

STATUS OF WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews the status of working women in India. Women make up almost half of the workforce. In India both married and unmarried women, now a days are not dependent on anyone and they earn for their own needs as well as for their family needs. The number of working women across the world has increased drastically. Now a days the women are very open to accepting and facing new challenges. Despite there is huge women involvement in almost all the countries in the society, some narrow minds still consider women as home makers and they born to live within the boundaries of four walls of house. Women in the present context are playing many roles such as investors, consumers, entrepreneurs, scientists, lawyers and doctors. They not only contribute positively to the needs of the family, but also they create number of job opportunities to strengthen the domestic and world economy. In fact, women play a role to increase the economic growth of the country. Hence, they used to entering into sectors that were reserved only for men (pilots, defense, drivers).

Keywords: Working Women, Workforce. Women Employment, Empowered Women, Self-Help Groups.

Introduction

In India both married and unmarried women, now a days are not dependent on anyone and they earn for their own needs as well as for their family needs. The number of working women across the world has increased drastically. Now a days the women are very open to accepting and facing new challenges. Despite there is huge women involvement in almost all the countries in the society, some narrow minds still consider women as home makers and they born to live within the boundaries of four walls of house. ¹Women in the present context are playing many roles such as investors, consumers, entrepreneurs, scientists, lawyers and doctors. They not only contribute positively to the needs of the family, but also they create number of job opportunities to strengthen the domestic and world economy. In fact, women play a role to increase the economic growth of the country. Hence, they used to entering into sectors that were reserved only for men (pilots, defense, drivers). Women make up almost half of the workforce. Few women in their families have appointed someone to take care of health emergencies, pick their children up from school and make them to do their homework, apart from this they also taking care of their elderly parent to a doctor's appointment yet, as mothers' labor force participation has dramatically increased in the past decades. The development of an infrastructure to support workers with family care giving responsibilities has been largely neglected. ²Women are the large majority of family care givers, and in the absence of reliable family supports, too many women are forced to make difficult decisions between keeping their jobs and caring for their family members.

The Status of Working Women in India

In Urban areas according to The National Family Health Survey II (1998) indicates that the working women face more violence as compared to the rural working women. Because of they are economically active and better informed about domestic violence their rights. They threaten male dominance on one hand and may result in better reporting of incidences of domestic violence on the other. According to International Clinical Epidemiologists Network 2000; mostly the educated and women who are employed facing more violence. Power leads to the violence. In our country most of the women dependent on men. As a result of this the power prevails on men only because our country is a patriarchal society.

Generally, less amount is being paid to women not only that they need to work extra an hour or two more than men. ³As per the data published in the year 2013, the ration of population and women employment was at 47.1 percent and that of men was at 72.2 percent. It has been assumed that the pay gap and the participation of employment between men and women will boost the global economy to 76 percent. Organization for Economic Corporation and Development stated that the men spend 22 years for sleeping whereas the women in their life span spend 10 years of their life in Kitchen. Moreover, a man in India on an average spends only

18-20 minutes contributes to fulfill the homely tasks. As culture in India is act as an obstacles to women in accessing jobs in some area like departmental stores, big factories and the public sector. ⁵Most of the women are perhaps involved in disguised wage work in rural areas than in the formal labour force in the urban areas. There has been data that over ninety percent of workingwomen who are involved in the informal sector in India and this data is not included in, official statistics. The jobs involved the informal sector consist of domestic servant, small trader, artisan, or field labourer on a family farm. Most of these jobs are being unskilled and low paid and do not bring benefits to the worker. Thus, the actual participation of labor force rate for women is estimated to be higher than that which can be calculated from available data. In fact, the vulnerable sections are the poorest of the poor. Should they become ill, lose their job and not able to continue working, they and their families fall into debt and find themselves in the vicious circle of poverty. The women workmen do not have regular wage and salaried employment in the organized sector of the labor market.

⁶As per 2001 census, all female workers' average age of was 33.6 compared to the male average of 36.50. As per 2011 census 31.20 per cent of women are estimated economically active individuals. Women earn 62 per cent of men's salary for equal work and 26.20 per cent of women compared to 9.0per cent of men cited a lack of role models as a barrier to advancement. India has a young workforce and population. India expects to add an additional 110 million people to its labour force in the next ten years, with both younger people and women entering the workforce.

Importance of Women Employment

The women are working, they are financially independent and earning income at par with their counterparts then also they have no right in their own income. Before marriage, all their financial decisions are taken by their fathers and after marriage by their husbands. Ergo women stay poor not only in rural but also in urban areas too. Major investments are done by their male counterparts as women are considered to be emotional and cannot take the financial decisions.

The reality is entirely different. Women are better decision makers because if they can take dexterous decisions in their house, then why can't outside. They are commonsensical and better managers. The whole set of responsibility of managing home and office lie on their shoulders, and they manage so beautifully yet they are considered as poor decision makers and are not allowed to take financial decisions. In the professional world too, women are facing lot of hardships. Women's representation in management is very low. Globally, women comprise only around 10 per cent of senior management positions in Fortune 500 companies (Chadha, 2002). While liberalization of the Indian economy has created considerable employment opportunities for many, including women, who possess marketable skills and talent, women are seen mainly in HR and Information Technology (IT) departments and servicing activities. Their presence in

hardcore production or marketing is less than men's and still lower at strategic policy-influencing levels. Women are not preferred in production or shop floor departments as they are considered to be physically weak and are not suitable in these areas female managers are observed to be working predominantly in HR, Public Relations (PR) and administration at subordinate or junior levels, and are often found in soft fields like fashion, clothing and beauty products. A large number of women also work in newspaper organizations, the electronic media, the IT industry and service organizations. Nevertheless, over the last three decades, women have been entering a variety of occupations and are diversifying into different professions formerly the exclusive domain of males. The working women find dual challenge of handling family and work pressure. They are expected to fulfill their dual roles efficiently. After crossing domestic impediments they are not able to give their optimum ability in the workplace and hence lag in the organization. The stress generated in the home affects the personal and organizational performance drastically. Earlier women were only responsible for performing their domestic roles, but as the time changed and they became a part of the workforce of the country they are now held responsible for performing both roles as a householder and as a professional worker. While managing work/life balance they are overburdened with the work, if they give their optimum capacity in fulfilling their professional duties, they fail to perform their traditional roles; this creates guilt in them as they think they are ignoring their foremost responsibility. This guilt ultimately distracts them in performing either of their roles. The husbands feel beneath their esteem to help the wives in sharing the household responsibility and believe it to be the only responsibility of the women in our country.

As compared to the foreign countries, wives are treated as domestic engineer and they feel no shame in helping their partner in household works. The educated working women, even while holding very responsible posts, continue to be over conscious of their duties and obligations at home—duties towards their husband, children and home. The inner conflict and tension was experienced particularly if they are very keen to play both their roles very efficiently and are desirous of paying equal attention to their home and work. Time apportionment of a working woman was related to the type of responsibilities at home and at work place. Moreover, women who choose to combine marriage with career had to face problems in allocating time and resources between the two major responsibilities.

Conclusion

Educating women and giving them the ability to stand on their own feet has been a priority in the globe. Ancient India was a center of learning and noted women scholars during that time contributed to the advancement of society. If women are given priority to gain access to education, no doubt they impact in the productivity of the economy. Empowered Indian women through self-help groups can take initiatives and bring positive social change in rural as well as underdeveloped regions. There are number of examples with regard to women self-help groups. In

India which have generated gainful employment and income for many families in villages and small towns, especially they are in backwardness in terms of economic condition. Moreover, Women can also positively contribute to the social welfare of the country. Many noted women activists have championed the cause of gender justice and equity in India. So, Women-friendly policies and laws will be framed as a result of this. This can change the way the world looks at India. We all know the women leaders such as Vijalakshmi Pandit and Sarojini Naidu played a key role in the Indian freedom movement. Women entrepreneurs are gaining benefiting from well-implemented governmental programs related to welfare of the women. They can contribute significantly to the economic growth the development of India in multifaceted ways.

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