

Problems faced by Married Women Teachers having Multiple Roles

Dr. Ritu Bakshi

Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Central University of Jammu, Jammu, India

Abstract

Family problems of women teachers arise while performing the household and occupational roles. Women's occupational status has always been closely associated with the home and family. There is a clear adjustment problem between socially approved status of women as housewives and mother of children on the one hand, and as more productive workers on the other. Family duties have always imposed restrictions on their employment. The present study has been conducted at Dharmshala and its suburb areas. Married women teachers working in schools located in this area constituted the sample of this study. The problems related to physical health, psychological problems, personal care, economic freedom, decision making and freedom of expression have been taken into account. Not much work has been done so far on this subject hence; the findings of this study can be significant, in the sense that they may suggest solutions to the family problems of working women and help in reducing their problems.

Key words: Teacher, Occupational Status, Psychological, Decision making, Expression

Introduction

No doubt, the concept of working woman is a reality today, but, this does not mean that what they have achieved, they have accepted entirely. Working outside remained a new element for them and they wished it for a long time, but when they actually came under its spell, they find themselves in a state of confusion. There is nothing unusual in it, after all 'Women are women'. They are by nature delicate. Today, they are found to standing at par with men in all spheres of life. However, the problems which they actually face are much serious than men. It is obvious that some problems persist in the family and for a working woman, the availability of time for undertaking both the responsibilities is much more crucial.

Woman has gradually realized that, as human beings, she has her own individuality and her aim in life does not end with becoming a good wife and wise mother. She has realized that she is the member of the civic community having multiple roles and her life is not restricted to home. She has realized her abilities. But, at the same time acceptance of additional role at work place has given rise to many problems such as personal, childcare, domestic chores, mutual interactions and social obligations, etc. (Desai, 2003).

Acceptance of multiple roles as family-member and professional worker has become problematic for many women. A tragic case in Pune, a few years ago narrates the agony of the problem, when two young school going brothers committed suicide at home when their Career oriented parents were not in town. Acute cause of suicide was "Loneliness and Depression", because, the parents, both government officers and were posted in two different towns (Sunday Times August 03, 2009). The above case indicates that it has become very important to study the problems which married working women have to face in their life.

Physical health, family and psychological problems of married working women have been observed in various studies conducted in India in the recent years. Dual responsibilities at home and work place start affecting health status, family and social life. Almost all the problems emerged due to strained situations at home and work place (Singh and Singh, 2002).

A working woman develops independence, assertiveness and self-assurance which are generally rare in non-working women. It also affects the power structure in the family. When a woman works, she apparently increases her ability to control because of the monetary contribution she makes to the family and this gradually give way to her increased participation. Despite of the increased economic independence and assertiveness in family decision making, each working woman has to carry an extra burden of home along with the professional career. (Rao, 2005) Pasricha's, 2002 article on "Women Domestic Workers' Socio-Economic Life" is an outcome of multidisciplinary investigation into the dynamics of working life, family adjustment of maidservants and the approaches adopted for resource development. It attempts to focus on the problems of working mothers in general and women domestic workers in particular. The present descriptive-cum-diagnostic paper attempts to focus on the socio-economic life of women domestic workers, working in one or more families for wages. It highlights the working conditions, family and work place adjustment and aftereffects of work, etc. Singh, 2005, in a study on 230 working women in Bombay, observed that women feel that their career stood in the way of home responsibilities, although they declared their families did not say so. In a few cases, the family pressure was also high. Said a botanist, "My in-laws are eager enough to benefit from my income, but did not make a single concession for me. For 20 years, I got up at 4 A.M. and go to bed past midnight finishing the household chores, yet I was trail all the time to see how 'dutiful' I was. The review of literature on women revealed that the status of women has changed in terms of social and economic relation in the family and society. Basic reasons for this change are education and employment. Literacy rate of women in India has increased in the recent years, which has created a lot of employment opportunities in all spheres of life. The women working force has also shown an increase in Himachal Pradesh over the years. As per the statistical data, Himachal Pradesh was among the states where women participation rate was 30-40% in the year 1991 (Census of India, 1991) and increased to 43.69 % in the year 2001 and 57.58% in 2011. (Census 2011 and annual report on Women and Child Development, 2009-10)

As discussed earlier the women's entry into paid occupation demands time beyond domestic boundary, which may in turn, affect their family life. Therefore, it becomes essential to look into whether working outside home results into family problems? This understanding is very vital from sociological and psychological viewpoint. The research studies have shown that educated middle-class women are facing various problems in fulfilling responsibilities as workers and mothers and their main dilemma is how to synchronize the two. The present paper is an outcome of study conducted to assess the demographic, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of working women and to access the family problems faced by married working women in context of sociological variables.

Methodology

The study was conducted at Dharmshala and its suburb areas. Dharmshala is the headquarter of district Kangra of Himachal Pradesh. All the women teachers working in schools located in this area constituted the universe of the study. A list of women teachers in government and private schools in Dharmshala town and in its suburb area was prepared from the information collected from the office of Deputy Director (Education) and Education Board office Dharmshala. Out of the total 192 women teachers, 68 were employed in 9 Government schools and 124 in 11 private schools in Dharmshala. Of the 192, only 128 teachers (43 in Govt. and 85 in Private schools) were married. The married women teachers formed the sample of the study, thus, the unit of study was married women teachers. In order to collect primary data on the topic, interview schedule prepared

by Kulshreshtra, with little modifications was used. Care was taken to include most relevant aspects in the interview schedule. The issues have been analyzed and interpreted depending on the problems related to three areas i.e. personal life, family life and social obligations. Although these areas are totally intermingled, mixed among one another in practical life scenario, yet the proposed sections can be of help from the study point of view. These describe the family problems of married working women in personal, domestic and social domains, across the sociological variables such as age, status of service, family type and place of living, income of respondents and their family and size of family.

Results & Discussions

Personal Life Problems

A working woman is guided by two conflicting ambitions of excelling as a perfect wife & mother and successful professional women. Both these roles demand her time and energy. Due to double burden, working women face many personal problems. These problems are further divided into following sub-sections:

- (a) Physical health
- (b) Psychological problems
- (c) Personal care
- (d) Economic freedom
- (e) Decision making
- (f) Freedom of expression

Since the prime responsibility of running household lies with the wife, the pressure of dual role leaves the working wife physically and mentally exhausted (Kapadia, 1993). Table 1 reveals that out of 128 respondents, 43.75 % are facing physical health problems like tiredness, headache, weakness, etc. and 24.22% of the respondents face psychological problems like frustration, depression, insecurity and anxiety. A big majority of respondents, i.e. 66.41% are facing problems related to personal care like exercise, *yoga* and body care. 61.72% of the respondents face the problem of economic freedom. 46.88% have problems of not involving in family's decision making and 32.81% respondents are facing the problems to express themselves in the family.

Table 1: Personal Life Problems of the Respondents (N=128)

S.No.	Problem Area	Response			
		No		Yes	
		f	%	f	%
1	Physical health	72	56.25	56	43.75
2	Psychological	97	75.78	31	24.22
3	Personal care	43	33.59	85	66.41
4	Economic freedom	49	38.28	79	61.72
5	Participation in decision making	68	53.13	60	46.88
6	Freedom of expression	86	67.19	42	32.81

Thus, the study revealed that majority of population has problems related to personal care and economic freedom followed by physical health problems. These problems have been further looked into with respect to variables such as age, family type, family income and job status.

Age and personal life problems

Age is a factor that affects the way of life depending upon the capacities and strength of the individual. The data reveals that majority of the subjects in the age group of 31-40 years and 51-60 years face more physical health problems like headache, tiredness and body ache. Majority in the sample in the age group of 31-40 years and 21-30 years face psychological problems that are hypertension, frustration and anxiety. It can be concluded from the data that working women in the age groups of 31-40 years and 21-30 years face more personal care problems than women in higher age groups. Data shows that out of 79 working women facing the problems of economic freedom, majority of respondents i.e. 41 (51.90%) were in the age group of 31-40 years, followed by 22 (27.85%) in the age group of 21-30 years, 9 (11.39%) in the age group of 41-50 years and 7 (8.86%) in the age group of 51-60 years. This concludes that the women in age group of 21-40 years don't enjoy economic freedom. However, this data further reveals that women in lower age groups have less economic freedom as compared to women in higher age groups. The data further enumerates that working women in the age group of 31-40 years are in majority who has no role in decision making. This infers that majority of respondents in the lower age groups are not involved in the family decisions. Regarding freedom of expression, out of 42 respondents, 21 (50.00%) in the age group of 31-40 years, 14 (33.33%) belong to age group of 21-30 years, 5 (11.90%) from age group of 41-50 years and only 2 (4.76%) belong to age group of 51-60 years. It is clear from the data that working women in the lower age groups face more problem of expression in the family but with the passage of time, the problem ceases.

Status of Service and Personal Life Problems

Although the status and role are said to be the two sides of the same coin, yet, there are some stages where the people playing the same role are denied the equality in their status. This has happened in the case of the teachers in the study area depending on the nature of appointments being made, i.e. permanent, semi-permanent and contract. There is a lot of difference in the salary, allowances and other facilities in spite of the fact that they have to play the same role. The status also suffers change and variation depending on the service sector that is public and private.

It is evident from the data that of the 87 respondents, most of the working women i.e. 22 (39.29%) are in semi-permanent service followed by 19 (33.93%) in jobs on contract basis and 15 (26.78%) of the respondents in permanent jobs facing the physical health problems. It is clear from the data that respondents in semi-permanent and contract jobs are facing more physical health problems. The women in permanent jobs face very less psychological problems whereas women in contract and semi-permanent jobs suffer more psychological problems. The causes explored by the respondents are mainly job insecurity, undue pressures and expectations of management of private institutions. The study shows that out of 85 respondents, 37 (43.53%) of the respondents were engaged on contract basis followed by 29 (34.12%) in semi-permanent and 19 (22.35%) in permanent jobs who are facing problem in personal care. Thus, the women in permanent jobs enjoy more economic freedom as compared to women in semi-permanent and in contract jobs.

Family Type and Personal Life Problems

Family remains the backbone of a social set up. This is the institution which not only caters for the growth and development of the individual but also banks upon to take care of the family obligations in return. The family size in the emerging Indian society presents a multi-colored picture for the interpretations in the present study. The types of the family like joint and nuclear, big and small can be different ingredients to expand the study further. This is what has been taken care of while analyzing the data. The study showed that women in joint families face more personal

life problems than those living in nuclear families. The most common reasons for these problems are the restriction imposed by elders in the family and more responsibilities.

Problems related with child care

Child is the pivot of the family around which the expectations and future of family is visualized. The child care is one of the most important areas which should not be ignored in the study dealing with the problems of women. There are positive and negative indicators in this regard. Whereas the more exposure of working woman enhances its discharge, the time constraint hampers the child care. Particularly the unavailability of child care centres in the study area makes the problem more serious. Most of the working women face the problem of child care along with their job. The problems related to education, health, food and recreation of the children are faced by working women due to dual responsibilities.

Table 2: Problems related with Child Care

S. No.	Opinion	Frequency	Percentage
1	No	49	38.28
2	Yes	79	61.72
Total		128	100

It is clear from table 2 that 79 (61.72%) of the 128 respondents face problems related with child care and 49 (38.28%) of the respondents do not have this problem. It can further be concluded that 79 respondents face the problem of child care, majority of respondents, i.e. 41 (51.90%) are in the age group of 31-40 years followed by 30 (37.97%) in age group of 21-30 years and 8 (10.13%) in age group of 41-50 years. It can be concluded from the table that most of the working women in the age group of 31-40 years and 21-30 years are facing problems related with child care and these problems gets reduced with respondent's age.

Conclusion

So the main reasons responsible for the problems faced by working women are the coping-up with everything all alone, psychological inhibition, lack of involvement in decision making related to important matters, restrictions in joint family, stresses at workplace and above all acute paucity of time. On the whole, long hours of work at workplace and at home coupled with absence of security, rest, recreation and care and above all the pervading sense of guilt makes a working women's life a bit problematic. But, in spite of facing many family problems, a few working women felt that going out of home is very important for their happiness and well-being.

To sum up, although the scene of working women's affairs seems to be apparently bright but in the core of family structure she still occupies a place which is full of pressures and stress. In her attempt to come out of the traditional bindings of conservation and oppression much more is yet to be sacrificed on her part to occupy equal status with men. She is found to resort to professional work in addition to attending the domestic liabilities. The caring activities of women are overwhelming, often praised and yet taken for granted. The sharing and caring is deserved and desired by working women so that she not only supplements the earning of the family but also the roles of man and woman seem complimentary. There are some rays of hope but, the state of affairs requires more awareness, commitment and motivation. The need and capacity should decide the levels, strength and quality of human give and take. And it will not be out of place to mention here that the gravity of the concerns is found covering all the areas of study that is physical health and personal care, psychological and social levels, freedom of expression and decision making.

Although the study is restricted to the women teachers in the area, it is indicative of the general state of affairs of women in the occupation but still the multilayered findings cannot be ruled out. Keeping in view, the various avenues of occupation in the society, apart from service class, there remains a sizable population of women folk engaged in manual works as laborers, farmers and maidservants. In that case, of course, the study will definitely open altogether new horizons of academic and social relevance.

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Pratibha
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