Research Paper Commerce

Occupational Stress and Challenges Faced by Working Women in India

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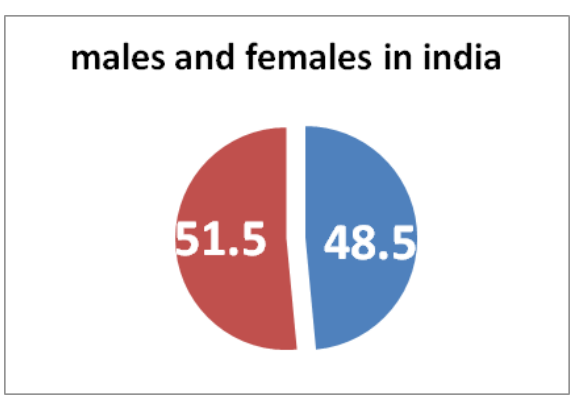
ABSTRACT

In India as the result of changing scenario of the present world in recent years, it has been observed that there has been increasing trend in number of women enterprises. Being second largest populated country in the world half of its population comprises females. With the spread of education as more and more women are becoming entrepreneurs they are also facing challenges both at home front as well as on work place front. So some steps should be taken by the employers, policy makers and family members to reduce stress of working women in India. Present paper is an attempt to discuss the stress level and challenges faced by working women in India.

KEYWORDS Scenario, entrepreneurs, challenges, stress

Introduction

Today, women represent over 40% of the global labour force. Approximately 70% of women in developed countries and 60% in developing countries are engaged in paid employment. Worldwide, more women than ever before are completing higher levels of education. Better job opportunities have increased many women's independence and resulted in a new status and role in their families and society. In India, women's are becoming educated at very fast speed, and also doing different kinds of jobs in different fields. Following is some statistics of women in India. As per Census 2011, the final population of India is 1210.57 million comprising 587.45 million (48.5%) females and 623.12 million (51.5 %) males

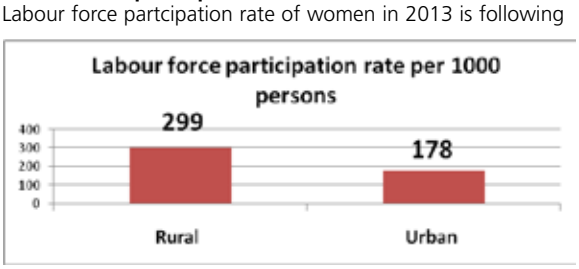


Source : Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation Government of India

Position of Women in India

Labour force participation rate :

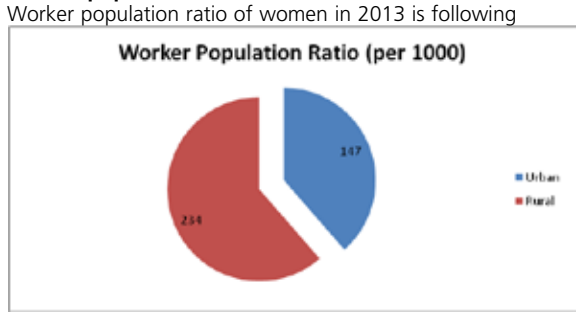
Labour force partcipation rate of women in 2013 is following



Source : Report on Third Annual Employment & Unemployment Survey (2012-13)

Worker population ratio:

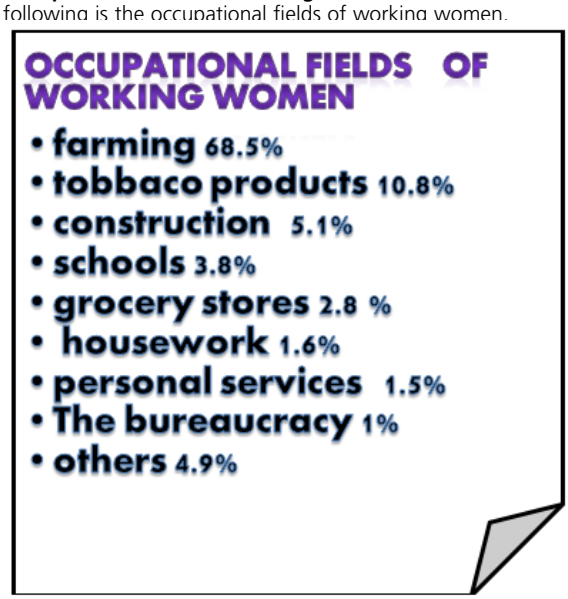
Worker population ratio of women in 2013 is following



Source : Report on Third Annual Employment & Unemployment Survey (2012-13)

Occupational Fields of working women in India:

following is the occupational fields of working women.



Occupational 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.

"17 percent of Indian working women face sexual harassment"

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 reorganisations, 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.

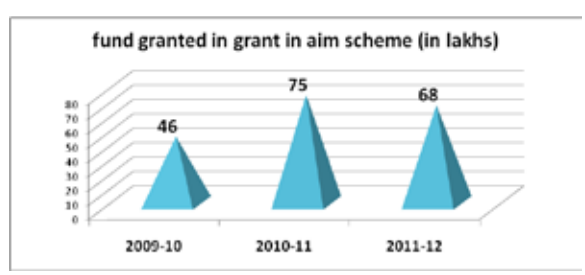
Consequences of Problems Faced by Women

Physical	Psychological & Behavioral
• Headaches • Stomach problems • Eating disorders • Sleep disturbances • Fatigue • Muscle aches & pains • High Blood Pressure • Heart disease	• Serious depression • Inefficiency in work • Suicidal behavior • Domestic violence • Anxiety • Irritability • Low morale • Depression • Alcohol & drug use • Feeling powerless

Initiatives taken to reduce working stress By govt. (ministry of labour and employment)

1. Grant in aid scheme The Ministry is running a Grant-in-aid Scheme for the welfare of women labour. This Scheme, which has been continuing since Sixth Five Year Plan is administered through voluntary organizations by giving grant-in-aid to them for the following purposes:

- Organizing working women and educating them about their rights/duties, Legal aid to working women.
- Seminars, workshops, etc. aiming at raising the general consciousness of the society about the problems of women labour.



Source : ministry of labour and employment www.labour.nic.in

2. Protective provisions for women employees:
➢ **Safety/Health Measures**
- Section 22(2) of the Factories Act, 1948 provides that no woman shall be allowed to clean, lubricate or adjust any part of a prime mover or of any transmission machinery while the prime mover or transmission machinery is in motion.
- Section 27 of the Factories Act, 1948 prohibits employment of women in any part of a factory for pressing cotton in which a cotton opener is at work.

➢ **Regarding Night Work**

- Section 66(1)(b) of the Factories Act, 1948 states that no woman shall be required or allowed to work in any factory except between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- Section 25 of the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966 stipulates that no woman shall be required or allowed to work in any industrial premise except between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- Section 46(1)(b) of the Mines Act, 1952 prohibits employment of women in any mine above ground except between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.

➢ **Prohibition of Sub-terrain Work**

- Section 46(1)(b) of the Mines Act, 1952 prohibits employment of women in any part of a mine which is below ground.

➢ **Maternity Benefit**

- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 regulates the employment of women in certain establishments for certain periods before and after child-birth and provides maternity benefits. The Building and Other Constructions (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 provides for maternity benefit to female beneficiaries of the Welfare Fund.

➢ **Separate Latrines & Washing Facilities**

Provision exists under the following:

- Section 57 of the Contract Labour Act, 1970.
- Section 42 of the Factories Act.
- Section 43 of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979.

➢ **Provision for Crèches**

Provision exists under the following:

- Section 48 of the Factories Act, 1948.
- Section 44 of the Inter State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979.
- Section 12 of the Plantations Labour Act, 1951.
- Section 14 of the Beedi and Cigar Workers Act, 1966.
- Section 35 of the Building and other Constructions Act, 1996.

3. Central/state advisory committee

A Central Advisory Committee has been set up at the Centre under the Act to advise the Government on providing increasing employment opportunities for women and generally reviewing the steps taken for effective implementation of the Act. The Committee has been reconstituted vide Gazette Notification dated 12.10.2010.

4. Working Women's Forum

The (WWF) is a women's organization in southern India. It was founded in 1978 by Jaya Arunachalam in Madras (Chennai). The WWF aims to empower poor women in southern India by providing microcredit, a trade union, health care and training.

5. Women's hostels

The objective of the scheme is to promote availability of safe and conveniently located accommodation for working women, with day care facility for their children, wherever possible, in urban, semi urban, or even rural areas where employment opportunity for women exist. To achieve this objective, the scheme will assist projects for construction of new hostel buildings, expansion of existing hostel buildings and hostel buildings in rented premises to be made available to all working women without any distinction with respect to caste, religion, marital status etc., subject to norms prescribed under the scheme. This scheme is operated by ministry of women and child development.

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. Women should also be encouraged to take the benefits of policy measures introduced by the govt.

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