



A RESEARCH ON STUDY OF CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS FACED BY WORKING WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Today males and females both contribute equally to the economic development of the country. We can find women play an active role in the workplace as engineers, doctors, geologists, and every other facet of society. Despite these women have to encounter several challenges at the workplace. Instead, they put much more effort into balancing their professional and personal life, undergoing stress as well as a physical dilemma. But still, she is not equally rewarded as their counterparts, and at times campaigns like me to become essential for highlighting their problems. The purpose of this paper is to highlight various challenges faced by women in the work environment. We try to do the root cause analysis of several factors which many of them have to face like sexual harassment, domestic violence, work-life balance, family planning, and lesser growth opportunities.

Keywords: working women, career growth challenges, work-life balance

INTRODUCTION

It is quite evident that women nowadays are not only confined to their kitchens merely; they are forerunners of society and also work as professionals, entrepreneurs and at various similar roles contributing equally as compared to the male counterpart. Technological advancement and growing awareness among society have allowed more and more women to get higher education. Advance learning has permitted them to stand independently on their own besides providing them equality among male-dominated society. In the present scenario, it is quite evident that women not only use brains at work but also has to go through physical excursions by performing daily duties at home. She has to immerse herself in bringing worklife balance. Time has shown various successful working females have proved the world, what they can do by splendidly being a Famous Book Author, Celebrity, Company Director or a Financial Banker and at the same time shouldering family responsibility and household chores. But while attempting to integrate and manage work-life balance, there are various challenges and deterrent which come in their path which try to deflect them. It might be in the form of family planning or social pressure and at times due to humiliation or intimidating at the workplace. The present study assesses inequalities faced by women at a personal and professional level to bring a work-life balance.

Objectives of the Study:

The study aims to figure out the following research objectives: To obtain sufficient knowledge about the challenges working women face in the workplace.

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To identify the key professional and personal pointers contributing to working women career growth.

To figure out possible solutions to overcome the most common challenges that working women face.

Data collection process

The study has taken into consideration a quantitative and qualitative approach. It follows a methodology of a questionnaire-based survey, where working women from different sectors from Vadodara were asked questionnaires. The study consisted of 15 questions asked to 25 working females related to key findings for our study. Based on results few items were dropped and some were optimized for better results.

The questionnaire was formed based on the consulting of relevant literature along with the relevant preliminary study that was conducted in the area.

Challenges faced by Working Women

Today's working scenario is quite different from what it used to be earlier. Technology advancement as well as ever-changing work and social roles have contributed to different challenges faced by working women in day to day life.

Sexual Harassment

Several women in corporate life may have experienced sexual harassment at some point of time either in the form of being touched sexually, demeaning remark or hearing a sexist joke. Again to compete in a male-dominant world, females feel they have more to prove more than counterparts, which leads to higher expectations from their seniors which creates psychological strain. They are provided maternity leaves but at the same time have to fulfill their targets. There are numerous instances where sexual favors are asked from women subordinates by male superiors in return of career growth. Their superiors depict that they have done some mercy that should be compensated with. The incorporate sector, male colleagues consider women are as weak and vulnerable.

Domestic violence

Domestic violence can be in the form of abuse or physical attack to gain supremacy over his or her spouse within a relationship. Sometimes verbal emotional abuse or a combination of threats and sexual abuse. There are several instances which show men involved in abusing girlfriends or wives. Females also at times face this abuse at the workplace due to competitive fear or hatred with a significant impact despite open door policy in place. Employers have a larger responsibility to play to make sure that such incidences don't happen at the workplace. Violence not only leads to physical injuries but also increased stress and trauma.

Work-life balance

Working women have multiple responsibilities to fulfill, and its quite a challenge to have a balance between their family and work. The career is still considered secondary responsibility for females and there is very less support from their families. She has to accomplish the expectations at work as well as carry on household duties giving equal time to family members and kids. In the dual roles of perfecting in all tasks, they get restless, isolated and stressed. This may lead to insomnia and depression. They might gradually feel helpless and frustrated due to lack of support and isolation. Such psychological pressure leaves them with options of either to accepting the mental depression as part of their life or leave there job.

Family planning

Many of us today leave in the nuclear family and for working women handling work responsibilities and at the same time planning for the family becomes challenging. She continuously keeps pondering on how she is going to manage her work after their children come to life. At times due to financial crunch, she is not able to keep a caretaker and if there is no grandparent at home to take care of young kids is again proves to be the roadblock for her professional career. Again every mother-in-law is keen that his son's wife delivers her grandchildren as soon as they get married. This sometimes creates pressure among the working females who in-turn retire from their occupation to devote their entire life to their family planning and later on the children's growth.

Lesser growth opportunities

It is evident that at places more and more men are getting promoted and female reach a standpoint from where they cannot rise further. Inequality and injustice are often visible in their pay as compared to male counterparts even if they contribute equally to their occupation. As a combined effect of discrimination and rejection of women at various levels discourages their successful participation in the workplace in a greater ratio. Even today male subordinates find it very difficult to accept the fact that women are capable of shouldering equal responsibilities as men at the workplace. The true potential and capabilities of working women have been underestimated concerning their recruitment's, pay scale and promotion.

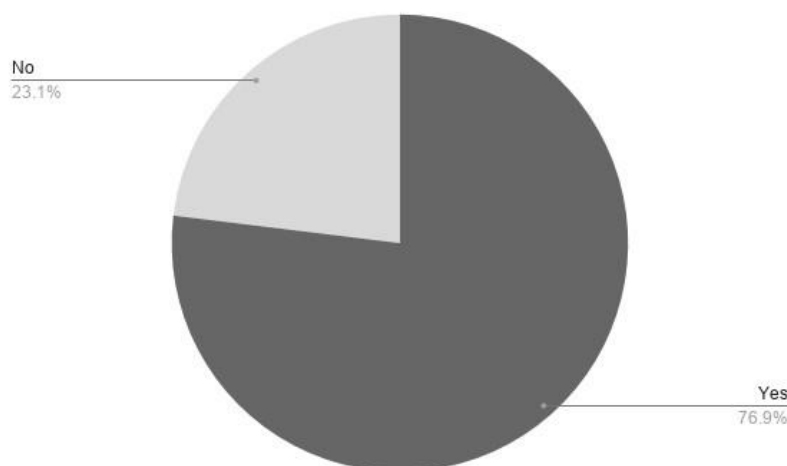
Analysis & Interpretation

The difficulties that females face in balancing personal and professional life are analyzed by carrying out a survey. Some of the questions are as mentioned and based on the survey a chart has been presented.

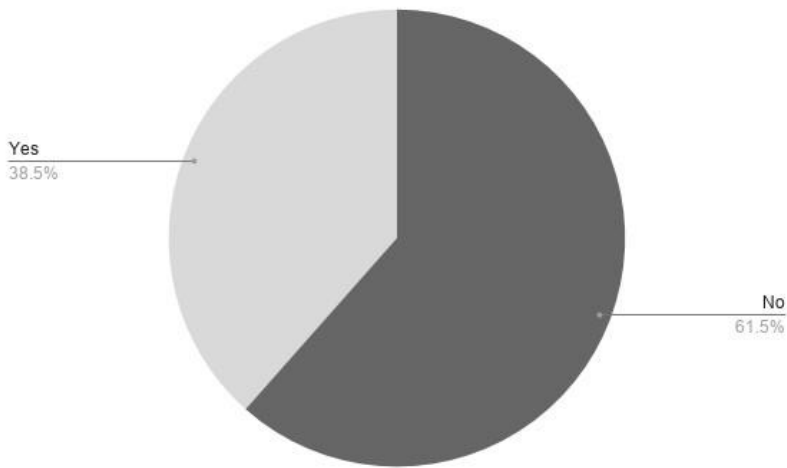
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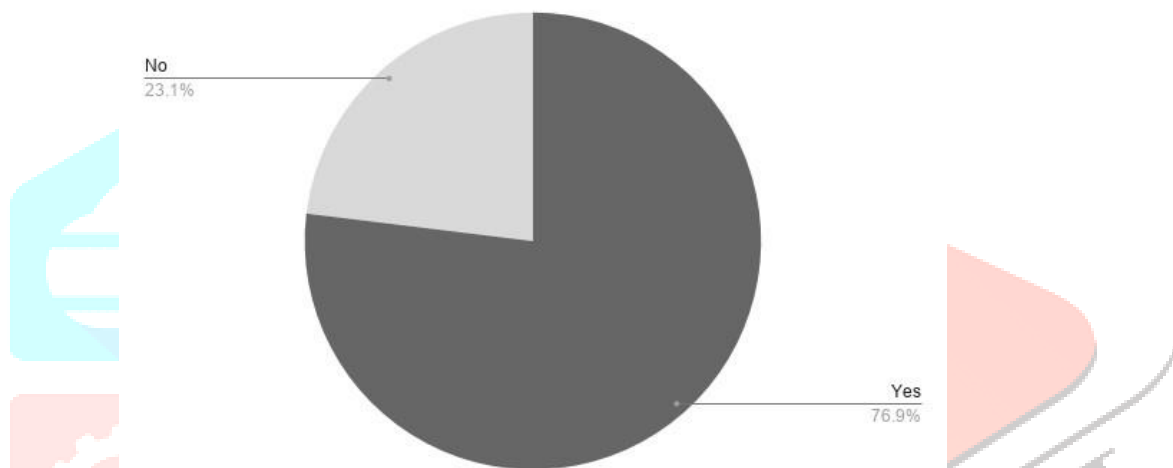
1. Do you feel that you are getting less time for yourself in comparison to male family member?



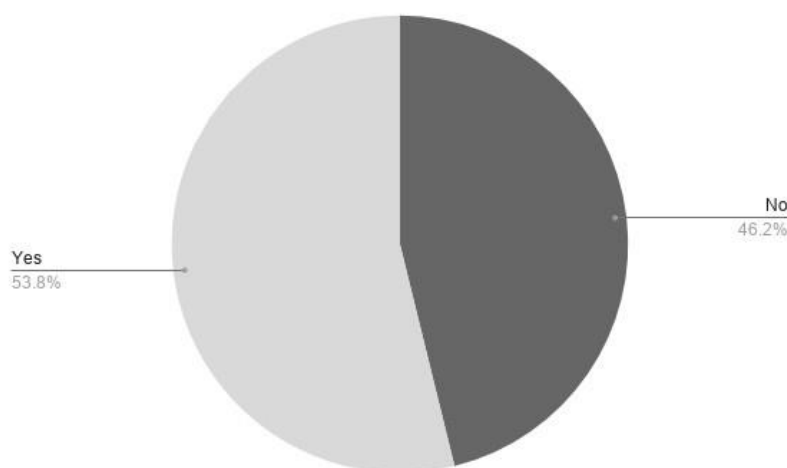
2. Do you feel that your Job priority is considered secondary as compared to working male family member?



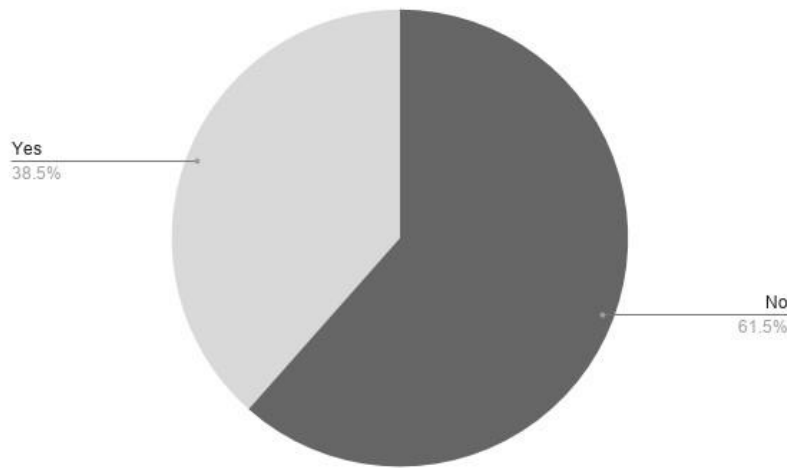
3. Do you and male family member get equal family support?



4. In comparison to male member will you get permission easily for business tour or training supporting your career development?

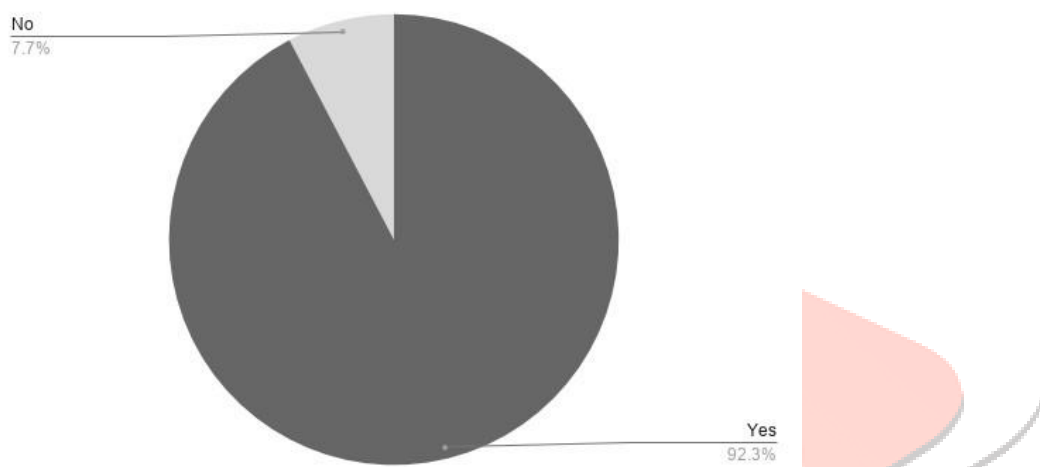


5. Can your work with paperwork without disturbance at home or have to often work after

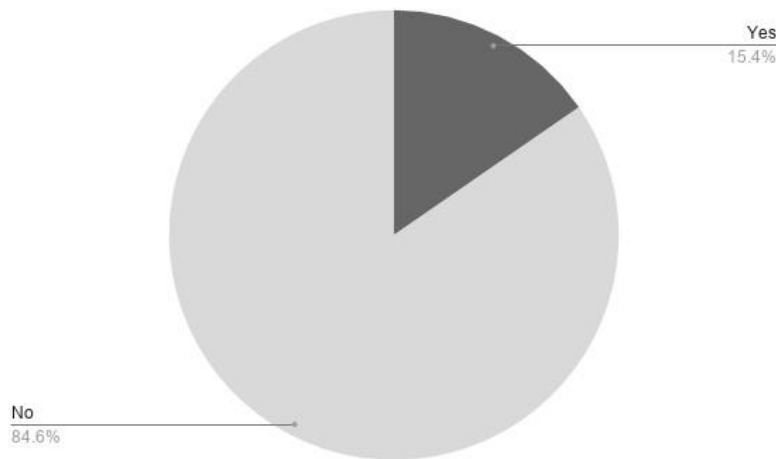


hours or on weekdays to cope with it?

6. Do you get mentally affected and get stressed with handling responsibilities at work

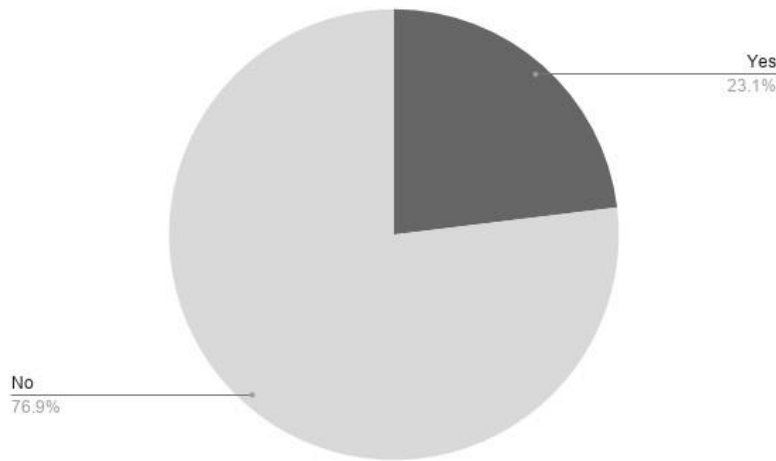


place and social life simultaneously?

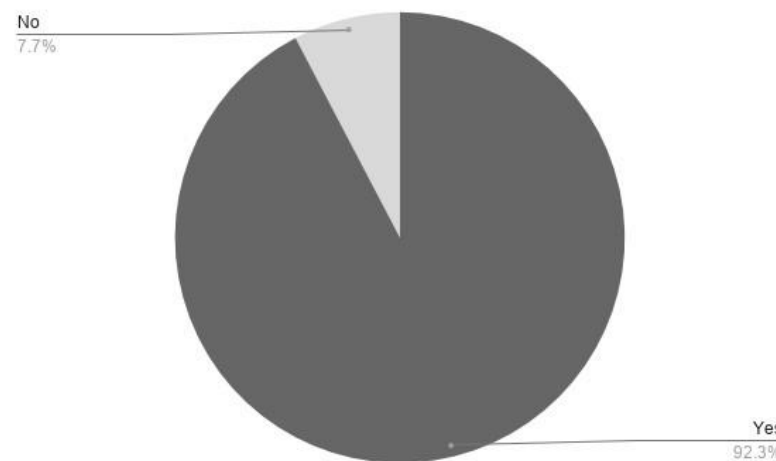


7. Are you getting less benefits at work place being a woman?

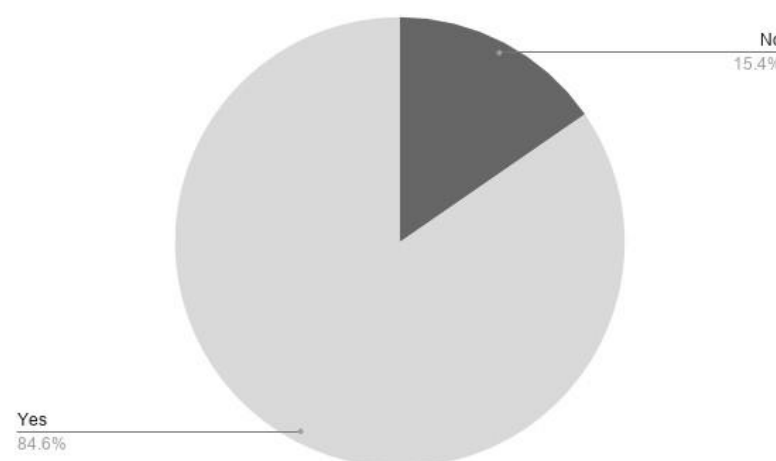
8. Do you feel that Women security is at threat at workplace?



9. Do you accept the stress level women has to face is higher than male?



10. Do you feel harassment at workplace decreases performance of females?



Key Findings

Working women face many obstacles in their career path among which Sexual and Mental Harassment by male colleagues is one of them arising from jealousy, competition and other factors. There is not a proper framework in place nor enough policies which favour women in the workplace. There are frequent cases where females become a victim of domestic violence or injustice, finding it difficult to bring balance between their work and life resulting in stress-causing health issues like hypertension, headache, etc. Lack of support and rigid schedules also brings hurdles in family planning. Despite handling multiple roles, shouldering additional responsibilities and proving better than their male counterpart there is much biasing done when it comes giving them the growth opportunity in terms of financial as well as lead roles.

Possible Solutions

Based on observations made from the analysis a large number of working women are undergoing stress caused by the imbalance of multiple roles. They need to carry out like multiple duties like competing at their workplace, managing children and family, carrying out social responsibilities, etc. They face a big dilemma of managing work and family conflicts. Females with unadaptable working schedules account for more family difficulties than females working at flexible schedules. This is the root cause of various health issues such as regular headache, weight gain, hypertension, etc.

The first finding shows that the stress level in working women is directly proportional to their age. Secondly, childcare concerns are also a contributing factor for stress in working women. For working females, they should need someone to shoulder this responsibility, so they can concentrate on their professional life as well. Stress relief plan of action like yoga and meditation, spending more time with family, recreational activity, music etc. can help them to reduce stress levels.

Also, a Three-Factor Model which relies on Knowledge, Behaviour and Skills is important for a healthy work-life balance.

The Knowledge of herself, subordinates, family members and duties allows working women to act effectively in her different roles as spouse, mother, daughter and so on. It enables them to develop a healthy relationship along with providing clarity of duties at a work environment and in personal life.

Managing behaviour is quite essential as this will lead their path in both professional and personal life. Also, her behaviour with her children's even after she comes tired at home will prove to be the base of for their own behaviour when they grow up. There would be a sense of responsibility which would directly be embedded in them.

Another factor that is important is her skill to deal at the workplace and with family. This is quite essential to bring a work-life balance. She needs to be calm and composed by sharing her thoughts and encouraging others to do the same. She should possess decision-making capabilities as well as technical skills to ensure she does not fall behind in both personal and professional life.

CONCLUSION

The present paper discusses various challenges and issues faced by working women in the current corporate scenario. It tries to highlight personal and professional life problems faced by working women in everyday life. To be physically fit and apply a balancing act between professional and personal life they have to undergo several situations and objections. Eventually, to sum up, the paper concludes with advice on how to balance using three important qualities, behaviour, knowledge, and skills. Hence, in the current situation, a working woman needs more support in the form of psychological and social ways both from society and her family. She has to remain multi-tasking to juggle between her kids, family, work-life and social life. Lastly, to make her dreams come true, she should be treated equally in comparison with men.

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