorcee, single parent, separated, have different issues at stake in the workplace. Some problems are definitely common, like mental and physical stress, lack of proper balance between employment and family care, unfair treatment in the workplace, stressful life and work place discrimination etc. But some challenges are age or category specific, like prejudiced and stereo typed thinking, safety and security issues, ego hassles with colleagues, and problem of glass ceiling etc. The main intention of this paper is to focus on stress and challenges faced by working women in today's era and put there solution.*

Keywords: *Gender Discrimination, Sexual harassment, Career growth, Health issues, Equality, Problems and Challenges.*

I. INTRODUCTION

No institution is stress free, Stress can be finding everywhere, whether it is in the family, business, organization or any other social or economic organization. Wherever there is life there will be activity and wherever there is activity there will be stress, therefore stress is a part and parcel of everybody's life. Though it is both men and women who deal with stress, but women are the most common victims and particularly the women find themselves struggling with stress more than others.

Women have established themselves as an essential component of the workforce. Women are the backbone of the society, she plays a vital role in the economic development of the country and also all fields of life, without their contribution no society can nurture properly, her contribution is equal as their male counterparts.

Without active participation of women in various national, social, economic and political activities, the progress of the country will be stagnant. Even though Indian women have started working outside their homes, but there are still many problems and challenges that working women face today. Sometimes there are not given equal status in their workplace, they do not receive the same benefit as the male employees. Gender bias, unequal pay, protection, mental and physical harassment, lack of proper family support, insufficient maternity leave are the vital matter and hard work which women face today. At present, women are the primary breadwinners in a large number of families.

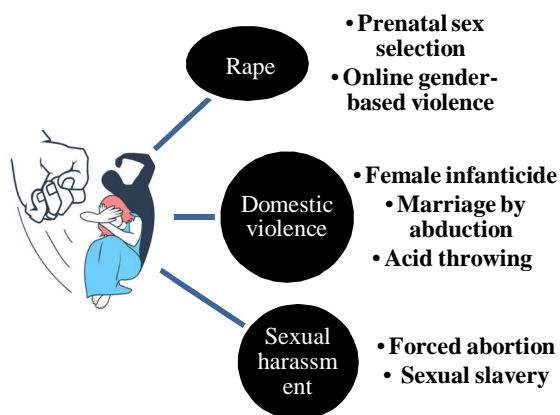
The financial demands for Indian families are rising day by day. As a result women in India, who were mostly known as home makers, are forced to go to a job and take on challenges that were considered appropriate only for men, such as working on night shifts in call centers or BPOs, fighter jet Pilots. Now a day woman are giving their best and active contribution in all male-dominated fields such as sports, medical, law, military, academics, Politics, bank, top level corporate positions etc. 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.

If we consider women's role in corporate environment, then sometimes they have to bring their work at home also and it cuts few more hours to sleep. It is not just about the reduce sleep, but this type of life style creates stress in working women and it directly affects her family. On the other hand many Indian families are still living as joint family with their in-laws and parents, it adds more stress to women as they have to manage them and make all the family members happy. 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. 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 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.

II. PROBLEMS OF WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA

A. Increasing Violence Against Women

Violence against women, also known as gender-based violence and sexual and gender-based violence are violent acts primarily or exclusively committed against women or girls. Such violence is often considered a form of hate crime, committed against women or girls specifically because they are female, and can take many forms. "violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women" and "violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men." Violence against women and girls is a problem of pandemic proportions. At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime with the abuser usually someone known to her. In addition, the term gender-based violence refers to "any acts or threats of acts intended to hurt or make women suffer physically, sexually or psychologically, and which affect women because they are women or affect women disproportionately". Violence against women can fit into several broad categories. These include violence carried out by individuals as well as states. Some of the forms of violence perpetrated by individuals are rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, acid throwing, reproductive coercion, female infanticide, prenatal sex selection, obstetric violence, online gender-based violence and mob violence.



B. Discrimination at Workplace

However, Indian women still face blatant discrimination at their workplaces. A major problem faced by the working women is sexual harassment at the work place. Further, women employees working in night shift are more vulnerable to such incidents. Nurses, for example, face this problem nearly every day. There is nothing that is done in hospitals to tackle and address the danger they face. Such blatant disregard of current Indian laws is one reason why sexual harassment at the workplace continues to increase. Also, Indian women are often deprived of promotions and growth opportunities at work places but this doesn't apply to all working women. This is usually the case in factories and labor-oriented industries.

C. Problems of Female Education

The problem of women's education in India is one which attracts our attention immediately. In our country, due to conservative traditionalism, women's status has, through ages, been considered to be lower than that of men. The education of girls and women is an integral part of national development. Steps that are being taken to improve and expand their education will not recede to the background due to lack of finance. It must be remembered that there is still a big gap to be filled between the education of the boys and girls, further; mother is the pivot of family life in India. Development of immorality; Suitable Curriculum for the education of girls; Lack of social consciousness among women, Scarcity of lady teachers; Lack of proper physical facilities; Unwillingness of lady teachers to serve in rural areas; Financial difficulties.

D. Problems Relating to Employment and Unemployment of Women

In India, more educated women are unemployed than before as the push factors for them to go out and work is missing. Unfortunately uncasing the talents and hidden potential of women's power has not yet happened in India. Women are withdrawing from the work force in large numbers and today India's women are less active professionally than women in our own neighboring countries. In Period, the girl in focus is aspiring to join the police force and is working in the factory in order to save for studies towards achieving her goal. In the case of most rural women, the lack of opportunity and information, patriarchy and lack of training in special skills are standing in the way of their finding remunerative wage employment outside the home. Freedom to move around and have others to look after the children also act as hurdles in the case of educated rural women.

E. Exploitation of Women in the Media

Exploitation of women are various forms and different natures. It include crimes involving sexual exploitation for economic gains like prostitution & trafficking, adultery, abduction, rape, wrongful confinement, and murder etc on the one hand and crimes related to women's property like dishonest misappropriation, criminal breach of trust, domestic violence, dowry extortion and outraging the modesty of women etc on the other.

F. Divorce and Desertion

"Desertion in order to seek divorce under the Act means the deliberate permanent forsaking and abandonment by one spouse of the other without that other's consent and without reasonable and just reason. In other words, it is an absolute repudiation of the obligations of marriage, it is not the withdrawal from a place, but from a state of things . Desertion cannot be made out by a single act but, it is a continuous course of conduct." Desertion can be viewed as synonym to terms like abandonment, forsaking, relinquishment, abstinence, refraining from marital obligations, total repudiation, separation, renouncement.

G. The Problem of Dowry

"Dowry" in the sense of the expression contemplated by Dowry Prohibition Act is a demand for property of valuable security having an inextricable nexus with the marriage. The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961 article 3 specifies that the penalty for giving or taking dowry does not apply to presents which are given at the time of a marriage to the bride or bridegroom, when no demand for them have been made. Although Indian laws against dowries have been in effect for decades, they have been largely criticized as being ineffective. The practice of dowry deaths and murders continues to take place unchecked in many parts of India and this has further added to the concerns of enforcement.

H. 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.

I. Sexual Harassment

Today, women face sexual harassment on way on transports, at working places, educational institutions, hospitals, at home and even in police stations when they go to file complaints. Almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. It is shocking that the law protectors are violating and outraging

modesty of women. Public transport system is overcrowded and women become easy targets for physical harassment. 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. It is a difficult situation for woman if the higher officer demands sexual favours. If refused the boss takes out other means to make her life miserable. If we want to see a society free of sexual harassment, there is need of changing the mindset of the society. Simply enacting laws is not sufficient. So, the political structure should be altered to achieve the goal.

J. Decline in the Political Participation of Women

A number of factors have been suggested as explanations, namely that women are less likely to engage in politics because of their lower access to socio-economic resources. For example, men are far more likely to be employed full-time than women, and employment is positively related to political participation, information and efficacy among U.S. respondents. Thus controlling for employment status may mediate a substantial portion of a gender gap in participation. Women are socialized toward a gender role that is more passive, private, rule-abiding, and compassionate, while men are oriented toward leadership, public roles, autonomy and self-reliance. This socialization may contribute to women's lower levels of political engagement with differences in political attitudes and participation beginning early in life and continuing over the life course.

K. Responsibility Towards Family, Society and Work

Women are the pioneers of nation. Indian culture attaches great importance to women, comprising half of world's population. According to a report of secretary general of United Nations, women constitute 50% of human resources, the greatest human resource next only to man having great potentiality. Women are the key to sustainable development and quality of life in the family. The varieties of role the women assume in the family are those of wife, leader, administrator, manager of family income and last but not the least important the mother.

L. Male Dominated Society

There is not a single country in the world today whose top political position is held by a woman. Feminists actually tend to underestimate male supremacism. They are afraid, for one thing, that, if it has been in continuous existence throughout virtually the entire globe from the earliest times to the present, then perhaps it really is natural for men to dominate women. From the analysis of large representative samples of all the human societies studied by anthropologists, I find overwhelming evidence that males control females in most domains of social life.

M. Ego of Male Counterpart

Loss of control or the fear of not being in the riders seat is on of the biggest drivers of negative male ego, make sure that decision are sounded off well in advance with your male counterpart or managers. Journal of personality and social Psychology after a research study in 2013, found that men donot feel great about themselves, when their wives or girlfriends get successful, with their self- esteem dipping rather than feeling happy about their partner accomplishment. This research found evidence that men automatically interpret a partner's success as their own failure, even when they are not in direct competition. At the workplace there is underlying feeling of exasperation in females, around the way male ego is expressed in the workplace.

III. CONCLUSION

The solution of the problem of occupational stress in working women in India lie in the change of traditional mind- set of the society that male are the bread winners and females are the house- keepers. So there is a need to change the attitude of the employers, policy makers, politicians and family members. They should provide the tension free environment to working women at place of work as well as at home. Women in India have an important role to play as far as economic development of country is concerned. The government has increased the importance of women by adopting various schemes and programs. No one thinks of upgrading women skills. Women going to work are often subject to sexual harassment. Public transport system is overcrowded and men take advantage of the circumstances to physically harass women. Colleagues offer unwanted attention which can still be shaken off but a woman is placed in a difficult situation if the higher officer demands sexual favours'. If refused the boss can easily take it out on the woman in other ways to make life miserable for her. There have been several cases of sexual harassment recently involving even the senior women officials. Women should also be encouraged to take the benefits of policy measures introduced by the govt. Most of the problems that beset working women are in reality rooted in the social perspective of the position of women.



Traditionally men are seen as the bread winner and women as the house-keepers, child bearers and reapers. This typecast role model continues to put obstacles before the working women. A fundamental change is required in the attitudes of the employers, policy makers, family members and other relatives and the public at large.

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