

Challenges and Problems Faced by Working Women in the 21st Century

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Abstract: It is difficult to classify the struggles women face at every stage of life because they are the only beings in the world to experience such a life-changing era as having a girl child, getting married, and then having children. Finding a way to balance work and family responsibilities has become a major challenge for working women in the modern era. Equal opportunity is something that both men and women want. Gender prejudice is a significant issue for working women today. Unfair pay, verbal and physical abuse, and a lack of vacation time also pose problems. In addition to these duties, women also shoulder a heavy burden of societal expectations. Included in this category are the duties of a mother, wife, housewife, and the daily routine. The primary purpose of this paper is to draw attention to critical concerns and challenges faced by modern working women and to provide a psychological viewpoint on these issues and the role that society may play in supporting working women in striking a balance between work and personal life.

Keywords: Family, Gender, Society

1. INTRODUCTION

The women of this country are the ones who hold everything else together. She's just as important to the country's economy as any man is. Women's underrepresentation in public life has been shown to have a negative impact on national, social, economic, and political development. Women in India have traditionally stayed at home to take care of their families, but in the modern era, with more women in the workforce than ever before, it is no longer optional. Although more and more Indian women are entering the workforce, they still encounter a number of obstacles. [4] They face discrimination on the job at times. Even if they work for the same company as men, they do not receive the same benefits. These days, working women confront a number of significant concerns and obstacles, including discrimination based on gender, wage disparity, insecurity,

harassment (both verbal and physical), inadequate family support, and inadequate time off for childbirth and related caregiving. Today's workplace and social landscape is drastically different from that of the 1980s and 1990s. Technological progress, shifts in the nature of work, and shifting expectations of women's roles in the home have all altered the way Indian women participate in the modern business world. Indian households are facing ever increasing financial obligations. Every family in India needs to find a way to bring in more money each month because of the country's high cost of living, rising tuition and housing costs, and other similar factors. Therefore, women in India, who were traditionally known as homemakers, are increasingly working outside the home, often at unorthodox hours (such as night shifts in contact centres or business process outsourcing; BPOs) that were previously seen to be more suited to men. Women today are making significant strides and contributions in traditionally male-dominated professions like sports, medicine, law, the armed forces, academia, politics, banking, and the C-suites of major corporations. Compared to thirty years before, today's working women have far less time to devote to domestic chores.

In addition, working women in India face a significantly higher number of obstacles compared to their counterparts in other regions of the world. In India, men are still generally seen as the primary breadwinners and heads of their households. Despite the fact that working women manage their professional lives by confronting competition and challenges at their places of employment and their personal lives by managing household work, children, family, and cooking, social responsibilities are still considered to be the exclusive domain of women. They are required to work a full-time job in addition to taking care of all of the household responsibilities they were previously responsible for as homemakers. The

greater stress that a woman experiences is a direct result of her efforts to juggle multiple responsibilities. If a suitable balancing act is not delivered in both personal and professional life, it can sometimes cause the relationship that she has with her Saul mate to become unbalanced. When we consider the roles that women play in corporate environments, we see that sometimes they are required to bring their job home with them, which results in a loss of several extra hours of sleep. Not only does this type of lifestyle result in less sleep for working women, but it also causes stress, which has a direct impact on the family life of the working woman. [1] It is a major logistical task for her to get up early, ignore her health problems, and get all of the necessary items ready for her children and her husband. Therefore, women have lost anywhere from two hours to fourteen hours of sleep each day on average, depending on the study. Joint families, in which members of both sets of parents and spouses live together, are still common in many Indian communities. Because of this, women have increased levels of stress because they are expected to manage their in-laws as well as their husband's extended family. [4] The idea that men are inherently superior to women in our culture contributes to the numerous obstacles that women face in the job. When it comes to reaching the top, women learn that they have to do significantly better than their male co-workers. When a woman reaches the top position in a firm, it becomes significantly more challenging for her to collaborate effectively with male personnel. In addition, the social and psychological tradition that exists in the society is the reason why the female employees at the company do not support their own female boss. Working under these conditions invariably places a significantly higher burden on women than it does on males. Women experience decreased motivation to advance their careers as a direct result of these kinds of challenges. It has been noted that as the burden of family responsibilities grows, working women are forced to find new employment, settle for part-time work, or quit their jobs altogether. Because of this circumstance, they are under an undue amount of stress about losing their work. Women are typically more cautious than men when it comes to making financial bets. They exercise greater caution when it comes to money. There is a proverb that states, "The hand that rocks the cradle leads the world." This proverb refers to women. Saving is the habit of

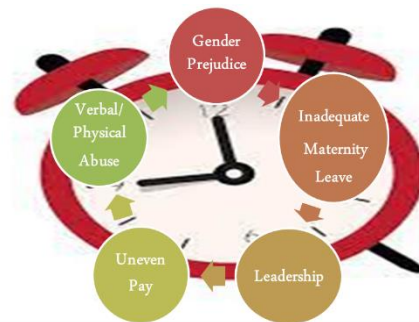
women. In times past, when women's primary role was that of a homemaker, it was expected of them to set aside funds for both unexpected expenses and long-term investments. In those days, women did not have access to information regarding the numerous markets for investing. But in the 21st century, working women have grown more educated about the various financial investments, and they have the enormous ability to bring about a positive change in the socioeconomic situations of the country. Women in the workforce today put their money into a variety of investments, including stocks, bonds, commodities, and mutual funds, amongst others.

2. CHALLENGES FOR WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA

ISSUES AT FAMILY



ISSUES AT WORKPLACE



- Gender Prejudice

For Indian women, the experience of gender prejudices typically starts at a very young age. It is quite challenging to come to terms with the idea that women are just as capable as males when it comes to working side by side with them. Women in Indian society are regarded as weak and only capable of enduring a little amount of pressure at work. This is in contrast to the male-dominated culture that exists in

Indian society, which promotes male supremacy in all big, important, and taxing roles. The talents and capacities of Indian women have, historically speaking, been grossly undervalued in terms of recruitment efforts, compensation disparities, and advancement opportunities. Even if a woman is employed, her entire salary may be provided to her husband, father-in-law, or another senior member of the family in many households; as a result, her financial autonomy is only on the most surface-level [5]. Despite the fact that a woman has a job, she is still dependent on another person.

- **Striking a Balance Between Personal and Professional Lives**

Trying to strike a healthy balance between one's professional life and their personal life can be extremely difficult for working women in India. She is tasked with meeting all of the requirements that have been set down by the other members of the family, most notably those of the children. Women's ambitions about their careers and the professional world are still looked down upon as unimportant in India. The emotional and moral support that is offered to working women is lacking in the majority of families. This is especially true of single-parent households. In addition to this, there are a lot of official requirements and dates that women have to meet in order to keep their jobs. Working women who take on this kind of dual role to achieve perfection in all of their responsibilities feel a great deal of stress in their day-to-day lives [5].

- **Verbal/ Physical Forms**

Women sometimes have the misconception that they need to outperform their male co-workers if they want to attain success in the business world. This causes their boss to have higher expectations of them and leads to increased productivity. This kind of situation puts a woman's body through a lot of stress. Inadequate maternity leave contributes to the stress experienced by working mothers, who are expected to look after their children while still meeting the professional expectations placed on them by their employers. Women in the workforce in India also report feeling insecure in their working environments. There are several instances in which female subordinates are expected to provide their male superiors with sexual favours in exchange for promotions and opportunities for advancement in their careers. The male superiors

demonstrate that they have shown some clemency or performed additional favours for which the ladies should repay them with a great deal of regard. In the business world, women are frequently stereotyped as being fragile and helpless; as a result, their male co-workers and superiors often have the mindset that they may take advantage of any situation involving their female colleagues and subordinates [5].

- **Negligible Personnel Space**

If Indian working women want to reach the point in their lives where they are financially independent and successful, they need to strike a balance between their families and their careers. As a result of all of this bother, women become antsy. They try to boost their working strength in order to be more productive in their work, which results in them getting less sleep. They begin to experience feelings of helplessness and frustration as they realise that no one is around to assist or support them. They frequently have the experience of being alone, which contributes to a myriad of mental, emotional, and behavioural issues on their part. The majority of working women in India struggle with not getting enough sleep and feeling depressed, which are both serious mental health issues. They have a severe shortage of available personnel space. They have none of their own time to spare. They have the impression that they are unable to discuss their emotions with anyone since they are confident that no one will comprehend how they are feeling. Because of the psychological pressure they are under, they are faced with just two choices: either they quit their jobs altogether or they learn to live with the despair that comes along with working [5].

3. ISSUES

- i. A key obstacle that a working mother must overcome is the lack of adequate time off for maternity leave. Their efficiency at work as well as their personal lives are both impacted as a result of this.
- ii. Another challenge that working women face is a lack of adequate support from their families. It is still often accepted that only women should be responsible for the housework. They discourage women from staying late at work, which has a negative impact on both the women's performance and their chances of advancement.

iii. A third problem that working women face in the workplace is insufficient safety. Women who work in business sectors and other private organisations are more likely to be victims of a variety of crimes at their place of employment because they are not supplied with adequate security.

iv. Another problem that working women face is the issue of unequal compensation. It has been noticed that female workers receive lower salaries compared to male workers in the same position. Even though women consistently prove to be more productive than males in the workplace, they are not compensated the same as their male counterparts. Because of this, they experience despair and a lack of motivation, which in turn affects her personal life.

v. Because they have to fulfil two different tasks at once, working women are unable to devote enough time to their children's varied extracurricular activities and school functions. Additionally, this causes tension for women.

vi. In spite of the fact that she devotes her entire life to her work, her family and society continue to place a lower value on their careers than they should. Even in this day and age, it is generally accepted that a woman's primary responsibility is to care for her own family, particularly her children. This results in a loss of motivation for the advancement of one's career [4]. If a working woman needs to participate in a business tour or any other type of training programme for the advancement of her career, then she must first obtain permission from her husband and other members of her family. In addition to this, they are responsible for making appropriate preparations for their children. On the other hand, this is not true for men in India.

4. EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL COMPONENTS OF THE ISSUE

According to the findings of the study, the vast majority of working women experience symptoms of stress due to role conflict or the simultaneous fulfilment of numerous responsibilities. They are required to fulfil a variety of roles, such as managing work at their place of employment, managing the demands of their family and children, and fulfilling societal responsibilities. Managing the competing demands of job and family life presents a significant challenge for working women. Women in the workforce who have schedules that are harder to adjust

often report having more family conflicts than working women who have more flexible schedules. This can result in a wide variety of health problems, including frequent headaches, hypertension, obesity, and so on. [4]

According to the findings of a comprehensive study, the levels of stress experienced by working women increase in a manner that is directly proportionate to their ages. It's possible that this is due to the additional duties that are placed on older women, both at home and at their places of employment. The amount of time spent at work is another factor that contributes to the stress experienced by working women. It's possible that this is because of the nature of the work that they do, which tyres them out both mentally and physically. The arrangement for child care is another another factor that contributes to the stress experienced by working women. Working women are more likely to experience stress because of the additional demands placed on them to properly plan for the care of their children and their day-to-day activities [2]. All of these problems that cause stress can be controlled if the institution provides a helping hand for working women in the form of support from superiors and subordinates as well as the appropriate number of paid and unpaid leaves. As an additional means of relieving stress, working women may benefit from engaging in activities such as spending time with their families, engaging in yoga and meditation, engaging in entertainment and music, and so on.

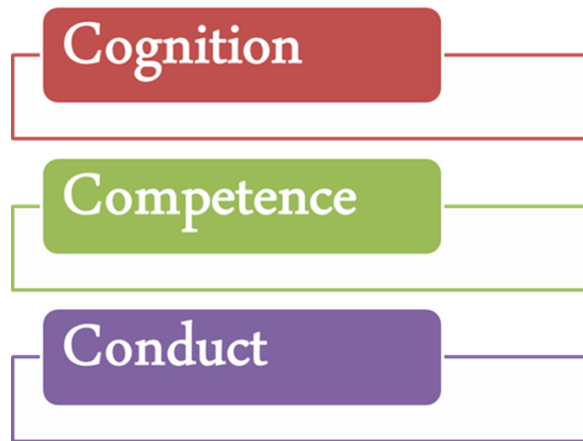
5. SUGGESTIONS FOR A HEALTHY WORK-LIFE BALANCE

According to Jim Bird [3] CEO of worklifebalance.com, having a work-life balance does not entail having an equal balance between one's personal and professional lives. It is the process of carefully coordinating several aspects of an individual's life, including as their family, employment, leisure activities, social obligations, health, career, and spirituality. While some of the activities require a greater focus, others may require less concentration on your part. A healthy work-life balance can be achieved by giving importance to these human pursuits and striking a delicate balance between them.

The Work-Life Balance Tips are Recommended by the Three-Factor Model.

This concept proposes that the key to achieving a healthy work-life balance is in maintaining a balance of three factors: cognition, competence, and conduct in both one's family life and one's professional life.

Three Factor Model



The ability of working women to effectively engage in her numerous roles as mother, spouse, sister, daughter, and so on is enabled by their knowledge about themselves, others, and the responsibilities involved in family life. In addition to this, it paves the way for children to cultivate good relationships with other people and clarifies the responsibilities associated with the various roles they play. A person's ability to get an understanding of their organisation, their working environment, and the duties that they are required to perform can help them strike the ideal balance between their professional life and their personal life.

The capacity of working women to successfully navigate their personal and professional lives is another element that plays a role in the work-life balance debate. She should be a peacekeeper in the family by talking about how others make her feel and encouraging others to do the same. Additionally, she should be an effective networker. Women need to be able to make decisions, have technical expertise, and be able to communicate well with their team in order to succeed in the workplace. Working women have the additional responsibility of managing their behaviour, which includes preserving their connections with members of their families and engaging in social activity through their everyday interactions. Additionally, the manner in which they conduct

themselves while at work need to be role-based, and consequently professional and formal.

6. CONCLUSION

In the article, the problems and difficulties that working women face in the contemporary era of the 21st century were examined. The paper draws attention to and provides a detailed description of the challenges associated with both one's personal and professional lives. In order to successfully maintain a healthy balance in their personal and professional lives while still remaining physically fit, women must face a variety of difficult circumstances and tests. In the end, the article ends with some advice on how to strike a balance, in which the primary concentration is placed on the three primary aspects of knowledge, skills, and behaviour. As a result, a woman in the 21st century requires an increased amount of psychological and social assistance from both society and the governing body.

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