

## CHALLENGES FACED BY WORKING WOMEN IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA

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### **ABSTRACT:**

There is a wide variety of religious practises, ethnic groups, cultural practises, and customs in India, making it one of the most traditional countries in the world. In India, the primary responsibility of women is the household, and their involvement is restricted to matters pertaining to the home. The fields of nursing, medicine, and education, which need a nurturing and loving attitude, are dominated by women in India. However, even if there are female engineers, managers, or geologists who are well qualified, preference will be given to a male candidate with the same qualifications who is available. The purpose of this study was to explore and identify the variables that impede female employees from striving to higher posts, as well as the obstacles and problems that are confronted by female workers. In subsequent sections, the research makes an effort to illustrate the actual situation of working women in India and also makes an effort to shed light on the primary challenges faced by working women.

*Keywords: challenges, traditional, women workers*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The life of a working woman is marked by a significant amount of stress brought on by her job. Work and family responsibilities are a part of every working woman's life, and striking a healthy balance between the two has become an important problem for individuals and families in many nations. The definition provided by the World Health Organization "Occupational stress" or "job-related stress" "is the response people may have when confronted with work expectations and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and talents and which test their ability to manage," according to the American Psychological Association (APA). Causes of stress in one's line of work The cause of occupational stress is an imbalance between one's personal life and professional life. There are several causes that might lead to a disconnect between one's personal life and their professional life.

In India, there is an age-old proverb that asserts women's work is inferior to that of males in terms of both capability and efficiency. Women are held back by the mindset that believes they are unqualified for certain occupations. In spite of the restrictions of the constitution, gender prejudice continues to be a problem in their hiring practises. In addition to this, the same mentality is responsible for the unfairness of having different pay rates for the same work. Even after 74 years of independence, there has been little progress made toward achieving actual equality.

The majority of working women are vulnerable to harassment in today's society, regardless of their social position, personal qualities, or the nature of the jobs they perform. When they go to register complaints, women are subjected to harassment in a variety of settings, including public transportation, workplaces,

educational institutions, medical facilities, and reception areas, and even at police stations. It comes as a surprise that those charged with upholding the law are the ones who have been breaching and outraging the modesty of women. The majority of women have a tendency to work in low-paying service occupations, but the majority of males are in immediate supervisory positions, which gives them the opportunity to take advantage of the women who work under them.

Nevertheless, Indian girls still frequently experience overt forms of discrimination in the workplace. They almost never have prospects for advancement or promotions at their places of employment. In spite of the passage of the Equal Remuneration Act in 1976, the vast majority of working women continue to be paid less than their male counterparts and are therefore denied the right to equal pay. In factories and other labor-intensive businesses, this is often the standard operating procedure.

Due to the prevalence of traditional values in Indian society, it can be challenging for a working woman to maintain a healthy balance between her professional and personal responsibilities. Figuring out what time it is at six o'clock is not going to be tolerated in certain households. Families that do not object to these working hours may live with a large amount of concern each day over the security of their female members while they are on the go. An employed woman faces a variety of challenges as a direct result of the careful protection and scrutiny that she receives from both her family and, by extension, society. A further challenge that working girls face is an absence of adequate support from their families. There are occasions when families do not encourage young women to leave their domestic responsibilities in order to pursue careers outside the home. They also discourage women from staying late at work, which hinders the performance of the women and, as a result, limits the advancement opportunities available to the women. Another significant challenge that a working mother must contend with is inadequate time off for maternity leave.

This not only has a negative impact on the efficiency with which female employees accomplish their jobs, but it also makes their personal life more difficult. Delusive expectations, particularly during the time of business reorganizations, which often impose unhealthy and excessive pressures on the worker, may be an incredible source of stress and suffering for the worker. This is especially true during the times when the firm is reorganizing. employment that is beyond hyperbolic. A person will genuinely feel physically and emotionally fatigued if their job requires them to work extremely long hours and be subjected to severe expectations to perform at top levels continuously for the same income. An employee's anxieties can be further exacerbated by factors like as extensive travel, an excessive amount of time away from family, and an excessive amount of time spent alone. It is going to be quite stressful to adjust to the culture of the geographical location, regardless of whether or not you are starting a new job at the same time. The lesson of life is that one must learn to adjust oneself to the many characteristics of a geographical point culture, such as the communication patterns of the boss as well as because the co-workers. Inability to properly adapt to the culture of the location in which one is working might lead to awkward clashes with coworkers and sometimes even bosses. Politics and gossip at work are likely to be important sources of stress in a number of different situations.

## **Factors Affecting Working Women**

The employment rate for Indian women is now barely 25%. According to the India Development Report published by the World Bank in 2017, India came in at position 120 out of 131 nations in terms of the percentage of women who participated in the labour force. Therefore, why aren't women contributing to the

economic prosperity of our country? What obstacles do they have to overcome, and what prevents them from engaging in the workforce?

I conducted an interview with a young female entrepreneur to get her perspective on the difficulties she and her all-female crew experience as a result of the duties they have at home. In today's Indian society, there is a lot of ambiguity around the concept of 'gender roles.' When a woman goes outside the home to earn money, it is expected of her that she would assume full responsibility for her household. Because there are certain days when all I want to do is come back home and have my spouse make me a dinner, dealing with this situation has proven to be one of the most difficult challenges I've ever faced. It is impossible for men to contribute to society since they lack even the most fundamental life skills, such as how to cook or run a household.

When it comes to hiring women for employment, there is often a gender prejudice at play. They have no trouble getting hired for occupations that need "nurturing," such as nurses or teachers, but a skilled female mechanical engineer typically has a difficult time proving that she is as good as, if not better than, her male counterparts in "hardcore" jobs. Even in other fields of work, women face discrimination because of the perception that they are not "made for" environments with high levels of competitiveness. The wage difference between men and women is another manifestation of these prejudices. For the same work, women get paid less than males since it is assumed that they "aren't as efficient" as men.

In the study conducted by Indian Woman Network (IWN) and Ernst & Young (EY), 47% of respondents claimed that their organisations "had no more than 5% women in senior executive roles." This information is cited in the report titled "The Future is HER." 42% of the women who participated in the survey reported experiencing "managerial prejudice," and 33% of those polled said that "there are different performance criteria and expectations imposed from male and female workers working at the same level."

The prejudices that are held against girls are antiquated, and we ought to do away with them in order to make our country a more positive and productive place. We have come a long way from the time of our grandparents, when it was difficult for females to leave their homes; thus, we need to keep the momentum going to encourage extra girls to follow their aspirations with self-assurance. We have come a long way since the time of our grandparents. We tend to get rid the societal hurdles that prohibit ladies from skilled success. It is not appropriate for us to discount the abilities of any person on the basis of their gender. It is possible that one of the most important steps toward achieving gender equality is to give women more agency in the workplace and in business. Let's make it possible for women not just to leave their homes but also to excel in their professional lives and realise their full potential by giving them more opportunities.

As members of a society that values equality, it is our duty to provide them with the opportunity and, as a result, the space in which they can pursue their goals when they are not otherwise occupied. The term "family-work balance" refers to the ability of working women to maintain a healthy balance between their personal and professional lives. To maintain a healthy balance between work and family life, however, it is not uncommon for certain circumstances to arise that lead to contention on either the social or professional front. She is unable to properly prioritise her responsibilities. As a consequence of this, she decides to withdraw from her career due to mundane responsibilities such as caring for her children, her elderly in-laws or parents, and many other family demands. It is possible for a person to find success in females if they are willing to share some of the duties that they have. they are responsible for the upbringing of children, the care of

spouses, family, and friends, the upkeep of dwellings, participation in volunteer groups, and the performance of civic responsibilities. It is a commonly held belief that the conflict that arises between a woman's job and her family life is to blame for the dearth of women in upper-level firm positions. This theory holds that women are forced to choose between their careers and their families. Some women choose not to advance in their careers in order to escape the added pressure that would come with balancing their personal and professional lives. Some businesses were reluctant to promote women because they assumed that women would prioritise their families above their job responsibilities and would therefore be less productive.

According to the results of the 68th Round of the National Sample Survey, which was conducted in 2011-2012, one hundred out of every one hundred females worked in rural regions. When it came to males, the number that corresponded to that variation was fifty-four. The percentage of women who participated was much lower in metropolitan regions. It was found that there were only fourteen working women for every fifty-four and a half employed males. According to a research titled "Empowering women and girls in the Asian nation" published by the consulting company Deloitte, the percentage of women in the Asian country who are participating in the labour force has decreased from 36.7% in 2005 to 26% in 2017. This is a significant decline.

According to the National Crimes analysis Bureau, the total number of crimes committed against girls increased from 3.3 lakhs to 6 lakhs in 2017. This is a seven percent increase from the previous year. We are at twelve percent representation, which is far lower than the global average of twenty-two percent, since there are only seventy-eight female Members of Parliament out of a total of 543. Countries such as Rwanda, European country, and East Pakistan have a significantly higher percentage of women serving in positions of political power. Why is an Asian nation that is democratic and has made thoughtful legal reforms that promote girls not performing well when it comes to ensuring that women have equal involvement in the economy and society? Girls tend to lag behind men in terms of attaining leadership positions in business, entrepreneurial, and political arenas. This is true regardless of the field.

There are a unit 2 major categories of obstacles that prevent women from having a larger, more significant presence at the geographical location and inside the property right. External: The socio-cultural aspects and the predominately patriarchal institutions do not make it easy for women to enter the employment. The girl is expected to perform the majority of the caregiving and household chores, the vast majority of which is unpaid. According to the report "Mind the Gap: State of Employment in the Asian countries" published by Oxfam in 2017, Indian females together put in 16.4 billion hours of unpaid labour per day. According to OECD knowledge, the average daily social unit work done by Indian males is fifty-six minutes, whereas the average daily social unit labour done by Indian ladies is three hundred and fifty three minutes. If this job were taken into consideration, the percentage of women participating in the labour force would increase to eighty-one percent. The lives of Indian girls are currently in a difficult situation. They are compelled to continue working at reception, which is employment that is neither respected for its quantity nor its social standing. Because of this, they are unable to leave and find job that has a significant amount. Women who do not conform to the standard figure confront a unique set of obstacles. It's possible that harassment will continue to be a problem. Recent events surrounding the #MeToo movement have brought to light the pervasive and sneaky character of this beast. According to data gathered by the Ministry of Women and Kid Development between the years of 2014 and 2017, the rate at which women were subjected to harassment increased by 54%.

This, despite the fact that a poll conducted by the Indian Bar Association indicated that seventy percent of female victims of harassment do not come forward to report it. Girls do not feel comfortable moving to work and being at work despite the existence of legislative measures and organisations of swish councils. Another obstacle is that the societal expectation from moms paired with inadequate service facilities. When they have their first child, many working women face the "Maternal Wall," at which point many decide to leave the workforce. It does not appear that workplaces are certificate-required or double-gearred to provide working mothers the independence and suppleness of service they require. Even if males don't appear to be interested in doing domestic chores, they still don't play an active role in parenting their children. A recent poll conducted by Times Employment discovered that due to service issues, ninety percent of working women considered leaving their jobs, but just ten percent of working males entertained the idea of doing so. The recent horrible gang rape of a doctor in Hyderabad highlights all of the problems that exist within society and the system, including hazardous streets, a lack of suitable transportation, aggressive and abusive males, insufficient police patrol, and unfeeling officials. Even if a girl's family considers it acceptable for her to have a boyfriend, she should nevertheless put up a gruelling struggle against the globe. Internal: Girls themselves have prejudices and attitudes that operate as hurdles as a result of being defeated to years of rigidity. This is a difficulty that is internal.

According to the findings of a Social Attitudes Survey conducted by Economic and Political Weekly, forty percent of both men and women feel that a woman should not be required to work if her husband is the primary breadwinner in the household. Since many women are brought up to think that being a mother is a woman's primary job and obligation, many of them choose to be stay-at-home mothers out of their own free will. According to the findings of a recent study conducted by Google and Bain & Co. titled "Powering the Economy with HER-Women Entrepreneurship in an Asian country," sixty-nine percent of women entrepreneurs in this country believe that cultural and personal factors are the primary impediments to their development as business owners. A lack of self-assurance and shyness, as well as a perceived deficiency in the abilities of networking, team building, risk-taking, and financial management, were cited by the females as issues that acted as roadblocks. Turning our attention to the Pardah or the Ghunghat In today's world, it's not realistic to expect young women to spend their whole lives confined to the confines of their homes. The new economy requires everyone to participate on an equal level. According to a research that was published by McKinsey in 2017, boosting the percentage of women who are employed by 10 percent would result in an increase of \$770 billion in our worth. The change needs to take place on three levels: the private, the social, and the institutional one if we want everyone to share in the benefits of economic growth and social equity. Men have no choice but to go moving as soon as women have the self-assurance to leave the house.

## **Changing Status of Working Women in India**

The fact that there are so few opportunities for women to advance in India's workforce undoubtedly does not come as a surprise to anybody nowadays. From the results of India's census and official surveys to the findings of research carried out by a wide variety of organisations, it has become abundantly clear that there is a considerable distance to travel until there are an equal number of women and men working in India. Now, an article that was published in the Indian categorical claims that the number of rural Indian females who are employed in India's workforce has significantly decreased in recent years. It is stated there were only twelve months of rural girls discovered to be a locale of the personnel in 2012, which is a significant decrease from the number of rural girls identified in the workforce in 2005 (49th). The following is an excerpt

from an article that explains why this is such a significant cause for concern: "This may be a matter of concern as it is thought that women's paid employment extends their ability to influence decision-making among the family and empowers them a lot more broadly speaking in society as a whole."

According to the authors of the article, the diminishing availability of work opportunities that are suitable for women may be to blame for the precipitous drop in the number of working women in rural regions. Girls who live in remote regions and are primarily responsible for running the household and taking care of their families sometimes find it easier to look for part-time work in the vicinity of their houses. This makes it possible for them to supplement their incomes. Moreover, jobs associated to farming are by far the most common sort of employment. [Case in point:] "However, the number of jobs available in the agricultural sector has been decreasing, while there has not been a proportional growth in other employment options. According to the findings of our research, the lack of suitable employment opportunities on a local level is likely responsible for more than half of the decrease in the proportion of working-age women in the labour force "The article makes this observation. The International Labor Organization published an essay in 2013 that made the observation that uneven work opportunities for men and women may be a pattern that is prevalent in the majority of south Asian nations.

According to the International Labour Organization, whereas eighty percent of males in South Asia had been documented to utilise or sort out employment, only thirty-two percent of women appeared to be doing the same. This disparity exists despite the fact that women make up a larger percentage of the population. An economics specialist working for the International Labour Organization named Steven Kopsas stated, "Despite extremely rapid economic growth in India in recent years, we're perceiving declining feminine labour force participation rates across all age groups, across all education levels, and in both urban and rural areas." The research by the International Labour Organization also found that one of the reasons for the fall of girls' engagement in the workplace in India would be the consequence of the very fact that there are just a few sectors that employ women. This was found to be the case. In addition, there are only a limited number of occupations that have the social sanction to be attempted by women.

According to the survey, "Women in India tend to be sorted by industries and vocations," such as basic agriculture, sales and primary services, and the production of handicrafts. It also states that these industries have not witnessed job growth, and that golf has been a "brake" on the involvement of women. In an opinion piece that was published in 2015 by the New York House of Times, the author attempted to provide an explanation for the lack of women in India's armed forces. "A large portion of the explanation for why they do not work appears to exist the persistence of India's ancient gender norms," which "obtain to confirm the "purity" of ladies by protecting them from men other than their husbands and prohibiting quality outside of their homes," according to the author. The conclusion of the study included recommendations for beneficial policy changes. The International Labor Organization has suggested that India should institute an anti-discrimination legislation that would make it possible for females to have access to a greater number of employment opportunities. In addition to this, it was said that the working circumstances of women needed to be improved in order to increase the number of women who participated.

## CONCLUSION

Women's working conditions and advancement opportunities have both improved significantly in recent years, particularly in technology fields. The labour movement ought to make an effort to enhance the working

circumstances of women in a variety of ways, such as making it simpler for women to take maternity leave and providing assistance to working mothers so they may advance in their careers. Actually, the nature of women is to advance in order to achieve high quality in every sector; however, if the conditions are not ready, then a decrease in promotion and an optimization of labour will occur, and so on and so forth. Since female workers are frequently subjected to sexual harassment, the government ought to establish stringent rules for dealing with crimes of this nature. Additionally, the public transportation system can be dangerous for women, and the government ought to increase the number of inspections it conducts. People have traditionally held the belief that men should be the only ones to work and earn money, while women should be responsible for the upkeep of the household. However, given the growing pressures placed on Indian families' budgets, women should also be actively involved in earning money for their families. Because of this, there has to be a significant shift in the mentality of workers, family members, and the general public.

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