

# PROBLEM OF WORKING WOMEN IN INDIA

<sup>1</sup>Aakriti Tiwari

Research Scholar Department of social work  
Devi Ahiliya University Indore (MP)

**ABSTRACT:** *India is a traditional country and there is diversity in religions, culture and customs. Role of the women in India mostly is household and limited to domestic issues. In some cases women can find employment as nurses, doctors, teachers the caring and nurturing sectors. But even if well qualified women engineers or managers or geologists are available, preference will be given to a male of equal qualification. The present study investigated to identify the factors preventing women employees from aspiring for higher posts and challenges & problems faced by women workers. Further the study try to explain the real condition of Indian working women and also make an effort to clear main problems of working women.*

**Key words:** - *Violence against women's, Role of NGOs, Main Problems Faced by Working Women*

## INTRODUCTION

The optimization problem of time allocation is constrained by a large number of individual specific factors such as work schedules, sleep and family duties (Hendrik and Momoe, 2012). In reality in the case of working woman, society and family put some constraints which have produced its impact upon her physical and mental health. Working woman faces so many problems associated with her time allocation while engaging in income earning activities outside. It includes problems related to health or physical, psychological, social and familial problems etc. three main problems faced by working woman is presented and in the second part time use related to sleep, leisure, resting and travelling is presented which often have a profound influence upon the time use of working woman across different occupations. It is generally perceived that gender bias against working women starts right from the stage of recruitment. Most of the Indian men are not ready to accept that women are capable enough to work side by side with men in all the sectors, other than in a few limited ones like teaching, nursing and in clerical sectors. Their capabilities are generally underestimated as a result of which Indian women have a tendency to opt for less demanding jobs even if they are highly qualified. Women have the responsibilities to effectively manage their multiple roles in domestic as well as professional lives. Men generally do not offer any help in the households work. This makes the life of working women extremely stressful.

## ROLE OF NGOS

This thesis focuses on domestic violence among tribal communities in Udaipur district in the state of Rajasthan, India. In particular, it looks at the effectiveness of a comprehensive women's empowerment program that responds to domestic violence with support and conflict mediation, which is supported by a local Non-Government Organization (NGO). Seva Mandir is an Indian NGO that "focuses on creating the social, institutional, and livelihood base for a democratic and participatory approach to development that benefits and empowers the poorest sections of society" (Seva Mandir 2012). Since 1982, Seva Mandir has been working to empower women socially, economically and politically in order to foster women's participation in development. Seva Mandir's participatory approach believes in building women's capacities so that they can become agents of their own development. This is primarily done through the formation and strengthening of women's associations at various levels. Building on over thirty years of experience, Seva Mandir's Women's Resource Centers (WRCs) were implemented in 2006 to address the high prevalence of domestic violence within the organization's work area (Thornhill 2004). This thesis focuses on the WRCs as an Intervention to address domestic violence.

## VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN'S

In December 2012, the brutal gang rape and death of a young woman on a bus in New Delhi sparked an unusual public outrage that has jolted the issue of violence against women in India into the spotlight, for the entire world to see. Her death serves as a tragic reminder of the global epidemic of violence against women, including rape, domestic violence, mutilation, murder and sexual abuse that affect women's everyday lives. Worldwide, women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, motor accidents, war and malaria (UNDPI 2009). While the protests in Delhi that followed the December rape case successfully held issues of violence against women in the forefront of the media, drawing attention from the Indian government and the international community, violence occurring within the so-called private sphere did not enter the public discourse.

Heise (1994), who declared gender-based abuse a global epidemic in 1993, argued that the most pervasive form of gender violence is abuse of women by intimate male partners (p.136). Worldwide, at least one in three women are beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused by an intimate partner throughout the course of her lifetime (UNDPI 2009). In India, 40 percent of women of reproductive age have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by their husband (IIPS 2007). Considering such a high prevalence of domestic violence, this issue remains a priority for development.

## MAIN PROBLEMS FACED BY WORKING WOMEN

For the sake of simplicity and easy understanding the main problems are divided into three. All such problems have profound influence upon working women's time allocation. A detailed explanation of all these problems across different occupations is presented below.

The three problems are:

- a. Health problems
- b. Family related problems
- c. Psychological problems

### Health Problems

World Health organization (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 the most 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 Ferber, 1986, Becker, 1991, presented interesting expositions on how these roles evolved. Even after so much progress in the social life of women, the attitude that women are responsible for domestic duties and their main work should confined to the household now too remains in the minds of a few segments of the society. As the survey revealed that nearly one third of the interviewed working women face some problems basically in relation to family support 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 the 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 indicator 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 effects on their concentration, memory, alertness etc.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sen. (1990) revealed that in spite of high female education and employment, women are compelled to do their traditional duties of cooking and shouldering of responsibility of childcare and other household chores.

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Somjee (1989) has some very strong critical comments. She has 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 on 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.”

Mitra (1997) analyses the causes and comes to some important conclusions: “Relationship between women and professions could be perceived as one of women in full-fledged professions, medicine, law, academics, etc. and another in the semi-professions-like nursing, teaching, clerks etc.”

Okolo (1989) studied that another obstacle is the lack of role models of executive women due to their scarce presence in top managerial positions. Likewise, this study found out that there is no gender difference in organizational hierarchies when a woman has already gained access to them. “The lack of impact in women can occur because executive and managerial women have developed survival features becoming immune to the effects of men’s hierarchies. A hierarchy composed by men solely may have an effect upon the election of a managerial board, and then its further influence is not very strong.”

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions related to the challenges and problems faced by working women drawn from the analysis of responses:

- Professional women feel isolated and burdened by the simultaneous demands of their new aspirations on one side and the traditional way of life on the other.
  - Women are discriminated against in all walks of life.
- Women are subjugated, dominated and exploited both at work places and home.
- Women are generally unable to give proper and quality time to households, kids and family.
- Working women generally face workplace sexual harassment, mental pressure, and safety issues.
- Females are also highly judgmental about other female colleagues and try to put one at any given opportunity.

- Women face problems leaving kids at home and going to office early in the morning.
- Child rearing problems are always faced by working women. People make particular perception or draw conclusion about characters of working women.
- The social system cannot accept the new roles of women who end up feeling misunderstood and distressed.

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