

CONSTRAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS-A CASE STUDY OF WORKING WOMEN OF SOLAN CITY

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Women have always been participating in the economic activities of the society since the time immemorial. However, a change has been observed in the trend of women's participation in labour force. While earlier they were concentrated in unpaid domestic occupations, they have now started moving towards paid non domestic and even professional occupations. But, undoubtedly a majority of working women still continue to concentrate in less skilled and lower paid jobs and are still a minority in most of the managerial positions. In so country do they constitute half or even close to it as far as managerial positions are concerned (Amba Rao, 1979). This is inspite of the fact that women represent over 50 per cent of the world population. Women take jobs outside their homes either because of need, economic necessity or due to special liking for the job. Working women is required to play dual role, that is, one as wife, mother and housewife and the second as an employee. Being subjected to the dual demands on their time and energy at home and work they are more likely to face life stresses. This dual career life style, while on one hand offers them the potential of persuing both family and career interests, on other hand it also presents many difficulties and challenges. The working conditions and wages of women workers particularly of manual workers in unorganized sectors are not satisfactory even after 50 years of independence in the country. As women enter the work force, they have to face some physical and psychological stress in the work environment. They have to bear pressures created by the multiple roles they have to play in conflicting situations which may adversely affect their job performance. Besides, several conditions associated with performing a job may also influence family life. Keeping this in view, the present study was undertaken with the following specific objectives :

1. To identify the constraints encountered by the working women.
2. To elicit their opinions regarding the best points in their job.
3. To seek their suggestions for making the job more attractive and satisfactory.

METHODOLOGY :

The study was conducted in purposively selected Solan city of Himachal Pradesh. A list of women workign in various private, public and government sectors, such as, University, Schoois, Hospitals, Mahila Vikas Nigam, Himachal Futuristic Communication Ltd. etc. was prepared. A random sample of 100 working women was selected by using random number table, but due to certain unprecedented and unavoidable reasons the data could be collected from 72 working women for the purpose of the present investigation. The data were collected with the help of pretested interview schedule by personal interview technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

Respondent's opinion about the best points in their jobs : Opinions were sought from the respondents regarding the best points they like in the job. The opinions as per respondent's status have been presented as under :-

1. Info. Officer, Info. Sub Centre, 2. Asstt. Prof., Exten. Edu., 3. Asstt. Porf., Sociology., Y.S. Parmar UHF Solar HP.

Scientists : A majority of the working women (scientists) expressed that the job involved both teaching and research so it kept them busy, in touch with the subject matter, improved their knowledge and had given immense pleasure while working with farmers in the fields who are the real backbone of our nation. Their job inculcated in them the feelings that they were contributing something for the development of the nation and this, in turn, provided them happiness, peace, enjoyment and satisfaction.

Lecturers/Teachers : The opinion expressed by this category of respondents were more-or-less same as expressed by their scientist counterparts. They were of the opinion that due to independent nature of the job they had no pressure of internal as well as external interference. They felt satisfaction in guiding the students to attain their goals and to get them exposed to varied experiences in order to improve the student's overall personality so that they can become the good citizens of the country.

Ministerial/Clerical staff : A majority of the respondents working in the ministerial staff reported that since the job was generally non-transferable so there was no fear of instability. It provided them security in life besides providing respect in the society. The job had also enabled them to awaken through demonstration effect, the illiterate rural women about their social duties and rights and this, in turn, had given them satisfaction to do something for the welfare and development of the rural women.

Bank Employees : The women respondents working in the banking sector expressed that banking job was quite peaceful and honest job. It had provided them social respect, freedom in life and opportunity to serve the people directly. Financial security allows them to share family responsibility, to make social rapport, improve future prospects and inculcate a feeling of self confidence in them; thus, enabling them to make the best use of their abilities and strength in different challenging avenues/areas.

Private sector employees : The women respondents working in the private sector reported that though there was insecurity of job in the private organisation yet the jobs were quite challenging. These jobs have provided them the opportunities to show their worth. The harder one works the more the gains. Besides making them confident and self-dependent, the jobs provided them amicable family like work environment to work with more zeal, honesty and dedication.

Constraints encountered by working women : The women respondents working in different sectors were also asked about the main problems encountered by them in carrying out their job/duties. Some of the main problems faced by them are enlisted in Table-1

Besides these problems, the working women have to face some awkward/conflicting situation at home and in the office which affect their performance in the job. When the kids are small and one has to do late sitting in the office, it adversely affects the children's well being. Due to this busy and late working schedule in the office, at times some family and social obligations have to be ignored.

Women also face the conflicting situation in the office due to following reasons :

- (a) Due to misunderstanding between the boss and subordinates.
- (b) When superiors and other colleagues are not cooperative.
- (c) When one desires to help someone but rules don't permit him or her to do so.
- (d) When colleagues are of jealous nature.

- (e) When the superiors are biased, and instead of encouraging/appreciating the work of juniors, they, believe in leg-pulling and discouraging him/her.

Table 1. Respondent's main constraints in their job

S. No.	Category	Constraints	Rank
A.	Scientists	1. Professional jealousy 2. Non availability of funds in time to carry out their research work. 3. Too much paper work and official formalities. 4. Lack of encouragement from the superiours. 5. More leg-pulling and back biting. 6. Lack of proper cooperation from the ministerial staff, thus, deliberately delaying the official work. 7. Lack of basic necessities like, water and electricity in the laboratory, creating problem in carrying out research activities.	II I IV V VI III VII
B.	Lecturers/Teachers	1. Disproportionate teacher-taught ratio. 2. Inadequate teaching facilities like laboratories, classrooms and lack of modern teaching aids. 3. Frequent and untimely transfers. 4. Inadequate training/knowledge of laboratory staff 5. Sometime students having no scientific aptitude get admission in science subject and create nuisance in the class.	III I II IV V
C.	Ministerial/Clerical Staff	1. Long working hours 2. Heavy work load 3. Late sitting hours 4. Lack of good working conditions 5. Inadequate/less salary	II I IV III V
D.	Bank Employees	1. Lack of encouragement and cooperation from the seniors. 2. Problem in taking leave (leave can't be easily granted) and strict duty hours.	III II
E.	Private Sector employees	1. Job insecurity. 2. More work and less salary. 3. Compulsory overtime. 4. Limited future prospects. 5. Due to time constraint, one gets cut off from the social circle. 6. Owing to fewer number of holidays, one is unable to devote much time to domestic and family affairs. 7. Lack of extrinsic motivation for doing excellent work.	I VII V II IV VI III

Respondent's suggestions for making the job more attractive and satisfactory :
 Suggestions were sought from the respondents for making their job more attractive and satisfactory. Some of the main suggestions are given as under :-

- Prospects for promotion should be improved and there should be equal opportunity for promotion for both sexes.
- There must be provision of residential facilities for working women particularly for those who come from remote and far-flung areas. Facilities for schooling/creches must be provided for their wards particularly for the children of those women who serve in the private organisations. It would be better if some type of recreation centres are also made available to the working women.

- (c) As the women have also to look after domestic chores/activities, efforts should be made to keep them in the vicinity of their hometowns. Considering the multi-farious duties they have to do, flexible approach should be adopted while sanctioning their leave as and when the need arises.
- (d) Working environment must be made supportive, free, frank and fearless for working women. A sense of confidence must be instilled among the women employees so that they may feel secure and improve their work efficiency.
- (e) The attitudes of male employees need to be changed. Instead of thinking their female colleagues as objects of sex, they should consider them as human beings and render their full cooperation and assistance in all official and related matters. Women workers should not be demoralized.
- (f) Efforts should be made to make women workers them self-confident, economically independent while maintaining their individual identity. It should be ensured, particularly by the private organizations, that husband and wife should be posted at the same place or atleast at some nearby place so that the working women can do their work more smoothly and efficiently. There must be a provision of short term loan credit at low rate of interest for the working women.
- (g) Incentives in the form of prizes, awards, appreciation letter, additional increment etc. must be provided to the best women worker in order to improve their job efficiency. Their grievances, if any, should be dealt with on priority.
- (h) It should be ensured that they may not be exploited physically, sexually and psychologically by their supervisors/bosses. Separate suitable sitting arrangement be made for the working women in the offices and in the government buses. Any body found indulged in harassing them must be penalized strictly.

REFERENCE :

Amba Rao, S.C. (1999) : The Managerial Mainstream and Indian women. *Indian Management*. 18 (11) : 2-9.

