

Socio-economic and psychological problems faced by married working women

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Woman has to perform many roles in her life both at home and work place. She has always been a multitasker who is handling several duties of her job, kitchen, family, house, society, personal health, passion and desires. Balancing between so many duties and obligations, a woman faces numerous challenges and problems every day, every time, and may be every minute or second. In carrying out all the responsibilities single handedly women are over strained and get exhausted. There are many reasons and problems that forced women to work. In the modern times the financial demands on the families are increasing day by day. Increased cost of living, expenses on education of children, and cost of housing properties raised are the few reasons that force every family to look for ways and means of increasing the household income. As a result, women in India who were mostly known as homemakers are forced to go for jobs and take up even careers that were considered only suitable for men such as working in odd hours. Keeping in view the double pressure of work on the working women a study was planned to know the socio-economic and psychological problems faced by married working women both at work and home level. The result indicated that women faced many problems due to dual work pressure like stress, fatigue, neglect of children, role conflict and over load of work and difficult colleagues which ultimately effect their health particularly due to the withdrawal of any support system.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Socio-economic, Psychological, Problems

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Traditionally, a women's place was at home. Despite all the sociological developments starting with the dawn of the present country, women continued to be confined to a secondary position and subjected to restrictions of varying security in regard to their activities and interest. Her employment outside home was looked upon with a lot of disfavor. A married woman's occupational status has been associated with home and

family. There is a clear conflict between a socially approved status of women as a housewife and a mother on the one hand, and her status as a worker, on the other.

Working outside the home provides the women day-to-day framework that encourages productivity and consequently enhances their status and prestige in the society. They hold themselves in higher esteem than equally gifted non-working women but at the same time

pressure of dual role and lack of enough time, working women have to face a number of problems and they cannot devote sufficient time for the psychological and emotional demands of their children. They feel frustration when they do not get due credit of their efforts and cooperation of family members. Sometimes such a situation creates conflict in the family which must be avoided to make the home environment congenial. The problems of a woman who simultaneously combines the role of a wife, a mother and a working woman are multiple. Thus employment imposes substantial stress on the home makers. Sulleret (1971) found out that working women were haunted by the feeling of guilt for not performing household activities in an organized way and poor performance of children in school which in turn created tension and prevented many women from feeling of fulfillment. The present investigation was thus planned and carried out keeping in view the following objectives.

- To identify the socio-economic and psychological characteristics of married working women.
- To examine the consequences of employment of married women on their daily life.

■ RESEARCH METHODS

The study was conducted in Ludhiana district of Punjab State, which was purposively selected. Out of the total blocks of the district, two blocks *viz.*, Samrala and Macchiwara were selected randomly. Ten villages from each block were selected at random. From the selected villages a list of married working women was prepared and then a sample of 100 married working women was selected randomly.

A structured interview schedule was prepared for collecting information from the respondents. Pre-testing was done and then schedule was suitably modified. Personal interview schedule techniques were used for collection of data. The data were analyzed on the basis of different statistical tools such of percentage mean score, student's distribution and Z-test.

■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The variables that were studied were age, education, caste, age-at-marriage, family, type size of the family, income, husband's occupation and income. It is clear from the Table 1 that majority of the respondents were in the age –group of 30-35 years. Forty four per cent of the respondents were graduates and 49 per cent belonged

to high caste. 75 per cent of the women were above 25 years of age at the time of their marriage. Most of the respondents had joint families. Fifty five per cent of the respondents had family size between 5-7 members. Above 67 per cent of the respondents had their monthly income above Rs. 10000. Most of the respondents husbands *i.e.* 70.00 per cent were in service and 65 per cent of them had income above Rs. 12500 per month.

Working problems :

The problems of working women are multi-dimensional and need intensive probing. There are two situations under which they emerge, one is at home and the other at the place of work. The problems are mainly due to dual commitment and concern at a practical level combining work with the home. Table 2 reveals that the most common problem felt by working women was fatigue and stress with mean score 1.76 each, respectively. Some other acute problems were role conflict (1.44), social functions remain unattended (1.41) followed by 'children get neglected' and too much responsibility with mean score of 1.26 and 1.25, respectively. Kumari and Mohanty (2014) also showed that working women had different kinds of problems and challenges. Some common problems were mental and physical stress, lack of proper balance between employment and family care, unfair treatment in the workplace, stressful life and work place discrimination etc.

Fatigue and stress were common problems experienced by the teachers and the clerks whereas for the class IV employee main problem was that most of their social functions remain unattended. When teachers and class IV employees were compared 'the neglect of children' was found to be significant at 1% level. While too much responsibility and 'role conflict' were significant at 5% level in comparison between teachers and class IV employees.

Concerning occupational problem Table 3 shows that's most of the respondents with mean score 1.21 faced the occupational hazard of overwork followed by 'difficult to adjust with colleagues with mean score of 1.11. In all the professions *i.e.* teacher, clerks and fourth class employees, occupational hazard of overwork was considered important with mean score of 1.06, 1.43 and 1.86, respectively. Paruthi and Bhardwaj (1985) also indicated that main occupational hazard faced by women

Table 1 : Distribution of respondents according to their socio-economic characteristics				(n=100)
Socio-economic profile	Nature of job			Total
	Teachers (n=75)	Clerks (n=11)	Class IV (n=14)	
Age (years)				
20-30	4(5.33)	3(27.8)	1(7.14)	8(8.00)
30-40	31(41.33)	4 (36.36)	9 (64.29)	44 (44.00)
40-50	34 (45.34)	2 (18.18)	3 (21.43)	39 (39.00)
Above 50	6 (8.00)	2 (18.18)	1 (7.14)	9 (9.00)
Education				
Primary	-	-	2 (14.29)	2 (2.00)
Middle	-	-	6 (42.86)	6 (6.00)
Hr Sec/10+2	20 (26.67)	2 (18.18)	5 (35.71)	27 (27.00)
Graduate	37 (49.33)	6 (54.55)	1 (7.14)	44 (44.00)
Post Graduate	18 (24.00)	3 (27.27)	-	21 (21.00)
Type of family				
Joint	43 (57.33)	7 (63.64)	6 (42.86)	56 (56.00)
Nuclear	32 (42.67)	4 (36.36)	8 (57.14)	44 (44.00)
Size of family				
Upto 4 members	21 (28.00)	4 (36.36)	5 (35.71)	30 (30.00)
5-7 Members	44 (58.67)	5 (45.45)	6 (42.86)	55 (55.00)
7-8 Members	10 (13.33)	2 (18.19)	3 (21.43)	15 (15.00)
Monthly income of the respondents(Rs.)				
Upto 2500	-	-	5 (35.71)	5 (5.00)
2500-5000	-	-	4 (28.57)	4 (4.00)
5000-7500	-	1 (9.09)	4 (28.57)	5 (5.00)
7500-10000	13 (17.33)	5 (45.46)	1 (7.15)	19 (19.00)
Above 10000	62 (82.67)	5 (45.46)	-	67 (67.00)
Occupation of husband				
Service	60 (80.00)	7 (63.63)	3 (21.43)	70 (70.00)
Agriculture	9 (12.00)	3 (27.28)	4 (28.57)	16 (16.00)
Labour	6 (8.00)	1 (9.09)	3 (21.43)	10 (10.00)
Business/self Employed	-	-	4 (28.57)	4 (4.00)
Husband's monthly income				
5000-7500	6 (8.00)	-	10 (71.43)	16 (16.00)
7500-10000	5 (6.67)	2 (18.18)	3 (21.43)	10 (10.00)
10000-12500	6 (8.00)	2 (18.18)	1 (7.114)	9 (9.00)
Above 12500	58 (77.33)	7 (63.64)	-	65 (65.00)

Table 2 : Distribution of the respondents according to the problems faced by them as working women								
Sr. No.	Problems	Mean scores			Overall	Multiple response		
		Teachers	Clerks	Class IV employees		T/C	T/O	C/O
1.	Children get neglected	1.34	1.16	0.88	1.26	1.98*	3.12**	3.76**
2.	Too much responsibility	1.18	1.39	1.54	1.25	1.37 ^{NS}	2.06*	1.16 ^{NS}
3.	Role conflict	1.56	1.43	0.78	1.44	1.14 ^{NS}	2.39*	2.42*
4.	Fatigue	1.78	1.64	1.75	1.76	0.97 ^{NS}	0.11 ^{NS}	0.86 ^{NS}
5.	Stress	1.78	1.64	1.75	1.76	0.97 ^{NS}	0.11 ^{NS}	0.86 ^{NS}
6.	Jobs not liked by in-laws	0.86	0.98	0.46	0.82	0.81 ^{NS}	1.97*	2.04*
7.	Social functions remain unattended	1.37	1.14	1.87	1.41	1.63 ^{NS}	1.98*	2.16*
8.	Conflict with family member	0.96	0.81	0.57	0.89	0.88 ^{NS}	1.16 ^{NS}	0.96 ^{NS}

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively
T = Teachers C = Clerks O = Class IV employees

NS = Non-significant

Table 3 : Mean score of respondents according to the extent of occupational hazard faced by them at the place of work

Sr. No.	Occupational hazards	Mean score				t-value		
		Teachers	Clerks	Class IV employees	Overall	T/C	T/O	C/O
1.	Overwork	1.06	1.43	1.86	1.21	1.97*	3.18**	1.98*
2.	Transfer	0.54	0.98	0.68	0.61	2.01*	0.77 ^{NS}	1.92 ^{NS}
3.	Night Shift		0.13	0.63	0.10			2.85**
4.	Conflict with superiors	0.72	1.16	1.29	0.85	2.18*	2.48*	0.84 ^{NS}
5.	Difficult to adjust with colleagues	0.96	1.34	1.74	1.11	2.52*	3.69**	2.17**
6.	Sexual harassment	0.32	0.48	0.64	0.38	1.11 ^{NS}	2.01*	1.88 ^{NS}

NS=Non-significant

* and ** indicate significance of values at P=0.05 and 0.01, respectively

results mainly from various interactions of the worker and the environment of the work they perform their duties as well as due to overload of work.

In the comparison of teachers and clerks t-value was significant at 5% level whereas in case of teacher and fourth class employees, 'overwork and difficult to adjust with colleagues' was significant at 1% level. Night shift was found to be significant at 1% level in comparison of clerks and class IV employees. Mehrotra and Sandhu (1996) studied about the factors contributing work management problems of employed urban housewives and Sanghvan *et al.* (1987) studied on the constraints faced by rural women regarding participation in income generating activities. Factors affecting stresses among working and non-working women was studied by Harshpinder (2000).

Conclusion:

From this study, it is concluded that the problems of a women who simultaneously combines the role of a wife, a mother and a working women are multiple. Thus employment imposed substantial stress on the home makers and to ameliorate those problems, there is a need on the part of male members and other members of the family that both men and working women both share the burden of housekeeping equally. New employment

opportunities to be generated in rural areas especially for the women and more crèches for the children of working women should be opened. In addition to these, good work environment should be established and there should be proper interaction between employees and the employers.

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