



Status of Working Women in their Families

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Abstract:

Family is a universal institution. It is impossible to imagine a society without the existence of family. It is an important centre for production, reproduction as well as in providing an emotional and affectionate atmosphere to human beings. Family is a place providing women a safe and secure atmosphere but at the same time it also made them confront various problems and challenges in their lives. Female's orientation towards jobs and promotion of work culture has empowered them economically but has impacted their personal and family life by forcing them to bear dual responsibilities of home and office. This research paper broadly deals with the problems faced by highly qualified working women in their families. These problems are further classified as personal problems, familial problems, economic problems and health related problems. It attempts to analyse respondent's personal problems in terms of making choices, fulfilling their aspirations/dreams, ignoring their life priorities and level of personal freedom of movement. Familial problems in terms of domestic services, neglecting the life priorities, support system in family, conflict issues and interaction level among family members. Economic problems in terms of access to property, level of expenditure and empowerment. The study also takes an overview of respondent's health status (both physical and mental health).

Keywords: Working women, Family, Problems

Introduction:

Family is a normative structure of rights and duties assigned to all members of a family, linked together by socially approved relationships based on sentiments and emotional bonds. It is a private sphere which is always kept separated from the public sphere. Therefore, people in family never want outsider's intervention in their family matters. Family is a place where we find the existence of consensus along with conflict. With the advent of processes of change i.e., globalization, modernization, westernization, rapid changes are observed not only in the global world but also in traditional Indian society and culture. These changes occurring in Indian values, norms have paved towards a more egalitarian society where gender equality is promoted in every aspect. Today women are not only literate but also making their valuable contribution in the country's economy by participating in it.

The concept of working women is a recent phenomenon and is getting popularity and acceptance among masses at a wider level. The notion of working women includes

fulfilling roles and responsibilities both at the workplace and homes. Teaching occupation is considered one of the most appropriate occupations for females. It provides them flexible conditions to successfully run their career and home. However, the situation is not the same for everyone especially for highly qualified women who possess distinctive self-identities and have individualistic orientation towards things. As a result, they face difficulty in integrating their life with family and society, breaking prevailing gender stereotypes and changing generally accepted values and norms of patriarchal society.

Economic independence or empowerment has definitely improved the condition of women in every sphere of life but along with this, it has also made them more responsible, dutiful both in their homes and offices. Here, the major contradiction lies in the fact that people's ideology has definitely changed towards female's education and job but they want them to become good daughters, wife, mother too by bearing their traditional responsibilities and duties properly. This situation may become difficult for highly qualified working women for two reasons. First, education advocates equality but our patriarchal society norms and values empowers men to be dominant and women to be submissive. Therefore, the opinion and belief held by highly qualified women hardly has consensus with those of traditional customs and ideology. Second, economic/ financial independence helps women to create their own self-identities and opinions.

Research Methodology:

Particular study is based on primary data. The study is conducted in Lucknow city of Uttar Pradesh. A sample of 75 teachers from higher education were selected through convenience sampling. Questionnaire was administered through online platforms and data was collected through google forms and analysed through google sheets. The sample of the study comprises 82.7 % Assistant Professors, 16% Associate Professors and 1.3 % Professors where about 69.3% respondents belong to colleges whereas about 30.7% belongs to Universities. Majority of respondents (41.3%) fall in the age group 30-40 whereas 30.7% fall in the category less than 30, 18.7 % and 9.3 % fall in the category 41-50 and above 50 respectively. Majority of respondents (53.3%) have Ph.D. qualification as their highest qualification, 36% have degree of Post-Graduation. Whereas approx. 2.7% have B.Ed. degree, 5.3% have M.Ed. and 2.7% have M.Phil. degree as their highest degree.

Objective:

- To study the status of working women and the problems faced by them in their families.
- To understand the economic status of women in terms of access to property, level of expenditure, decision making regarding family budget.
- To explore the health-related issues faced by women.

Result and Discussion:**1. Personal Status:**

The study found that the majority of the respondents possess a high degree of self-confidence, moderate level of communication skills, time management skills, problem solving skills and multi-tasking skills that made them capable enough to deal with difficult situations of life. Approx. 87% respondents have a high degree of self-confidence that may be associated with their financial independence. As economic independence increases the self-confidence of a person.

Making Choices:

In terms of respondent's making choices about their lives. It takes into consideration variables like appearance (Clothing, jewellery), lifestyle, decision making related to amusement and recreation means. Majority of the respondents agreed that they make choices regarding their appearance, lifestyle and recreation means with the help of their family members. The study found that respondents preferred their families most in making choices regarding their appearance and lifestyle but in case of amusement and recreation means and destinations they prefer their own choices as well as their family and friend's opinions and choices too.

Dreams or Aspirations:

No individual in this world is without dreams or aspirations. Dreams provide liveliness to our lives. They give us hope, reasons and make our life more meaningful in the right directions. Majority of the respondents' want a peaceful life and disagreed to have a dream regarding learning new things and fulfilling their hobbies. The study result regarding respondents' inner dreams and aspirations shows that about 91% of respondents had a dream of peaceful life, 74% had desire to learn new things and fulfil their hobbies, 72% respondents had dream to learn driving and 64% wanted to go travel abroad. It was observed that 5% were satisfied with their life and had no wish for peaceful life. 26.67%

has no dreams regarding abroad trips. 16% had no hobbies and 23 % disagreed with having a dream of driving.

2. Status in Family:

Most of the respondents agreed that unlike traditional families, today both male and female possess central position in their families, follow family obligations and have seriousness towards family relations and take initiatives in resolving family conflicts. More than 50 percent of the respondents agreed to have a high degree of positive atmosphere, happiness, peace and satisfaction in their families while approx. 40 percent agreed to have it of moderate level and a very few had negative opinions regarding the above matter.

Problems observed within families:

Problems are the inevitable part of human life; they exist at personal level as well as community level. Family is also not a problem free institution; we observe various problems there too. Most of the prevalent problems faced by females within their families were gender stereotyping, burden of domestic chores, responsibilities of children. Small proportion of respondents also complained about the existence of the problem of domestic violence, gender discrimination and unfair treatment in families. However, a large proportion of respondents disagreed to have such problems in their families.

Neglecting Life Priorities:

As human life is full of responsibilities. Status, position and relation all demands some responsibilities to be fulfilled. Working women are not an exception to that therefore they often face role conflicts, burden of work, dilemma/ confusion regarding their life priorities. They often neglect their life priorities while fulfilling these responsibilities. A very small percentage of respondents agreed that they never ignore their life priorities. Health negligence occupies first place in these life priorities. Approx. 47% working women agreed that they hardly focus on their health and fitness in their day-to-day life. In general, they neglect their health. In their busy schedule of life, they neglect their hobbies, interests, comfort too. Social commitments are sometimes unfulfilled by them.

Problem of getting recognition for deeds:

As it is obvious to have them expectation to receive recognition and praise for our deeds and contributions made for the family.60% of the respondents agreed about their high degree of contributions made towards family while they receive moderate and less degree of recognition and praise for their contributions.

Domestic Services:

In terms of domestic services, it was found that most of the domestic chores are still performed by females only like cleaning, washing utensils, preparing meals, washing clothes, watering plants etc. Apart from being in service they perform these domestic duties as well. While male members occasionally perform the job of marketing and preparation for any event or party. Even preparation for pooja and taking care of relatives is considered the primary job of females and performed by them in a majority. Therefore, these dual burdens of home and office affects women's lives in several ways. The highly performed jobs by maid is cleaning, washing utensils and preparing meals that are essential works to be done.

Conflict Issues in Family:

Healthy personal relationships work as a support system and relieve stress but relationships are characterized by various ups and downs in the form of conflicts. Cooperation, support, conflicts all are integral part of the relationships. There could be several factors responsible for these conflicts emerging within families. The data collected indicates that most of the conflicts arise in families due to misunderstanding and high expectations from other persons and other causes such as not fulfilling moral duties, differentiation of values, unrealistic desires, high temper, immaturity are less important in terms of conflict. Consensus and suggesting suggestions were the most widely adopted method initiated by females to resolve the conflicts within families. Whereas use of power and dominance and postponing matters were initiated by males to resolve the issues arising in the families.

Level of interaction in family:

Interaction is not only the basis for the formation of social relationships but its frequency also determines the quality of those relationships. The level of interaction within families determines the level of affection, love, harmony, peace within Families. Hectic and busy scheduled of working females affect their level of interaction with their family members. Study results show that females have maximum level of interaction with their children followed by elders, younger members of the family and relatives.

Level of Family Support:

Support in families strengthens the relationships among families and makes life peaceful in every manner. Working females need more support and care as they bear more physical and mental pressure of both home and work. The study measures support from their

family members in different forms like advice, cooperation, sharing of work burden, emotional support, motivation and guidance.

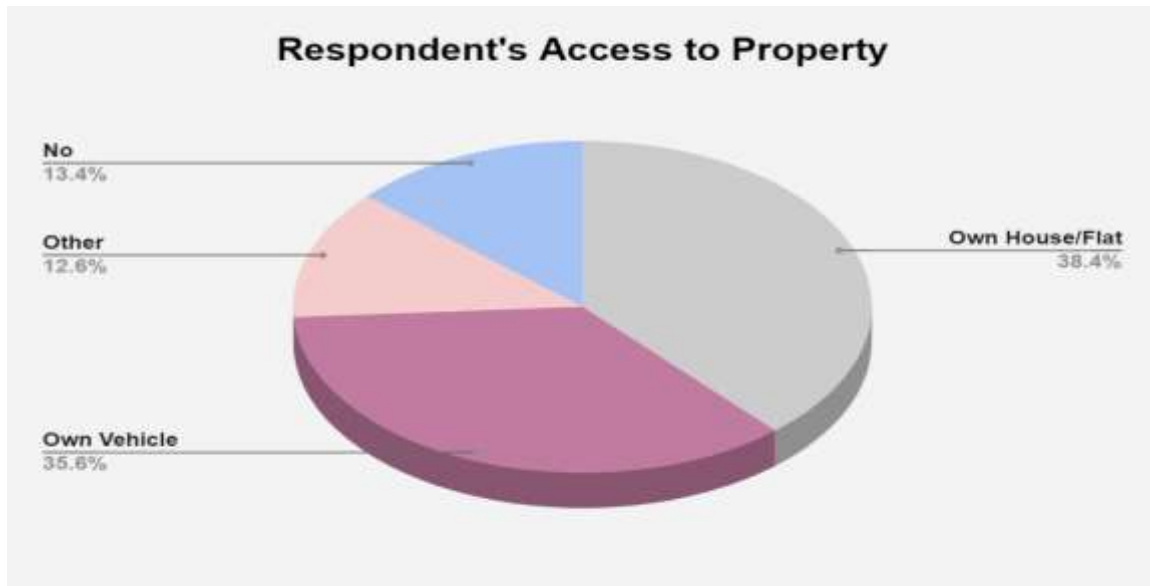
The result of the study shows that respondent's receive support in the form of advice more from the elders (male elder and female) in their families followed by younger and spouse. Maximum cooperation is received by elder females followed by elder male, younger females, younger male and spouse. Work burden is often shared by elder and younger females' members within the family followed by younger and elder male and spouse. This shows that the burden of household chores is still shared by only females' members of the families. Maximum emotional support is received by elder females followed by elder, younger males and spouse. Maximum motivation and guidance are received by elder members of the family followed by younger ones and spouse.

3. ECONOMIC STATUS:

Economic independence is one of important parameters in measuring empowerment of women. Financial security definitely influences every aspect of life and improves the quality of life but the question arises here is does this financial independence really empower the person. Here, this is what the study attempts to find out. In order to measure empowerment through economic independence various aspects were analysed like access to property, level of expenditure, decision making regarding family budget and day to day experiences and outcome of this independence.

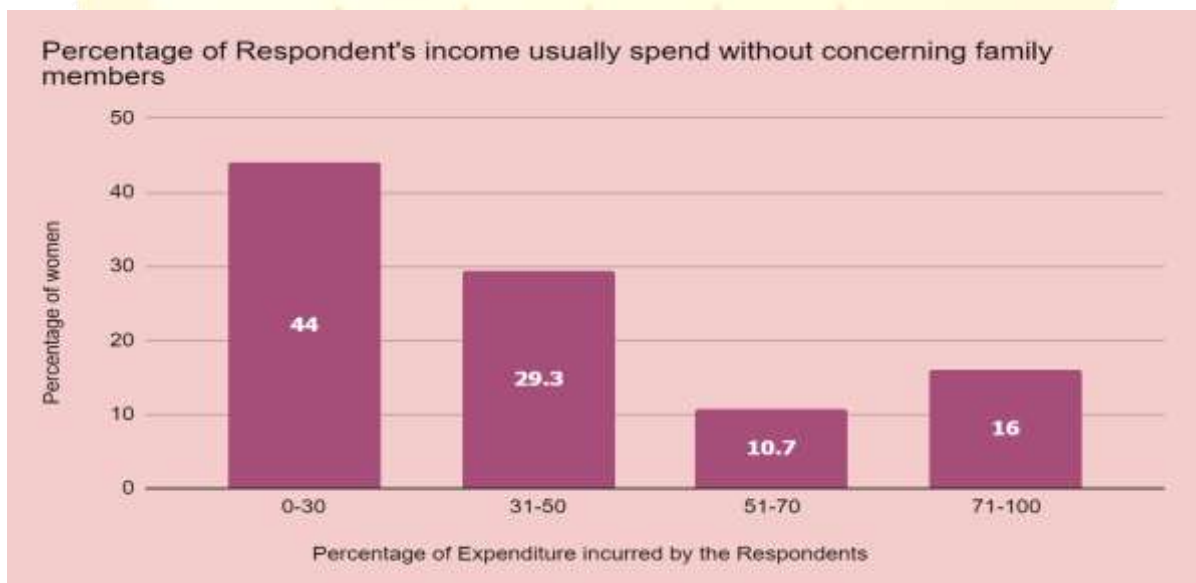
Access to property:

Access to property is an important indicator of the economic status of a person. Ownership of property and control over resources have a definite impact on a person's life security. In Indian society the term property is often associated with males. Generally, females have less access to property in comparison to males. As the respondents are working women and are economically independent therefore it is expected from them to have some sort of their own property. The collected data indicates that 38% of respondents have their own houses/flats, 35.6% own vehicles and 12.6 % have property in some other forms. Whereas 13.4 % agreed to have no access to property.



Level of Expenditure incurred by respondents:

Both income generation and expenditure determine the level of a person's wealth and quality of life. Level of expenditure incurred by a person not only determines his capacity to spend but also enhances his quality of life by giving physical comfort. Familial relationships and bonds are the backbone of Indian society. Whether rich or poor all are connected to with their families in every aspect. Especially female's life is deeply connected with their families. Here, the question arises, do these familial relations really affect/ determine the expenditure incurred by females of these families. Thus, the study seeks to analyse how freely females made expenditure or without concerning their family members.



The result of the study depicts that even being economically independent, the majority of respondents can spend a very little percentage of their income without concerning their

families. The collected data indicates that 44% respondents can spend 0-30% of their salary without asking their family members. 10.7% respondents agreed that they can spend 51-70% of their income without consent of family members whereas 16% told that they can spend their whole salary without concerning their families. Here, respondents are independent in financial matters and getting handsome salaries but have little control in terms of utilization of that earned income.

Empowerment through economic independence:

Empowerment through economic independence was measured through various aspects of life like increase in self-respect and dignity, creation of self-identities boosting up confidence level, getting prestige in family and society, making self-choices and important decisions of life.

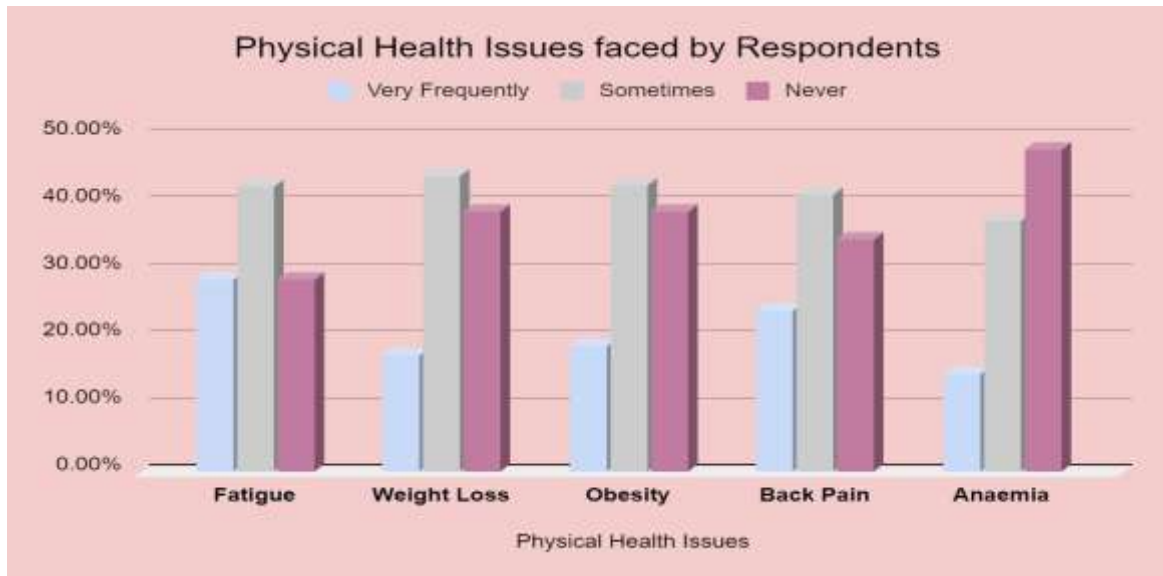
The result of the study depicts that approx. 91% respondents agreed that economic independence has enhanced their self-respect, dignity and has created their self-identities. Approx. 84% respondents agreed that it has boosted up their confidence level whereas 16% did not agree. 81% respondents agreed that economic independence has enhanced their prestige in family and society but 19% denied that economic independence has no relation with getting prestige in family and society. Overall study found that the majority of respondents agreed that economic independence has definitely enhanced their self-respect, dignity and identity but it has not been much beneficial in enhancing prestige in family and society and making decision about important events of life. Even being self-dependent in financial matters 15% respondents don't make their own choices in their everyday life. About 19% did not make decisions regarding important events of their life. Even after occupying the most prestigious jobs in society 19% respondents disagree with the fact that economic independence enhances prestige in family and society. About 10% respondents disagreed that economic independence has enhanced their self-respect, dignity.

4. HEALTH STATUS

Physical Health

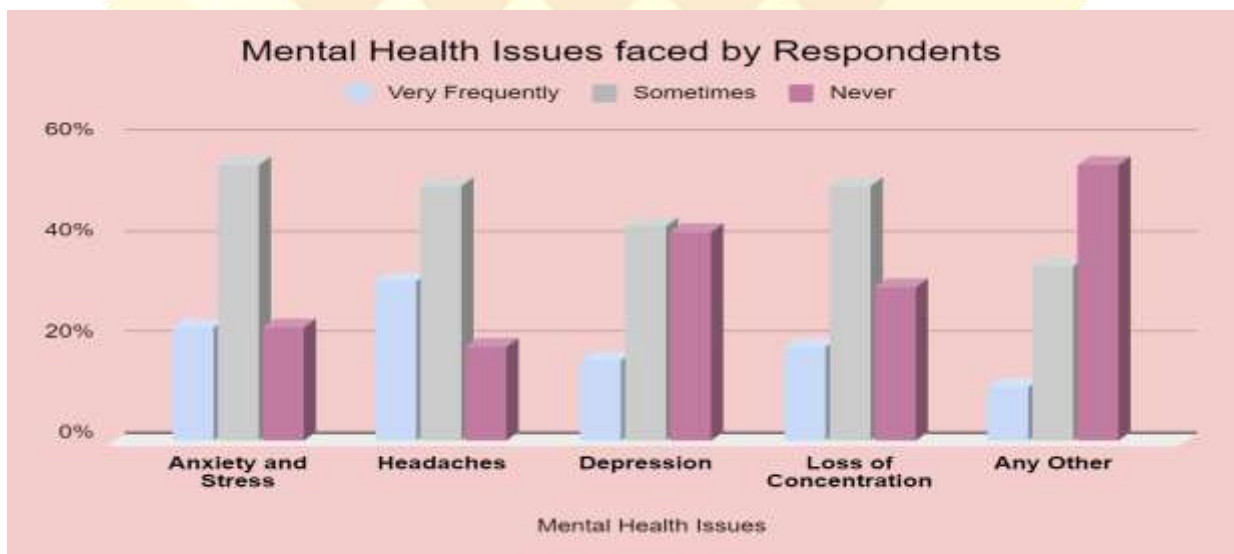
Both physical and mental health govern the condition of a well-being. Healthy physical and mental state is necessary to perform various tasks allocated in our personal and social lives. The study found that fatigue (28%) and back pain (24%) were common problems faced by respondents very frequently. Other health issues observed among respondents were the problem of obesity (18.67%), weight loss (17.33%) and anaemia (14.67%) faced

by them very frequently. However, nearly 50% respondents sometimes complained about the problems of fatigue, weight loss, back pain, obesity, anaemia, fatigue and back pain.



Mental Health:

In terms of mental health, most of the respondents complained to have headaches (31.67%) very frequently. The next problem observed among them were related with anxiety and stress (22.67%), loss of concentration (18.67%), depression (16%) etc. however, more than 50% respondents agreed to face the problem of anxiety and stress, headaches, loss of concentration and depression sometimes. About 10% respondents stated that they face mental health issues in some other forms.



Conclusion:

Today women are not only literate and independent but empowered in every manner. They are making their valuable contribution in every sphere of life and paving the platform for the progress and development of both society and the nation but this scenario has also compelled women to face various challenges. Society's perception and ideology has definitely changed in respect to job orientation of females but this ideology still demands family obligations to be fulfilled as well. As a result, women are confronting the burden of dual roles performed at homes and offices, role conflict, resulting in the loss of both mental and physical health, neglection of life priorities. Some traditional issues are still prevalent and affecting females lives like less access to property, restriction in terms of spending the earned income, etc. This is true that various problems exist for working women but at the same time we all shall agree that financial independence has really improved and enhanced women status both in their families and society as compared to traditional society.

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