

Problems Faced by Working Women in India: An Obstacle for Women Work Participation



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ABSTRACT: India is termed as a traditional country with wide diversity in religion, ethnicity, culture and customs. The role of women in India is mostly limited to household and domestic works. women in India's workplace remain significantly under-represented. India has a female work participation rate of 20 percent which is less than the global average of 47 percent. The major objective of the study is to identify the factors responsible and creating problems for working women in India and how it has an effect on female work participation rate. The present study is conceptual in nature and is based on secondary data collected from various sources. The data collected is analysed with the aid of simple growth rate to understand the comparison in the female work participation rate over time. As per the study results it was understood that the FWPR has increased at a growth rate of 12.50 percent. Although it has been very much tough for the women in India, to survive after facing many hurdles, exploitation and discrimination still they are being persistent in their efforts and constantly trying to make their existence noticeable in the male dominated Indian society.

KEYWORDS: Working Women, Participation, Exploitation and Discrimination

INTRODUCTION

Resemblance of women as a Goddess can be perceived only in the history of India and particularly in the mythological instances who possess the virtue, compassion, affection and wisdom for the welfare of others. Over the years this tenet has been diluted under the influence of male dominance, patriarchal system and modernization in the society. With the modernization and development of education the situation of Indian women has deteriorated over time rather than getting better. A vicious chain of problems has become very traditional for Indian women.

India is termed as a traditional country with wide diversity in religion, ethnicity, culture and customs. The role of women in India is mostly limited to household and domestic works. In terms of employment structure, the women in India prefer to join professions like nurses, doctors, teachers, caring and nurturing sectors. In terms of other employments preference is given to males even if of equal qualification. Workplace has never been equal for men and women, in spite of having equal qualifications women in most occupations are discriminated on general grounds of pay, sexual harassment of women abounds in every sector of work, women are deprived of their right to maternity leaves and are often shown the door once they conceive. Promotions and top positions are often denied to deserving women, despite being equally eligible.

Women in urban areas comparatively have relative social freedom from families and have scope for getting prestigious jobs due to their level of education when compared with women in rural areas who are still bounded to daily household works and are employed as incompetent labourers. But life of a working woman is not easy both in urban and rural areas as occupational stress plays an important role in the working women's life. Working women have to balance between family and work where she faces many personal and social turmoil and problems. Whether married and unmarried women both have their own problems which they face when they move out of their homes to work. There are numerous problems and difficulties faced by working women in India, like difficulties in the workplace, remuneration issues, security problems, gender biases, assaults and exploitations, work and personal life balance etc. These problems can lead to low female work participation rate, which directly impacts the employment structure.

Women are the backbone of the society. She plays a vital role in the economic development of the country and her contribution is as equal as their male counterparts. Without active participation of women in various national, social, economic and political activities, the progress of the country will be stagnant. Upgradation in the education system and career opportunities have been strongly promoted in India to ensure universal participation of labour force which cuts gender disparity. However, women in India's workplace remain significantly under-represented. India has a female work participation rate of 20 percent which is less than the global average of 47 percent. Women workers in India are predominantly employed in agriculture and traditional rural

Problems Faced by Working Women in India: An Obstacle for Women Work Participation

industries or service sector. Women employment is critical not only for their empowerment, but also to improve their efficiency in certain field and maximizing the productivity of the nation's economy.

OBJECTIVES

The major objective of the study is to identify the factors responsible and creating problems for working women in India and how it has an effect on female work participation rate. The papers views and moves forward with the idea that the problems are reasons for the stagnant growth in female workforce. The study tries to brief out the real condition of Indian working women and also makes effort to provide suggestions to solve the problems of working women and increase in the work participation.

In India, today women are educated and are aspiring to become independent; they are also getting established like any other male entrepreneur and professional. Today Indian women are also being aware of their rights and privileges, they also seek equality and fair decisions; they also wish to feel the joy of freedom and independence and there they begin to make efforts to realize all their aspirations.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is conceptual in nature and based on secondary data collected from various sources. The study is an analysis of systematic review of literature from various articles concerning to the to subject. The secondary data with respect to female work participation rate has been sourced from Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MOSPI), Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) and Census Report 2011. For the analysis of data and to draw out the results simple growth rate method has been used.

$$\text{Growth Rate} = \frac{\text{Present Value} - \text{Past Value}}{\text{Past Value}} \times 100$$

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this modernised world, women are no longer lag behind in terms of career. They are keeping themselves shoulder to shoulder with the opposite sex. However, if a woman chooses to work, she is expected to do multiple tasks. There is no profession today where women are not employed, they are everywhere. But another true fact is that working women have to face problems and difficulties by virtue because of their gender. 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 as well as work place some of them are briefly explained below.

Discrimination at Work: At every stage of their working sphere women are subjected to discrimination like deprivation from promotions and growth opportunities. Major discrimination can be witnessed under the equal pay agenda and are underpaid in comparison to their male counterpart which is a common scenario in agriculture, factories and labour-oriented industries.

Challenges to Safety and Dignity: The orthodox mindset of certain communities or families in India makes it difficult for the women to work beyond particular time limit. If any women works beyond office hour the society will put a question mark on her dignity and moral. Moreover, sometimes they hesitate to work late night due to insecure social environment. Working woman needs to balance her domestic environment with the professional life, if not they are forced to leave the job.

Balancing Between Home and Work: Working women provide a financial support to the male counterpart as well as the family, but in spite of her contribution her image of woman being a home-maker has not much changed. If women are working outside the home, they are expected to cook food, take care of kids and all other household duties. This busy schedule deprives her of peace, rest, sleep, independent thinking and luxury life.

Unequal Opportunities in Job: Women are subjected to continue same with unequal opportunities despite having required qualifications, skills, talent, hard work and performance as she is overlooked in comparison to her male colleagues. These unequal opportunities make most of the women to settle down at less challenging jobs than their capabilities.

No Ownership on Her Own Earning: In most of the cases though women have independence of earning money by her own self, but she has no control over it. In most of the families, especially middle class, upper middle class and lower middle class, it seems that the income of the woman either goes in the hands of her father or husband, rather than in her own hands, or she is supposed to ask them to purchase anything for herself.

Sexual Harassment: A major problem faced by the working women is sexual harassment at the work place. As a working woman steps out, she is subjected to sexual abuses and harassment directly or indirectly while travelling, within office, on field, in canteen, in outdoor meetings etc. She is abused verbally, physically as well as symbolically by her colleagues, higher authority, subordinates

Problems Faced by Working Women in India: An Obstacle for Women Work Participation

etc. Women employees working in night shift are more vulnerable to such incidents. Due to these sexual harassments' women are faced with psychological pressure and sometimes forces a woman resign from her job.

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.

Lack of Family Support: Family support for a working woman is the most important key factor to encourage her for moving out and live independently. 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. Insufficient maternity leaves are 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.

Health Problems: It is true fact that a healthy woman builds a healthy community. Multiple roles played by women affects not only her own health and well-being but also affect the overall health and well-being of the family. The stress and strain they face while combining the outside work and domestic work, child care, care for elderly make her more tiresome and she gain less leisure. A women total hour of work increases at the expense of her leisure time.

Other reasons: It includes 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.

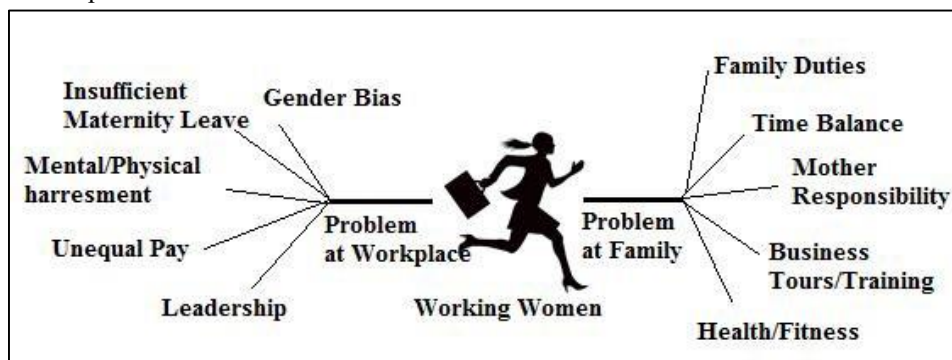


Figure 1. Challenges faced by working Women.

Source: Verma Aarti and Mulani Mahesh, 2018

State-wise Female Work Participation Rate in India

Labour force participation rate is an estimate of an economy's active workforce. The labour force participation rate is an important metric to use when analysing employment and unemployment data because it measures the number of people who are actively job-hunting as well as those who are currently employed. The labour force participation rate omits institutionalized people (in prisons, nursing homes, or mental health facilities) and members of the military. It includes all other people aged 16 or older and compares the proportion of those who are working or seeking work outside the home to those who are neither working nor seeking work outside the home. The present study concentrates only on the female work participation rate. Table 1 examines the State wise female work participation rate in India. The Table analyses the growth in the FWPR from 2011 to 2020. As observed under the Table the all India FWPR has increased at growth rate of 12.50 percent from 25.51percent in 2011 to 28.7 percent in 2020 as per the estimated figures. The highest growth rate in FWPR was witnessed under the States of Punjab, Kerala and Sikkim with percentage growth of 56.72, 48.66 and 47.84 percent, respectively. Lowest figures were observed under the States of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan with growth rate of 2.69, 3.98 and 7.06 percent, respectively. States like Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam witnessed a massive drop in the FWPR with negative growth rate of 50.71, 41.31 and 36.78 percent, respectively. With respect to Union Territories Daman and Diu had the highest growth of 133.71 percent, whereas Chandigarh witnessed the lowest growth of 17.50 percent. With the strong efforts and policies of the government in encouraging women empowerment, providing education, social security measures the numbers are yet to improve a lot, as the Indian FWPR is too low as compared to the global average.

Table 1. State-wise Female Work Participation Rate in India.

States and Union Territories	2011 (%)	2020* (%)	Growth Rate
Andhra Pradesh	36.16	37.6	3.98
Arunachal Pradesh	35.44	20.8	-41.31

Problems Faced by Working Women in India: An Obstacle for Women Work Participation

Assam	22.46	14.2	-36.78
Bihar	19.07	9.4	-50.71
Chhattisgarh	39.7	52.1	31.23
Goa	21.92	24.9	13.59
Gujarat	23.38	30.7	31.31
Haryana	17.79	14.7	-17.37
Himachal Pradesh	44.82	63.1	40.79
Jharkhand	29.1	35.2	20.96
Karnataka	31.87	31.7	-0.53
Kerala	18.23	27.1	48.66
Madhya Pradesh	32.64	37.2	13.97
Maharashtra	31.06	37.7	21.38
Manipur	38.56	26.8	-30.50
Meghalaya	32.67	44.1	34.99
Mizoram	36.16	34.9	-3.48
Nagaland	44.74	31.1	-30.49
Odisha	27.16	31.8	17.08
Punjab	13.91	21.8	56.72
Rajasthan	35.12	37.6	7.06
Sikkim	39.57	58.5	47.84
Tamil Nadu	31.8	38.3	20.44
Telangana	NA	41.8	NA
Tripura	23.57	23.5	-0.30
Uttar Pradesh	16.75	17.2	2.69
Uttarakhand	26.68	30.1	12.82
West Bengal	18.08	23.1	27.77
Andaman and Nicobar Islands	17.81	25.9	45.42
Chandigarh	16	18.8	17.50
Daman & Diu	14.89	34.8	133.71
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	25.25	52.3	107.13
Delhi	10.58	14.5	37.05
Jammu and Kashmir	NA	33.1	NA
Lakshadweep	10.96	23.1	110.77
Puducherry	17.63	28.4	61.09
Ladakh	NA	51.1	NA
India	25.51	28.7	12.50

Source: Census of India 2011 and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation.

Note: * represents estimated female work participation rate.

Suggestions for Improvement of Female Work Participation Rate

The key to strengthening the social status of a working woman lies in her own hands. Women need to be more assertive and aware of their own rights at home as well as at work place. Secondly, Implementation of the policy must be monitored closely, and the data of the women's participation in the organization must be reviewed regularly. The society and the family are two crucial institutions that can put its effort to raise the status of the working women in India. Contribution of women to a society's transition from a pre-literate to a literate state is undeniable. Basic education is key to the develop the ability and achieve sustainable productivity in working women.

CONCLUSION

Women of today are confident; they want to become self-reliant and they also want to contribute to their families and children not only in terms of physical and mental terms but also in terms of financial support. Although the overall scenario of Indian women is not so much praiseworthy because there is still a major percentage of women who are illiterate, unaware of their rights and duties, those who are living in rural areas and those whose social participation is totally nil, that surely needs a lot of interventions and improvements from our Governance, Society and of course the Indian women themselves. Although it has been very much tough

Problems Faced by Working Women in India: An Obstacle for Women Work Participation

for the women in India, to survive after facing many hurdles, exploitation and discrimination still they are being persistent in their efforts and constantly trying to make their existence noticeable in the male dominated Indian society.

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