

Challenges at Workplace and Working Women

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Abstract – In the economic development of a country women plays a significant role. The contribution of women is nothing short of their male counterparts. But it has been observed that very often the women employees do not get the same benefits as the male employees. Unequal pay, insecurity, sexual harassment, lack of proper family support and deficient maternity leave are the major issues and problems that women face in their workplaces. In the present study attempt has been made to identify the challenges which obstructs the productivity of the women at their workplace. Besides, the researcher also seeks to suggest some remedial measures.

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In the economic development of a country women has a very important and vital role to play. However there are numerous issues and problems and challenges that they face even today at their workplace. The working women are sometimes not treated equally and are considered inferior to their male co-workers. Very often they do not get the same benefits as the male employees. The major issues and problems and constraints that women face in their work places includes unequal pay, insecurity, sexual harassment, lack of proper family support and deficient maternity leave (Mittal, 2015)

Earlier, it was found that most women in India were employed in the non-managerial posts and were often engaged in low-profile jobs. However, today it is heartening to find the Indian women in diverse sectors in various occupations. This has resulted in the increase of their duties and responsibilities towards their family and the society at large (Mathew & Panchanatham 2009b). But even today though many women have joined the workforce still only a handful of them are found to be involved in managerial roles. As observed by Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005), the pressures from the job and family domains are often incompatible, giving rise to imbalance. Various issues are being faced by entrepreneurial women. Dilip Kumar (2006) has elaborately explained some of them like dearth of finances, gender discrimination, limited mobility, inadequate education, family commitments and lack of motivation.

Usually women are expected to carry out multiple roles simultaneously. This increases their stress not only at the workplace but also at their homes. There are a number of challenges and constraints faced by women, working in various capacities, at their workplace. Often it has been observed that women face the problem of rude behaviour, extended working

hours, low wages, less number of leaves/holidays, insecurity etc. at their workplace.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

To explore the challenges working women face at their workplace and suggest remedial measures.

METHODOLOGY:

The sample design adopted for the study is that of a random technique, fitted to the requirement of the study. With time and resource constraint, the study is confined to the Kamrup (Metropolitan) district of Assam, India. Guwahati city (urban area of the district) and two development blocks- Chandrapur Development block and Rani Development block (part), (rural areas of the district) have been selected for the purpose

100 samples have been drawn from Guwahati city and 40 samples each have been drawn from the Rani Development block and the Chandrapur Development block respectively making the total sample size of 180 samples.

In order to collect the primary data an intensive survey has been carried out. Working women (sample units) have been selected. Data has been collected with the help of a pre-tested and well-structured interview schedules designed for the purpose. The processed data has been presented and results have been interpreted with the help of statistical techniques.

DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATIONS AND FINDINGS:

Women face a number of challenges at their workplace. In order to identify the most common challenges faced by a working woman various

studies have been conducted. It has been observed through these studies that health maintenance problems, poor time management, role overload and lack of support networks force women to juggle family, entrepreneurial, personal and societal duties. An attempt has been made by the present study to identify the challenges which obstruct the productivity of the women at their workplace. The study has also suggested some remedial measures. The researcher has categorised the challenges faced at workplace by the sampled women as Personal level challenges, Social level challenges, Environmental level challenges and General challenges. An in depth analysis of the challenges is given below.

Table 1: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: Personal Level, 2018-19

Challenges: Personal Level	Area (in percentage terms)			Total
	Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
Lack of personal confidence	25.0(10)	30.0(12)	14.0(14)	20.0(36)
Fear of making mistakes	5.0(2)	27.5(11)	15.0(15)	15.6(28)
Insufficient income	40.0(16)	37.5(15)	5.0(5)	20.0(36)
Staying engaged and motivated	22.5(9)	35.0(14)	29.0(29)	28.9(52)
Role conflict or multiple roles	10.0(4)	27.5(11)	25.0(25)	22.2(40)
Inadequate leadership qualities	10.0(4)	12.5(5)	7.0(7)	8.9(16)
Family commitments	17.5(7)	20.0(8)	35.0(35)	27.8(50)
Strict family background	12.5(5)	27.5(11)	14.0(14)	16.7(30)
Inadequate family support	5.0(2)	12.5(5)	8.0(8)	8.3(15)
Ineffective security arrangements	50.0(20)	47.5(19)	15.0(15)	30.0(54)
Insufficient maternity leaves	7.5(3)	12.5(5)	9.0(9)	9.4(17)
Poor self-efficacy	20.0(8)	17.5(7)	22.0(22)	20.6(37)
Any other	0.0(0)	2.0(2)	2.0(2)	1.1(2)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the absolute number
Source: Field Study



Figure 1: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: Personal Level, 2018-19

Among the personal level challenges ineffective security arrangements at workplaces, staying engaged and motivated and family commitments have topped the list.

Table 2: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: Social Level, 2018-19

Challenges: Social Level	Area (in percentage terms)			Total
	Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
No social challenges	60.0(24)	35.0(14)	67.0(67)	58.3(105)
Employment Discrimination	22.5(9)	50.0(20)	24.0(24)	29.4(53)
Socio-cultural problems relating to language, religion etc.	5.0(2)	10.0(4)	2.0(2)	4.4(8)
Social pressures	22.5(9)	7.5(3)	5.0(5)	9.4(17)
Any other	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	2.0(2)	1.1(2)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the absolute number
Source: Field Study

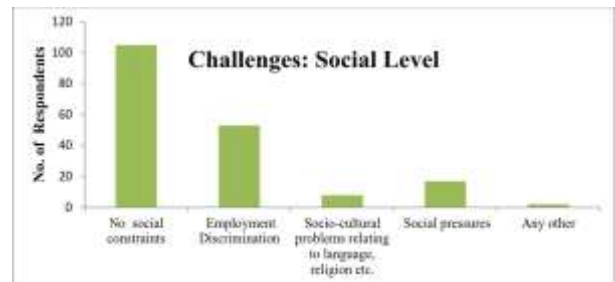


Figure 2: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: Social Level, 2018-19

About 58% of the respondents did not face any social level challenges. However for those who faced Social level challenges, employment discrimination is the most common.

Table 3: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: Environmental Level, 2018-19

Challenges: Environmental Level	Area (in percentage terms)			Total
	Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
Local competition	60.0(24)	57.5(23)	25.0(25)	40.0(72)
Difficulty faced in understanding the rules and regulations of the Government	10.0(4)	12.5(5)	19.0(19)	15.6(28)
Ineffective training and development programmes	7.5(3)	5.0(2)	6.0(6)	6.1(11)
Difficulty faced in understanding legal compliances	17.5(7)	20.0(8)	14.0(14)	16.1(29)
Marketing hazard	30.0(12)	37.5(15)	22.0(22)	27.2(49)
Inaccessibility to technological advancement	0.0(0)	15.0(6)	7.0(7)	7.2(13)
Any other	5.0(2)	7.5(3)	4.0(4)	5.0(9)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the absolute number
Source: Field Study

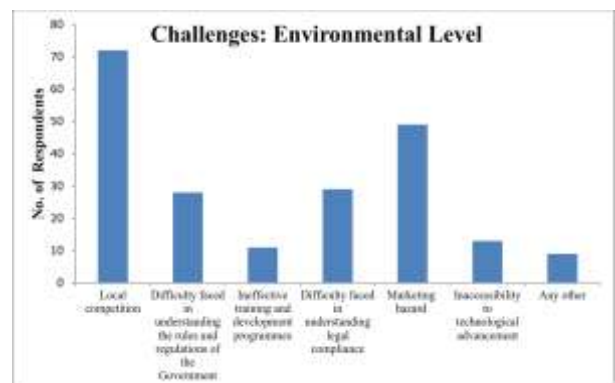


Figure 3: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: Environmental Level, 2018-19

As for the environmental level challenges local competition (40%) and marketing hazard (27%) were the most common. Further, 16% of the respondents

also referred to difficulty faced in understanding legal compliance.

Table 4: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: General, 2018-19

Challenges: General	Area (in percentage terms)			Total
	Rani Block	Chandrapur Block	Guwahati City	
Adapting to change	15.0(6)	20.0(8)	23.0(23)	20.6(37)
Time management	50.0(20)	55.0(22)	48.0(48)	50.0(90)
Balancing work and leisure	35.0(14)	45.0(18)	32.0(32)	35.6(64)
Less Government support	20.0(8)	5.0(2)	16.0(16)	14.4(26)
Lack of skill and professional development	10.0(4)	7.5(3)	2.0(2)	5.0(9)
Stress Management	5.0(2)	7.5(3)	10.0(10)	8.3(15)
Gender discrimination	7.5(3)	7.5(3)	7.0(7)	7.2(13)
Ignorance about legal compliance	2.5(1)	2.5(1)	8.0(8)	5.6(10)
Lack of knowledge about technological advancements	12.5(5)	15.0(6)	11.0(11)	12.2(22)
Lack of career guidance	17.5(7)	25.0(10)	17.0(17)	18.9(34)
Competition with their male counterparts	5.0(2)	5.0(2)	16.0(16)	11.1(20)
Lack of awareness about new trends and development in business	12.5(5)	10.0(4)	14.0(14)	12.8(23)
Any other	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate the absolute number
 Source: Field Study

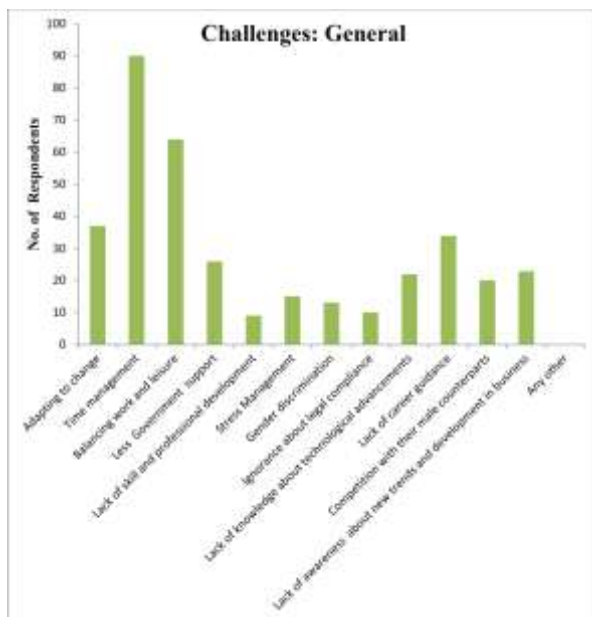


Figure 4: Challenges faced by the respondents at workplace: General, 2018-19

In case of general challenges time management was the most common constraint faced by the sampled women followed by balancing work and leisure.

Many cultural and institutional factors are the reasons as to why women face serious challenges and constraints in their productive activities. With the help of the qualitative technique of Focus Group Discussion the present study has made an attempt to obtain information with regard to the various challenges faced by the women at their workplace. Such an endeavour has led to some important findings as discussed below:

- The sampled women have to take care of the children and the elderly family members. At the same time they also have to be engaged in productive activities. Further they were also expected to be engaged in unpaid agricultural work. All these imposed challenges and constraints on the women’s time use and mobility which has limited their ability to upgrade their skills.
- Although women play a major role in agricultural production they have limited control over the income earned from agriculture.
- In case of the rural labour markets, women are more likely than men to be segregated in part-time, seasonal and/or low-paid work. They are also found to be involved in a disproportionate amount of unpaid family work.
- Women’s access to land is constrained by customary law and practices.
- Challenges are faced by the rural women on their access to credit, productive inputs, extension services, markets and market information.

SUGGESTIONS:

Some measures to deal with these challenges and constraints working women face at their workplace are mentioned below:

- Awareness needs to be created amongst the women engaged in income generating activities about their rights
- Training and workshops are to be conducted for better performance of the women employees
- A friendly environment and appropriate work conditions are to be created at the workplace
- Complaint committee needs to be formed at the workplace
- Participation of women at all levels of management should be ensured.
- Adequate maternity leave needs to be provided to the working women.
- Day care facilities for the children of the women employees need to be provided at the workplace.

CONCLUSION:

In the rural as well as in the urban areas various challenges and constraints faced by the women at their workplace have resulted in the fall in their productivity and entrepreneurial potential. This on its part has led to the slowing down of the transformation of the urban and rural economies. Thus it has become very essential to address these challenges and constraints and thereby lead the economy towards the path of progress, growth and development.

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