



# PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF WORKING WOMEN:

A case Study of Dharwad City

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## **ABSTRACT**

*The most common issue in India is 'Issues of Working Women'. Working women are facing lot of problems at their work places.*

*In India, traditionally women are considered as inferior, slave or useable thing by man. If you watch short videos or reels on you tube, you will also get to know about this. This is, a debatable issue.*

*But women are working everywhere now a days. We need to change mindset of society and that will not to happen overnight. It takes lot of time to change this male dominated society.*

*The study is about the problems and challenges being faced by working women. The improvement paths are also mentioned, which may be helpful for better status of women. "Beti Padao, Beti Bachao" the slogan gets its meaning when there is no harm to women.*

**Key Words:** Working women, status, problems, challenges male domination etc

## **Introduction**

During the earlier days, the status of women in India was inferior to man. They were considered as the perfect homemaker the society. She could handle the toughest situations easily without any problems because of her patience. Indian women are treated as goddess. They are worshipped in the name of Saraswati, Durga, Parvati and Kali.

The census carried out by the Government of India constitutes 933 females for every 1000 males. In every phase of life men are considered as superior to women. Traditionally speaking, women were considered as caretakers of all members of the family. She has to maintain family smoothly and also manage all expenses economically. She is a backbone of the family members. She plays a vital role for the socio-economic development of the family and also for the country. She is the first teacher for her children and also, she has to take care of aged in-laws. She has to obey the orders of her husband and in-laws. She will not be involved in decision making for the family issues, though women had been educated during past days.

The position of women in society has been changed rapidly. Women are working in almost all the sectors, which shows that she has not been restricted for cooking and taking care of their households. Now, they are

stepping out from household activities to identify their identity. Society has also accepted these changing circumstances because of age-old struggle carried out by feminist, women revolutionists, the concept of equality and liberty. Now the women found out their place in the society. In spite of all these positive developments, still women are facing the many problems, be it, in the family, in their working place, society at large.

During these days, especially in urban areas the position of women has been completely changed. She is playing multiple roles on par with men. She has also upper hand in taking decisions. Now-a-days, they have become independent and they are climbing success ladder in every field.

Though the women have proved their ability in every field, still she is facing many challenges in society. These multi tasks being performed by the women have impact on their health care because she cannot get sufficient rest and always, she will be under the stress as she has to look after her family and her profession. Besides this, she faces sexual harassment in her working place. This disturbance obstructing her overall growth of her personality.

The feeling of superiority by menfolk creates many hurdles for women. Men always feel to dominate women in every situation. They do not want to allow her to recognize her identity in society. This poses biggest challenges for the women. They try to deal with these situations continuously. To give some instances, the top position in corporate sector has been dominated by the male and only a few positions have been occupied by the female. The females are unable to accept top positions due to the attitude of men. The irony is that, the women who are in top positions do not want to favour their partners. Such environment creates problems for women to progress in their career. It has been observed that, sometimes women will be in a position to leave their top jobs due to stress being created by the family responsibilities.

The women have completely transformed in the modern day, the urban women specially have changed from being a mere homemaker to the modern-day multitasking women, handling responsibility without fear. She had taken on the world with confidence. Women of today handle their duties and chores at home, manage a career outside their home, nurture their children and balance their family lives with their professions. This is the scene in most of the urban households today. Modern day women are independent, takes right decisions boldly, stands up for their rights and walks the path of success. Kalpana Chawla, Indra Nooyi, Susma Swaraj, Aishwarya Rai, Susmita Sen and many more women achievers are a prime example.

### Statement of the Problem:

The present research study constitutes “**The Problems and Challenges of Working Problem in urban areas: A case study of Dharwad City**”. The reason for selecting the above research study is to know the challenges and issues being faced by women in her life. She has several problems in her family members because she has to maintain cordial relationship with all family members and it is inevitable to look after all the domestic works without fail and similarly, she has to show her full effort in her working place. So, she has to work more than 12 hours per day. Several times, she has to take office works to home and these pending works should be completed after the completion of her domestic work. As a result, she never gets peaceful sleep leading to health hazards. In some cases, it is too difficult for working women to make supervision and monitoring on their children’s education, which leads poor performance in their educational career. Consequently, Children feel that they are being neglected by their parents. Considering all these problems and challenges this research paper entitled “The problems and challenges of working women” has been selected.

**Objectives:**

- ✓ To know the problems and challenges faced by working women in the workplace
- ✓ To know the problem of health, family relation and some psychological issues
- ✓ To search the possible remedies that could help to overcome from the problems.

**Research Methodology**

The study is exploratory in nature. It is necessary to identify the problems and challenges faced by working women in an urban area in different professions such as employee of public sectors, banks, schools and colleges, hospitals and in commercial organization etc. The study also intended to know the organizational supports for working women so that the women can work in her working place with efficiently. The present study conducted for urban women employees in white collared jobs. The study was conducted in Dharwad. Dharwad city is considered as a Vidyakashi, where majority of the scholars resided and also the citizens of Dharwad are too traditional in nature. The Dharwad city is consisted of multi-linguistic, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural identities. The places covered for study were the local schools and colleges, banks, hospitals, commercial organizations etc. Primary data was collected from 100 working women of the organized sector using a mixed-methods approach that included face to face interviews, focus group discussions and structured questionnaires. The questionnaire has finalized after the pilot study.

**Review of Literature**

The literature review focused on married working women than on unmarried working women (Karl, 2009). The study also focused on organized sector rather than unorganized sector of working women (Shalz, 2011). Eggins (1997) advocates for more facilities to women in the workplace, suggesting that "...it is an important part of developmental strategy as well as an act of social justice". Singhal (1995) is of the opinion that, "Participation of women in workforce is an important aspects for the economic development and population planning."

Somjee(1989) has presented some critical comments in connection with this topic. She said that "in the history of women's studies, which is not very long, a variety of approaches have been adopted in order to understand women's problems and find solutions to them. such approaches range from how women are perceived in various cultures and historical settings, given their biological functions and what nature "intended" them to do, to their decline in power and status vis-à-vis men in the complex social evolution, to a widely shared emphasis on the need to make women equal through the economic and the need to make women equal through the economic and legal route which treats them as individuals rather than those having the sole responsibility for looking after the family."

**Significance**

The study is basically to evaluate the prevalence of work life among the married working women. The purpose of the present study is to discuss specifically the problems of married working women in the process of balancing their work and family life. Before, the female workers in India was mainly employed in non-managerial, low-profile positions. Now, they have occupied almost all categories of position in the workplace. This has drastically changed the work culture among the women in their duties and responsibilities to their family as well as to society. The concept of work life balance, along with its implications, is core issue that must be investigated as the number of working women is on the rise and the problems, they face because of it is without doubt quite serious. This study is proposed to evaluate the impact of long working hours, caring responsibilities or other potential workplace or family determinants on the work life balance of married working women in Dharwad. The impact of this evaluation study helps to bring awareness among the members of the society about the work life balance of working women and the necessity of moral and physical support to working women in India.

**Challenges of working women:**

Working women has to face a lot problems during the work. She has to balance the time and maintain all the formalities at her home. She has to face several problems at home and also at her workplace. The below figure illustrates about her work with several problems

**Status of Working Women in Workplace and Family**



**Gender**

Problem at workplace	Problems at Family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gender Discrimination</li> <li>➤ No Sufficient maternity leave</li> <li>➤ Mental and physical harassment</li> <li>➤ No equal pay</li> <li>➤ Problem of leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Family duties (care of children and other elder members of family)</li> <li>➤ Time Balance</li> <li>➤ Business tours/training</li> <li>➤ Health</li> </ul>

**Discrimination**

Indian Society has been dominated by the male in all the spheres. Therefore, it is too difficult to accept the fact that women are also capable of working equally with men. Women are weak and she is capable of handling lesser work pressure at the workplace. The potential of Indian women has always been underestimated in regard of their recruitments, salary issues and promotions. Even women have no authority to enjoy her own earning, she has to take permission from her husband, father-in-law or elder member of the family. Therefore, it indicates that she doesn't have the authority of decision making in family issues.

**Balancing Personnel and Professional life**

Another challenging task for Indian working women to maintain the balance between their work and family. She has the responsibility to fulfill all the demands of family members in general and kids in particular. This responsibility considered as a primary task and the career and professional aspiration are considered as secondary. The secondary task is not compulsion for women but it is her choice provided she maintain all the primary responsibilities. In major cases, working women suffers from emotional and moral support from the family members.

### Mental and Physical disturbance

Women have feeling of hard work than male colleagues in her working place. This leads to higher expectation and efficiency by their boss. Such conditions create strain and stress to woman. Several times, women take office files to her home to reach day today's target. She has to work pending files only after fulfilling the expectation of all her family members as a result she to work late night. Indian working women also feels insecure at their workplace. There are several cases where women subordinates are asked for sexual urges from their male superiors in returns of the promotion and hike for salary. Generally, women are treated as weak and vulnerable in corporate sector and hence male colleagues and superiors think that they can take advantage of their female colleagues and subordinates.

### Negligible Personnel

Indian working women have to maintain the balance between their family and career. This is a challenging task for women because she has to try to increase their working power for their work which creates them lacking in sleep. They gradually feel frustration and she may fall for depression because she may not get support either from family member or at working place. As a result of this, she has to face several emotional and psychological problems. She feels an immense lack of personnel space.

**Table 1: Status of Promotion between male and female (in nos.)**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
<b>Equal time (Equally considered)</b>	60	69
<b>Longer (Long time)</b>	15	15
<b>Earlier (Early time)</b>	15	16

**Inference:** The data pertaining to promotion in workplace has collected, which indicates that 69% of female employees were promoted at the same time irrespective of their gender, 16% women were promoted earlier than their male colleagues and 15% took longer than their male peers. The overall picture of the above table illustrates that till there is differentiation between gender during the promotion, though the percentage is less.

**Table 2: Basis for Women getting promotion on merit (in nos.)**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
<b>Yes</b>	25	30
<b>No</b>	50	54
<b>Can't say</b>	15	16

**Inference:** The table 2 indicates about the distribution of women getting promotion on the merit basis or other. Around 30 percent of working women opined that the promotion was given on the basis of merit but not on the basis of partiality. 54 percent of working women agreed that, the partiality is present in the distribution of promotion at workplace. This shows that, there is an inequality among the gender with special reference to promotion.

**Table 3: Distribution of effort in work compared to men**

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
<b>Yes</b>	40	47
<b>No</b>	30	30

Can't say	20	23
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**Inference:** The table no. 3 enunciates about the working performance of women compared to men. 47 percent of women agreed that their performance is equal compared to men in their workplace, whereas 30 percent of working women were agreed that their performance is not equal compared to men and rest of the percent did not answer the question. The overall picture of the above table indicates that, less than 50 percent of working women are agreed that their performance is equal to men. The reason maybe they getting full support from their family members.

Table 4: Attitude of boss towards female Employees

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
<b>Co-operative (Concerted)</b>	35	41
<b>Neutral (Impartial)</b>	50	54
<b>Abusive (rude)</b>	5	5

**Inference:** The table No.4 illustrates about the attitude of boss towards working women in an organization/office. Nearly 40 per cent of working women agreed that the boss who belongs to male is co-operative in nature and 54 percent of female have opined that their boss is neutral and just 5 percent of boss shows abusive attitude. The overall picture of the above table indicates that, majority of the bosses are neutral in nature, which leads working to face the problem at working place to clear their doubts during the work and they have to take assistance of their colleagues during doubts.

Table 5: Perception of prevalence of sexual harassment or under estimation

	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
<b>Yes (Agreed)</b>	50	59
<b>No (Disagreed)</b>	40	41

Table 5 constitutes the explanation about the sexual harassment of working women in their workplace. Nearly 60 percent of working women agreed that, they are facing the sexual harassment from their senior officers, whereas the rest of the per cent have disagreed about the harassment. The overall picture of the above table gives clear picture of the sexual harassment for working women is major in number.

## MAIN PROBLEMS AMONG THE WORKING WOMEN

The main problems faced by the working women are categorized into three parts, namely Health, family and psychological problems. The detailed explanation about these problems has been presented in below paragraphs.

### Health:

World Health organizations (WHO, 1946) defines "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". It is true that a healthy woman builds a healthy community and health status of Kerala women is much better than the national average. Woman's multiple roles affect not only her own health and well-being but affect the overall health and well-being of the family. The heavy 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. Working woman's total hours of work increases at the expense of her leisure time.

### Family Related Problems

Anthropologists and sociologists hail that family is a universal social institution. In 1949, George Peter Murdock defined family as “a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction”. Thus, family constitute fundamental and basic unit where the seeds of love and care are sown and brought up. In every family mother’s role is so significant and Engle (1983) pointed out that mothers can more efficiently allocate resources to children than the fathers, because they are more attached to their children. A similar idea related to child care and role of woman is given by Dwyer (1983). Disintegration of joint families and development of nuclear families often put heavy stress on the time allocation of working women. Working women with preschool children often pose a heavy strain on their time allocation and to solve this problem is to give more attention to parents and grandparents and thus it will lead to a shift in favour of joint families. Such a change in the outlook of the society will surely reduce the inmates in the old age home and they will enjoy the care and love of their children and grandchildren. Full-time working mothers still do a second shift at home, and they have less free time than their husbands, but the disparity has begun to decline until recent decades, men and women adopted distinct economic roles. Blau and Feber, 1986, Becker, 1991, presented interesting exposition on how these roles evolved. Even after several changes in the social life of women, but the attitude that women are responsible for all domestic duties, which is a main work. Majority of the working women opined during field survey that, they are facing the problems by their family members, because they are unable to get support from their family members to participate in income earning activities outside.

### Psychological problems

Mental health is described by World Health Organisation as “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. Good mental health is essential for wellbeing of individuals, their families, and the community. Mental, physical and social health is interdependent. (WHO, 2005). People living with mental problems may experience poorer health-placing individuals at an increased risk of chronic disease. The status of women is directly connected with their economic position, which in turn depends on opportunities for participation in socio-economic activities. The economic status of women is now accepted as one of the main indicators of society’s development. The World Health Report (2001) stated that women face so many physical and mental illness including behavioural disorders and these are the result of a complex interaction between biological, psychological and social factors. Shift work (those work which is scheduled after the normal daylight hours like (9-5) often create so much stress upon women working in such work schedules. Such shift in day and night work adversely affects working women both physically and mentally. It will also have adverse impact on their concentration, memory, alertness etc.

### FINDINGS

- ❖ Working women are facing the problem of work life balance
- ❖ Working women are facing sexual harassment from their seniors/bosses. They are also facing the mental harassment from their colleagues belonging to same gender.
- ❖ The impact of financial independence increases the respect of women among the society.
- ❖ Working women feel that they are facing more mental pressure and depression than non-working women.
- ❖ Working women are unaware about the Act and Policies.
- ❖ Working women are facing several health issues
- ❖ Working women are forced to leave their small kids at home because of lack of support from their family members.
- ❖ Lack of proper support system.
- ❖ It is a challenging task for working women to being a single parent
- ❖ It is a difficult for working women to make supervision on their children about their behavior and educational growth.

## SUGGESTIONS

The following are the suggestions to overcome from the above said problems for working women. They are as follows:

- To maintain the work balance in their life needed the support of family members
- The boss should not underestimate the performance of working women and he has to cooperate the efforts of working women.
- The team leader of an organization or office should not show the partiality during the promotion.
- Working women should have the awareness about the Acts and Policies.
- Working women should be encouraged by the elder member of the family and they have to involve in taking care of their children.
- Working women should appoint the housemaid for taking care of their children in case of single parent. As a result, working women will not have the health issues and she never fall on depression.

## Conclusion

The overall study of the above research article can be concluded with following aspects.

- Professional women feel isolated, because she cannot balance the work because to take care of family.
- Working women has been underestimated by the other member of the society.
- Since, the Indian society has been dominated by the male, female has to follow the orders of male without any objections.
- Generally, working women face the sexual and mental harassment from their colleagues. Therefore, sometimes she feels insecure in her working place.

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