

Working Environment for Women in India: A Case Study

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Abstract— The status of Indian working women has undergone considerable changes. Though Indian working women are now more independent and aware of their legal rights, such as right to work, equal treatment, equal remuneration and right against sexual harassment, a majority of working women remain unaware of these rights as a result of this; they face various forms of discrimination, harassment and exploitation in their homes, at the way to work place and at work place due to the majority of working women is unaware of their rights, the working environment for women in India is remain not good and unfavorable to women, legislature and policy framers of India made various laws and rules ensuring rights of working women but in reality, those all are limited to just in form of ‘Act’ not in ‘Action’. That is why the condition of working women is not good; they are less paid, over-worked, mistreated and harassed physically as well as mentally. These all factors affect the quality of their life and change their personality to a great extent. This paper examines, the existing working environment for women in India and the various problems are faced by them. It also tries to trace the changes in working women’s personality as the outcome of existing working environment. An attempt has been done in this paper to make working women aware about their legal rights provided under constitutional provision and by various relevant laws. This paper is simple based on secondary data, collected from various books, articles of newspaper and some reports.

Index Terms— Working Women, Working Environment, Equality, Discrimination, Harassment, work place, Personality, Rights, Law and Act.

I. INTRODUCTION

Laborers are being Subject to misuse and discrimination and their human rights being damaged so the need emerged for an order of the laws for their assurance and security. Working ladies shape a noteworthy proportion of society. Among – workers, the states of women are especially helpless & hapless thus numerous administrative enactments have been given in all work resolutions which address issues of women who work. Women fundamentally require some protection due to the accompanying Women constitute 50% of our population and if they do not come out and work, then our country will never grow at the pace we all envision it to grow, and for that very reason, governments over time have taken special care to enact and amend laws to ensure greater participation of women in the growth story of India”.

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From time immemorial women have confronted biased test. In this era too, as an ever-increasing number of young educated women go into clerical employment, their odds of confronting ruthless conduct from men—at various word related dimensions—have increased.

In our country, India, a large number of well qualified and trained women, who are capable to work outside and contribute in national development, stay at home and spend their whole life in managing household works. It cannot be denied that looking after children is the primary duty attached to womanhood. A woman should not neglect these responsibilities for the shake of her career. If children are totally left to servants or put in hostel, they will miss the love and affection of their mother. Hence, women must keep their primary role as mother with managing other responsibilities. Swami Vivekananda says, “The ideal Women in India is the mother, the mother first and the mother last” (Swami Vivekananda 1907).

We live in a world where goddesses are worshiped and women get tamed, harassed, abused, raped, and kidnapped every single day. Keeping a check on a number of women-related cases, the government of India provides crucial rights to Indian women.

"Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, once and for all." - Hillary Clinton.

II. METHODOLOGY

A Doctrinal research is the base of this research paper. This paper is simply based on secondary data, collected from various books, articles of newspaper and surveys of others and some reports secondary data, collected from various books, articles of newspaper and surveys of others and some reports. On the grounds of gender equality, here are rights an Indian woman holds in India

1. Women have the right to equal pay:- According to the provisions listed under the Equal Remuneration Act, one cannot be discriminated on the basis of sex when it comes to salary, pay or wages. Working women have the right to draw an equal salary, as compared to men.

2. Women have the right to dignity and decency :-In an event that the accused is a woman, any medical examination procedure on her must be performed by -- or in the presence of -- another woman.

3. Women have the right against workplace harassment:-The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act gives a female the right to file a complaint against any kind of sexual harassment at her place of work.

4. Right against Discrimination:-Discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status is made unlawful by Sex Discrimination Act, 1975. The act apply to all employees whatever the size of the employer and whether in the public or private sector. Although the provisions relating to sex discrimination are worded in terms of sex discrimination against women, the apply equally the treatment of men (with the exception of the special treatment afforded to women in connection with pregnancy or child birth).Under the sex discrimination act, 1975 women and men of any age can bring claims of discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status. The sex discrimination Act also protects job applicants as well as current employees, who require no qualifying period of employment in order to bring a claim the act also protects ex-employees (Jois and Rama ,1984). Articles 14, 15 and 16 of the constitution are also protecting working women against discriminatory actions of the state. It should be noted that the civil partnerships act, 2004 also protects those in civil partnerships from discrimination in the work place.

5. Right to get Minimum Pay for their Work: - Minimum wages act, 1948 provides for fixing minimum rates of wages in certain employments. Under this act working women has a right to get minimum payment for their work.

6. Right to get Maternity Benefit: Performance of the biological role of child bearing necessarily involves withdrawal of women from the work force for some period.

Women continue to encounter challenges when it comes to advancing in the workplace—and in many facets of society. This is why Catalyst, on the heels (no pun intended!) of the Women’s March on Washington, is highlighting 10 important issues that are fundamental to women who are trying to progress in business across the country. We’ve also shared a few action steps required by leaders who are willing to be innovative and make room at the table for women to succeed at work.

Here they are, in no particular order:

Flexible Work Arrangements— Working flexibly is an issue for many women. Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) define how, where, and when employees’ work, allowing them to best manage their career and personal priorities. Once seen as an employee benefit or an accommodation for caregivers (primarily women), flexible work arrangements are now an effective tool for organizations to attract top talent as well as a cost-savings measure to reduce turnover, productivity, and absenteeism.

2. Equal Pay— It’s 2017, and women still make less than men. Women around the world continue to face a wage gap. In fact, women on average will need to work more than 70 additional days each year just to catch up to the earnings of men. Our research shows that even after taking into account prior experience, time since degree, job level, industry, and global region, women MBA graduates were paid \$4,600 less than men in their first job after graduation.

Race and Gender Bias—Women of color continue to deal with some of the workplace’s most entrenched hurdles. Everyone has unconscious biases—even the best-intentioned people—which play out in their everyday lives and interactions such as those in the workplace. Working women of color face a unique set of challenges that intersect across race/ethnicity, gender, and culture. Because of this, many women of color who oftentimes have to deal with daunting roadblocks such as other people’s beliefs, attitudes, and experiences.

Access to Hot Jobs—Why don’t women have the same access to career-making roles as men? Not all leadership opportunities are created equally, and not all jobs provide the same degree of career advancement. Today, women still get offered fewer of the high visibility, mission-critical roles, and international experiences (what we call “hot jobs”) that are important to reaching the highest levels of leadership.

Role Models—There are few powerful examples of women role models in workplaces. You can’t be what you can’t see. Our research shows that almost two-thirds of women reported a lack of senior or visibly successful female role models as a major obstacle to their career advancement. While women are almost half of the US labor force, they make up less than 5% of CEOs and less than 10% of top earners in the S&P 500; and for women of color are nearly invisible on both S&P 500 boards and Fortune 500 boards.

Sexual Harassment—Women at all levels of employment and all levels of workplace are affected. Sexual harassment remains a widespread problem, and at least one-quarter of women having reported some sort of harassment on the job. This inappropriate behavior costs employers in many ways: increased absenteeism, persistent job turnover, and low productivity and engagement. Individually, women become depressed, experience anxiety, or quit all together in the hope of avoiding continued harassment.

Non-Inclusive Workplaces—Women often feel dismissed or ignored. When women (or any employee) feel like outsiders in the workplace because of their unique qualities or differences (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation), they feel excluded. Exclusion comes at a great cost to organizations in the form of lowered job satisfaction, reduced work effort, diminished employee voice, and greater intention to leave. Building an inclusive workplace means creating a culture that fully engages and supports all employees. Non-Inclusive Workplaces—Women often feel dismissed or ignored. When women (or any employee) feel like outsiders in the workplace because of their unique qualities or differences (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, nationality, age, religion, sexual orientation), they feel excluded. Exclusion comes at a great cost to organizations in the form of lowered job satisfaction, reduced work effort, diminished employee voice, and greater intention to leave. Building an inclusive workplace means creating a culture that fully engages and supports all employees.

1. Comparison between working and nonworking women regarding psychological well-being

[1] A feeling of well-being generated by achieving what one aspires is an important aspect of mental health. Accomplishments generate positive feeling states such

as confidence, happiness, and satisfaction, while failures often lead to sadness and frustration. In the present study, the working women and the nonworking women were compared with regard to their psychological well-being on the PGI Health that the working women had lower scores on PGI Health Questionnaire as compared to nonworking women. As per test norms, lower test score indicates higher psychological well-being and higher test score indicates poor psychological well-being. Here, in the present study, the differences between two groups (working and nonworking) were statistically highly significant, which means that the working women had higher psychological well-being as compared to nonworking women. These findings are consistent with the study of Gove and Tudor, who found that employed women have dual roles as sources of gratification – work and family – allowing them to possess greater psychological well-being. Burke and Weir reported lower satisfaction and poorer mental health and physical health among homemakers. These researchers observed that traditional, domestic, and home care roles can be more stressful than the nontraditional work roles as there is poor reward value attributed to these roles in advanced and industrial societies.

- [2] Relation between social support and psychological well-being Further, assessment of perception of social support of working women and nonworking women revealed that women in dual-earner families perceived lower social support as compare to those in single-earner families . As per the norms of PGI-Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ), the higher the score, better will be the perceived social support; in the present study, nonworking women (homemakers) scored higher as compared to working women and both the groups differ significantly with each other. It may be due to the fact that homemakers have plenty of time to interact and make better relations with neighbors, friends, and relatives than working women. Sometimes, homemakers interact with others just for the sake of passing time, whereas working women hardly get sufficient time to interact and if so, only on weekdays or holidays.

Whatever the reason behind joining a job for a woman, working environment always affect the women's personality to a great extent. The consequences of impact of working environment on women's personality can be studied after dividing into two main categories:

- A) Positive Impacts, and
- B) Negative Impacts.

A) Positive Impacts of Working

Environment on Women's Personality-Women have always been a partner of man in every field of life. Women work from immemorial time. In ancient time they worked mostly participating in many fields of work and services. They are I.A.S., Navy officers, C.E.O. of various multinational corporations, professors, doctors, teachers, nurses, receptionists, call centre executives, managers, sales girls, and even household workers and factory workers etc working activities and working environment affecting women's personality positively. Some of positive impacts are

as follow: -

1) Economic Independence:- Independence is not complete until it is economic independence is attached with it. Although most of women spend their most time in work related to household duties and feel the same tiredness as working out but their work is under valued because it has no economic value. So, their works or household duties are considered of low grade that is why men do not help their wives in household work or not like to become house husbands. But when a woman join a job outside the home it gives her economic independence which gives her choice to spend as per her wish because then she need not to be dependent on her husband or family for money.

2) Confidence: - Working outside the home and getting money in consideration of her work build the confidence of a working woman high. When a woman support her family financially and contribute in the expenses of her family out of the money earned by her give her a kind of self-satisfaction, meeting with different people of different personalities and facing different kinds of challenges at work place make her more confident. This confidence enables her to face problems and challenges of life and make her personality better.

3) Awareness: - When a woman goes out of the four walls of her house to work, she faces the outer world. She knows how the people of the society, think, behave and react. She gets knowledge and awareness about new technologies, social norms, her rights, and mentality of the different people. This awareness about her rights makes her enable to protect herself and to become more self-dependent. If a working woman is aware enough about her rights, no one can exploit her anywhere.

4) Development of Managerial Skills: -Working women face more complicated situations than their male counterpart as they have to play dual roles and shoulder dual responsibilities of the work place and their families. Even though the employment of women is accepted, most of the in-laws and majority of the husbands have not accepted the changing life pattern. They are not prepared to share the responsibilities of the household and of looking after children (Pandya, Rameshwari and Patel, 2010). These all works are done by women and after completing these all works they goes for their job and at workplace they also do lot of works. They have to manage both house hold work as well as office work. This result into the development of managerial skills in women. So, it can be said that women are good managers even without holding the post of manager.

B) Negative Impacts of Working Environment on women's Personality

As we know that working women in India face various problems related to their working life like they have to manage their household works with their job, they are under paid compare to their male counterparts, face evil eyes and misbehavior of the people during travelling to and at work place, lack of minimum facilities at work place etc these all negative aspects of working environment affecting their personality in a negative manner. Generally, these negative impacts have been seen in working women's personality;

1) Ego: - Ego is an emotional status of mind in which person thinks herself / himself superior to others and as the

result of this she/ he starts to misbehave with others. It has been seen in some working women when they get good money for their jobs or if they get higher position in office they start to behave badly with others at work place and even at their home they behave in same manner. They treat their husbands not good if their husbands getting less monetary income. This is all because of ego problem arising in working women out of a negative consequence of working environment.

2) Decreasing Tolerance and Patience: - It was a time when it was said that patience and tolerance are the other names of women but now the time has changed. In modern time, working women are becoming less patience and losing their tolerance power because they face various pressures and stress related to their work. They play dual role regarding household work and job, most of them are facing harassment at work place as well as in home, and these all factors are affecting their tolerance.

3) Marital Discrimination: - generally it is seen in private sector that unmarried women are preferred by employers than married women for example for the post of counter sales girl, receptionist, air hostess etc unmarried women are preferred because of narrow misconception of the employers that they attract people towards them easily in comparison with married women. The sex Discrimination Act, 1975 makes it unlawful to discriminate either directly or indirectly, against married persons of either sex on the grounds of their marital status.

5) Women's Work is undervalued: - women's work is also undervalued or neglected by males. Women's employment in family farms or business is rarely recognized as economically productive, and any income generated from this work is generally controlled by men. Such work is unlikely to increase women's participation in allocating family finances. In a 1992 study of family based textile workers, male children who helped in a home-based hand loom mill were given pocket money, but the adult women and girls were not.

6) Women are overworked:- most of women are employed in unorganized sector specially in agriculture, small and cottage industry, piece work etc. where women work roughly twice as many hours as men for example, women's contribution to agriculture, whether it be subsistence farming or commercial agriculture, when measured in terms of the number of tasks performed and time spent, is greater than men. The women's contribution is highlighted by a micro study conducted in the Indian Himalayas which found that on a one- hectare farm, a man works 1,212 hours and women 3,485 hours in a year.

7) Harassment: - Indian working women face lots of physical and mental harassment at working place. A major problem faced by the working women is sexual harassment at the work place. Further, woman employees working in night shift face more such incidents. Some employers and colleague mistreat them; they look at them with evil eyes. They treat women working under them or with them as things having no self-respect and dignity. Such man of bad mentality pass unpleasant and sexually colored comments and create embarrassing circumstances for women colleagues. In the

informal sector, such as domestic services, construction work, forest produce collection and in many other occupations women are exploited by employers, contractors, middlemen etc in organized sector, sexual harassment though not wide spread but some forms of harassment like threat of transfer to distant places, ill treatment etc are found.

III. CONCLUSION

There are 940 females per 1000 males according to 2011 census; it means 48% of the total populations of India are females. After the liberalization of 1991, as an outcome impact of globalization on Indian society, the participation of Indian women in economic activities has been increased, now more women are working on various posts in various industries and services than earlier. They are supporting their families mentally, physically and financially but Indian working women face more complicated situations than their male counterparts as they have to play dual roles and shoulder dual responsibilities of the workplace and their families. They have to look after their children and elder members of their families and after finishing all household duties go to the work place. During the travelling to work place they face eve teasing, evil eyes and misconduct of the peoples of bed mentality. At the work place they also face various forms of discrimination, harassment and sexual colored comments and behavior of male colleagues, in spite of these all problems, women are doing very well and performing their duties sincerely and efficiently. It is time to address the issues and discuss the kind of policy reforms and institutional changes required for making the working environment better for women in India. The constitution of India provides various provisions for working women to ensure their safety, security and make working conditions better. But despite the intervention to effectively deal with problems of Indian working women, the condition of 'de jure' and 'de facto' is totally different. Some of the major reasons behind this are – a) working women are not aware of their Rights. B) the attitude of Indian society is not good for working women, if they raise their voice against injustice, they are discouraged by the society, for example- if a woman file a complaint for eve teasing or sexual harassment, the police instead of taking action against offender, usually try to compromise between the parties and the society also instead of condemning the conduct of offender, start to blame that working women and question mark on the character of that working women as the result of all this, the aggrieved working women get discouraged and hesitate to raise voice for their rights. These situations encourage the offender to repeat the misconduct against working women. So to make the working environment for women in India more better and favorable, the working women should be made aware about their rights by various programmes, seminars and campaigns and the society should change its attitude for working women, a working women should be encouraged by society, administration and police to raise her voice against discrimination, harassment and injustice relating to her working life. Women play very important roles in our life. They make our life complete as mother, sister, and wife and

daughter. All the women including working women should have equality and respect. Without giving a respectful treatment to women, we can't progress in real sense. Swami Vivekananda rightly said, "Countries and Nations which do not respect women have never become great no will ever be in future."

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