



Problems Faced by Working Women in India

Ms. Nupur

ABSTRACT

Globally a lot of changes have been taken place in the last hundred years with men accepting women working outside of their homes because of the dire economic needs of the family, society and sometimes the countries also. Women in this era work at odd hours, especially working all night side by side with men. With all the advancements in technology and attitudes there are still societies in which women are not able to achieve their full potential as many domestic factors stand as barriers in a woman's professional life. One of the major problems is handling the different roles they play at their work place and at home. Due to these conflicting expectations women are facing difficulties and they are put to a lot of stress that affects their physical and mental health. In this paper we will examine the common problems faced by working women globally.

KEYWORDS : Women, Women employees, Workplace, Family

INTRODUCTION

The women face constraints beyond those already placed on them by other hierarchical practices. These cultural rules place some Indian women in a paradoxical situation when a family suffers economically, people feel that a woman should go out and work, yet at the same time the woman's participation in employment outside the home is viewed as unfortunate. When a family recovers from an economic crisis or attempts to improve its status, women may be kept at home as a demonstration of the family's morality and as a symbol of its financial security. As in many other countries, working women of all segments of Indian society faces various forms of discrimination including sexual harassment. Even professional women find discrimination: two-thirds of the women in one study felt that they had to work harder to receive the identical benefits as compared to employed men at the same level. Sharing of responsibility at work place or taking independent decisions is still a remote possibility for them. Since globalization women are able to get more jobs however the work they get is more casual in nature or are the one that men do not prefer to do or is left by them to move to higher or better jobs. 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 tasks. Although the cultural restrictions women face are changing, women are still not as free as men to participate in the formal economy. At risk are millions of poor who depend on the income generated by one or more women in their household. Female workers tend to be younger than males. Even then throughout the economy, women tend to hold lower-level positions than men even when they have sufficient skills to perform higher-level jobs. Researchers have estimated that female agricultural laborers were usually paid 40 to 60 percent of the male wage. Research has shown that women contribute a higher share of their earnings to the family and are less likely to spend it on themselves. They work as lawyers, nurses, doctors, teachers and secretaries etc. There is no profession today where women are not employed. However, it is true that working women have to face problems by virtue of their sex. For centuries, women have been subjected to exploitation and torture physically, sexually and mentally. There are innumerable challenges and problems faced by them both at home and work place.

PROBLEMS FACED BY WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA

Sexual Harassment: Today, almost all working women are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. Jobs where men are in an immediate supervisory position give them an opportunity to exploit their subordinate women and demands sexual favours in return of other benefits and promotions. If refused the boss takes out other means to make her life miserable. If a woman is praised for her work or promoted on merit, her colleagues attribute it to sexual favours. This psychological pressure can easily lead to a woman resigning from her job. There is need of changing the mindset of the society. Simply enacting laws is not sufficient.

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. In order to achieve success in corporate sector, women feel that they must do better than their male colleagues. This leads to higher expectations and efficiency by their bosses and subordinates. Working in such conditions inevitably puts strain on women to greater extent as compared to men, thus making them less eager in their career. Maternity leave is seldom given and other women's issues do not occur on the priority list of most of the trade unions.

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. 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. 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.

Poor Security: It is one of the major issue that women face in BPO sector as they mostly fall victim of crimes at workplace due to lack of security. Many cases have been registered where women working at BPO sector have become victims of sexual abuses and rapes while going back home due to lack of proper security provided to employees. Women employees working in night shift are more vulnerable to such incidents.

Unequal Pay: It is another important issue that women face at their offices. Even though, women prove to be more proficient and well organized than male employees most of the time, they are not paid likewise.

Working at odd hours: 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.

Balancing Work-Family Life: Work life balance is very important so as to have a harmonious existence with colleagues and family members without facing any stress and stress related problems. To achieve this one must keep in mind the following points: a) **Time management** to manage the time between her work and family life to have a balanced life with fewer conflicts. b) **Stress management:** When there are too many responsibilities for one to take care of then there

definitely is a mental stress due to psychological pressures. Their health will get affected if for a long duration a person faces stress. c) **Technology management:** Women have to outsource help where and when needed so that she and her family can reduce conflicts to a large extent.

Lack of Family Support: At times, the family doesn't support women to leave her household work and go to office. They do not allow women working till late in office which also slow down the performance of the women and this as a result affects their promotion.

Insufficient Maternity Leaves: Inadequate maternity leave not only affects the performance of women employees at work, but is also unfavorable to their personal lives.

Travelling for work: There are men and family members who question women if they have to travel a lot because these people feel that the primary duty of women is to take care of the children and do the household duties they are responsible for. In many cases women do not take up jobs that entail a lot of travel or give up flourishing careers for this reason. It is very difficult for the woman to leave home without making reliable arrangements especially for childcare.

CONCLUSION

Policies and legal system alone cannot help in curbing the problems faced by women at work place- the overall mind- set and acceptance level of the people needs to transform. Just letting women work outside home does not mean that society treats men and women equally. The problems that women face in their workplaces should be put to an end and then only it can be said that men and women have identical status. Even though there are various laws that are made for protection of women even in workplace but due to lack of proper implementation and interpretation of law, it has not been quite effective in protecting women from the crime and inequality in their workplace. Organizations are going out of their way to ensure they endow with safe work atmosphere for their women employees, and are also putting up policies to make sure the women feel motivated to work and go on with their career, even after child birth.

REFERENCES

1. Desai, N (1996). "Women's Employment and their Familial Role in India," in Shah, A M; | 2. Baviskar, B S and Ramaswamy, E A (Eds.), Social Structure and Change: Women in Indian Society, Volume 2, New Delhi, India: Sage, 98-112. | 3. Glenn, H. and Walters, J. (1966), "Feminine Stress in the Twentieth Century", Journal of Home Economics, Vol.58, pp. 703-707. | 4. Greenhaus, H.J., Collins, M.K. & Shaw, D.J., (2003) "The relation between work-family balance and quality of life", Journal of Vocational Behaviour, Vol. 63, pp. 510-531. | 5. Gadgil D.R., (1965) "Women in working force in India", Asia Publishing House, Delhi | 6. Hate Chandrakala A. (1969) "Changing Status of Women in Modern India", Vikas Publication, Delhi. | 7. Jain Devika(ed) (1975) "Indian Women", Publications Division, Government of India, Delhi. | 8. Kapur Promila, (1970) "Marriage and Working women in India", Delhi, Vikas Publication. | 9. Kapur Promila, (1974) "The changing status of the working women in India", Vikas Publication, Delhi. | 10. Shrinivas M.N (1978) "The Changing position of Indian Women, Delhi, Oxford Uni. Press. |