



Volume 1 No. 1 2014

Sameeksha

ISSN: 2394-2517

Sameeksha

**International Journal of
Commerce, Economics
and
Management**



*"a journey of
Aspiration to Inspiration"*

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Women Walking on a Tight Rope Managing Work Life Balance

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ABSTRACT—With life style changing at dynamic speed, with increasing disparities in economy it has been observed that women are taking plunge into entrepreneurship or working in corporate fields or in paid occupations. With growing needs of family and devaluation of rupee it has become necessary for both the parents to work in order to meet the daily demands of life. With modernization spreading its wings Indian women have long backed passed the infantry level of orthodox culture. Women going out of the house and earning for the family was considered to be of low profile in traditional families; but with fast paced changing socio-economic scenario she has entered into working class world. This paper highlights the multitasking role of a women played in balancing the home front and her corporate career. The psychological stress which she undergoes, the hurdles which she encounters, the health related issues due to hectic schedule, literacy rate of women and the motivational factors which help her to go ahead and overcome all odds are highlighted in this paper.

Keywords: Devaluation of Rupee, Multitasking, Lifestyle, Motivational Factors

INTRODUCTION

India today has women working in all sectors of fields be it educational, medicine, retail, aviation, industrial, designing, entertainment, hospitality, food and beverages etc. in almost all streams she has shown her presence in magnanimous way. They have become more independent, are able to accept challenges and have learned the art of walking on tight rope of life; balancing personal front and professional career. Whether she has started her own business or is working in some company she has to overcome plenty of hurdles at every step of her life. Being educated itself is a big achievement to a woman. If a woman is educated entire household is benefitted. Gender bias is still a big issue in India. Literacy rate of India according to 2011 census is 74.04% . The male literacy rate is 82.14% and female literacy rate is 65.46% . Among the Indian states, Kerala has the highest literacy rate 93.91% .

Due to strong gender bias in rural areas there is a lot of preference given to sons of the family in terms of full filling their luxury demands, education, etc. as they are the heirs of the family and girls are side lined as she is ultimately going to get married and leave the house. Rural female literacy rate is only 58% while rural male is 78% . In urban areas women employment is 13.9% while in rural areas is 29.9% . Inflation is increasing at high levels, rupee value is going down, creating difficulty in meeting the basic needs of family has forced women to

accept jobs and sometimes do odd jobs with low wages. Dramatic change needs to be done to empower and make aware about her potentials.

Table 1: Literacy Rate Male and Female India 2011 Census

States/ UT	Total Literates	Male Literates	Female Literates	Total Literacy Rate	Male Literacy Rate	Female Literacy Rate
India	77,84,54,120	44,42,0,762	33,42,50,358	74.04	82.14	65.46
Maharashtra	8,25,12,225	4,62,94,041	3,62,18,184	82.91	89.82	75.48

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: SURVEY IS DONE BY COLLECTING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA

The present study is based on data collection through primary as well as secondary sources. Researcher has randomly selected working women from in and around Pune to get a clear view on the modus operandi of their lifestyle. Personal interviews with the respondents have helped in understanding their barriers and motivational factors which allows them to progress for their corporate careers. Researcher could manage to get live case studies of 20 women to strengthen the paper. The observations and conclusions were derived from the structured personal interview of the respondents and cases analyzed.

Researcher has set two hypotheses for the current study and conclusions were drawn with the help of chi square test and t test. Correlation analysis has been used to understand the various factors that affect women performance.

Hypothesis 1 H_0 = Responsibilities at home does not hamper performance of women at work

Hypothesis 2 H_0 = Education and job plays important role in prosperity for her next generation

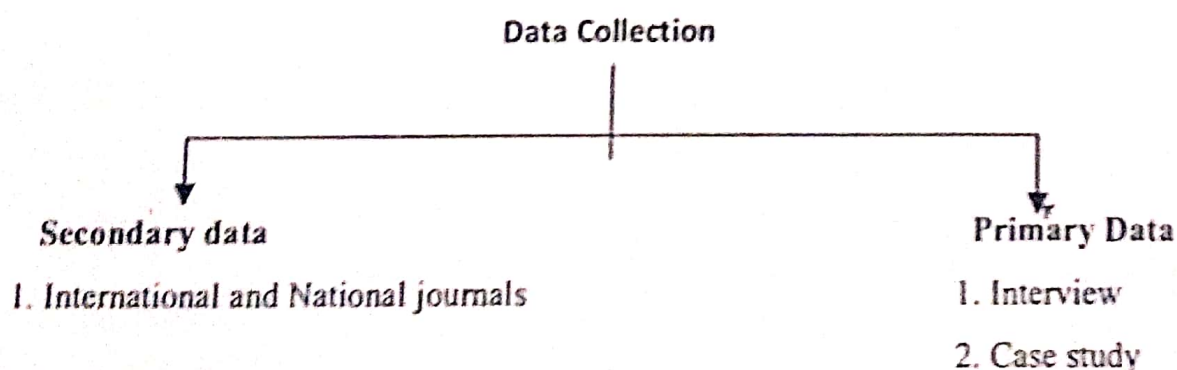


Fig. 1

FACTORS INFLUENCING WOMEN'S ROLE

A woman's life is influenced at different stages of her life. It doesn't mean she lacks vision or cannot take her decisions; it's only because she has multiple roles to perform and has many bandhans around her. In the beginning, as a daughter, her life is governed by her parents. She develops her ideology and lessons of

life from them. Parents play a vital role in building her career. At that stage of teenage; friends also has lot of influence on her personality.

She blooms and blossoms and her personality takes a new form and gently goes into a next phase of her life. She gets married and her role as a wife and daughter-in-law demands a more challenging responsibility. Generally it is observed that the first career break happens during this time as she has to adjust with new customs and traditions of in-laws. If it's an inter-caste marriage then it takes a still longer time to get accustom to entirely new language and religion.

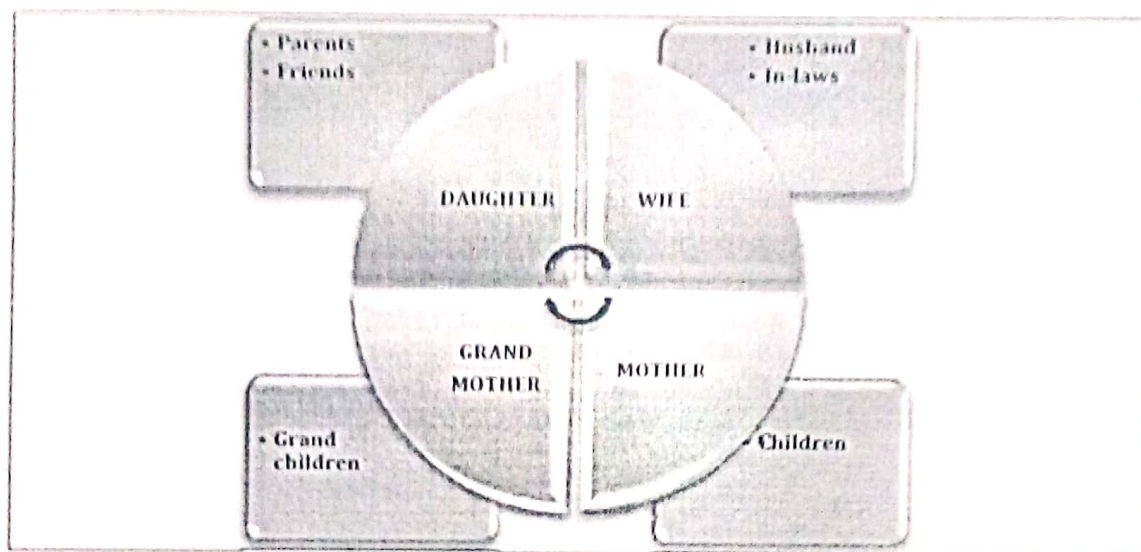


Fig. 2: Factors Influencing Women's Role

She tries her level best to quickly adjust to the new environment, pleasing everybody in the house, learning likes and dislikes of her husband. By progressing further her role now requires more multitasking behavior as she becomes the mother who does not only do 24 x 7 work but simultaneously handles the household chores like maintaining family ties and commitments.

Later as her children starts grows she rethinks of joining back her career and that time she has reached her mid-30s. If at that time if she is supported well by her husband and in-laws then she goes to good levels of success in her career. Thus by playing various multi-tasking roles she slowly enters at the fag end of her life by becoming grandmother taking care of her beloved grandchildren.

So there are numerous factors influencing her decision making attitude as there are many adjustments which she has to keep on doing as priorities keeps on changing at various stages of her life. Again

WORK LIFE BALANCE

The primary economic need has made women to go out and work. Diagram A indicates an ideal situation where it would be she is managing the home front

Career is also handled in effective way so there is success without any difficulty in short span of time. Everybody likes to be in this ideal situation. But actual situation diagram B is different than ideal situation where in there are many ups and downs in a woman's career in terms of emotions, egos, stress, health, family, children, office work, travelling. So the fluctuations in the career graph are seen and how she keeps on motivating herself in her low time and again bounce back with renewed vigour and vitality is reflected of her behavior in maintaining a fine balance between responsibility of work place and home

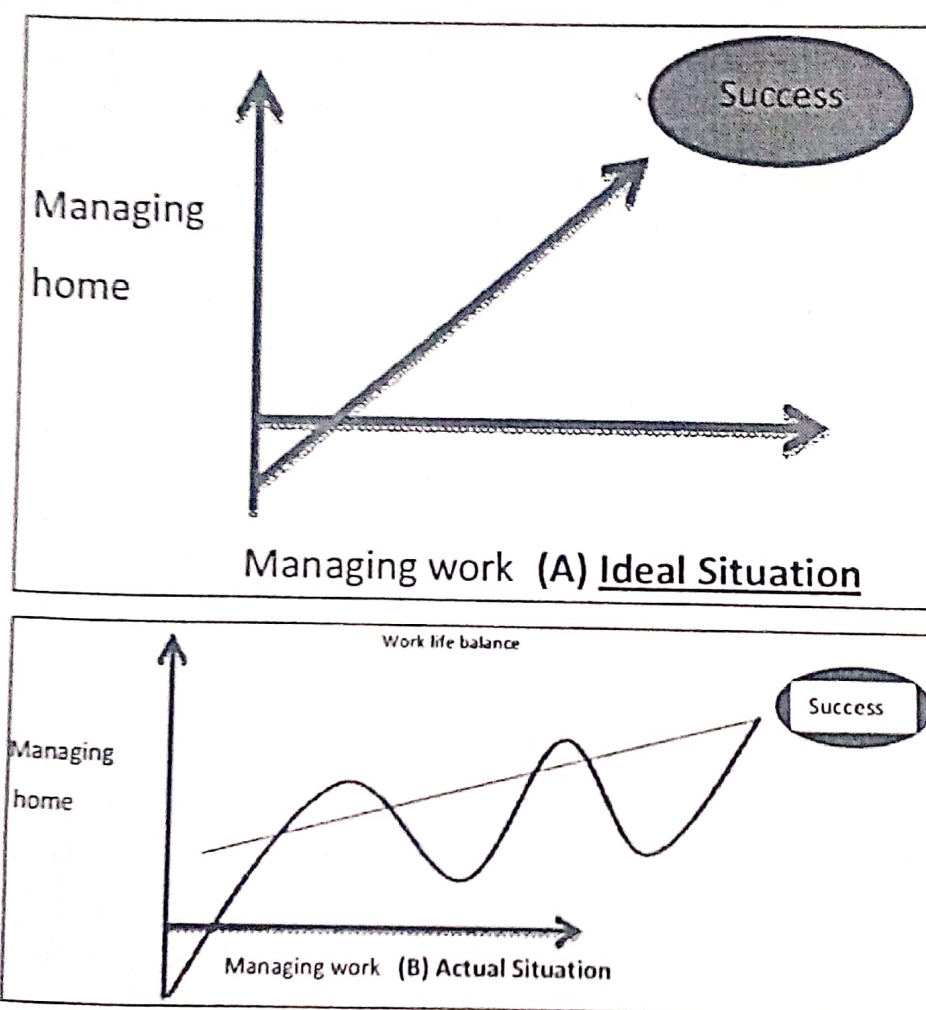


Fig. 3: Work Life Balance

TESTING OF HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1 H_0 = Responsibilities at home or family problems does not hampers performance of women at work.

Table 1 provides the summary statistics information of Pearson Chi-square value and the p-value for 55 working women. The observed chi-square statistic is 4.5 against tabulated value of 3.84, which is associated with a zero percent which is lagging our standard of 5% risk, so we have to reject the null hypothesis, and can conclude that responsibilities at home or family problems hampers performance of women.

Table 2

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.5	1	.000		
Continuity Correction	4.56	1	.001		
Likelihood Ratio	3.98	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.001	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.76	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	55				

Source: Primary data

Hypothesis 2 H_0 = Education and job plays important role in prosperity for her next generation

Table 2 provides the summary statistics information of Pearson Chi-square value and the p-value for 55 women. The observed chi-square statistic is 0.231 against tabulated value of 3.84, which is associated with 59 percent. This is too great a risk (far exceeding our standard of 5% risk), so we are unable to reject the null hypothesis and can conclude that education and job plays important role in prosperity for the next generation.

Table 3

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.231	1	.590
Continuity Correction	.021	1	.765
Likelihood Ratio	.122	1	.542
Linear-by-Linear Association	.134	1	.675
N of Valid Cases	55		

Source: Primary data

MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS FOR A WOMAN TO START WORKING OR START AN ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

While discussing with women researcher felt that in spite of so many things to handle on her cards how she manages both the fronts effectively and what are the motivational factors that kindles her entrepreneurial moves or gets her occupied in a job:

- To be independent financially.
- To be the creator of her business.
- To gain self-respect for herself.
- For betterment of life.
- To explore her vision and talents.
- Strong financial support.
- Strong family support

Entrepreneurship is a complex phenomenon. In India we do have entrepreneur females in all fields but it requires motivating them, guiding them through proper entrepreneurial development programs for undertaking risk bearing ventures. The rate of economic development depends upon the entrepreneurial competence. Hence; it becomes all the more important for entrepreneur's potential inputs to encourage economic development of India. Sometimes death in the family of earning member like father, husband also forces a woman to take up a job to support her family.

CASE STUDY

Payal belonged to a middleclass family from Mumbai working in an IT company having a good salary for 3 years. Her first career break happened when she got married. She got married in a joint family where she had to adjust with everybody's mood swings. Her husband's financial background was medium as he was a government employee. Soon she became mother of a baby girl and was more occupied with responsibilities. Payal's in-laws and parents were supportive so when the baby started walking she resumed back with her career. With a good break of again 4 years in her career it was a bit difficult for her to earn the same salary as she had to begin from initial levels because in IT companies new technologies gets implemented very fast. Her daily routine used to be to get up at 5.30 a.m prepare for tiffin's for her and her husband used to chop all vegetables, prepare food for her baby and clean the house before leaving for her work. She had to travel by bus from house to station and from there catch a local train from Malad to Churchgate then catch the bus to reach office. After coming back from work she had to be smiling forgetting the office work pressures and be with her family putting a mask of enthusiasm and happiness hugging back with household chores and rituals. This continued for another 3years and Payal again became the mother of a baby girl.

Her 2nd career break happened which lasted for 2 years. Payal in all odds was determined to work and wanted to have a better lifestyle as the house in which they all stayed was falling short of space, with growing kids ,and lack of privacy. Her husband was happy with his Government job. Payal now had joined the IT firm with better opportunities and with good salary and is now nearing mid-thirties. With increasing family needs and growing demands from children both parents are working hard. So many times Payal prefers to do overtime in order to repay loan which they now have removed for their new flat. Due to pressures she has developed backache and blood pressure which she feels strongly will overcome by medicines. She is getting love and affection from all family members but for the betterment of lifestyle she is really working hard, also keeping the entire family closely knit with love and affection. Soon her next promotion is in pipeline.

OBSERVATION OF THE CASE STUDY

It has been observed that the urge to go to higher ladders of success doesn't stop women from working. By performing multiple roles in spite of health problems she has a positive and open approach towards life. A desire to give the best education, to have a house of her own are thriving her to cross all barriers of life. Payal is fortunate enough to have a joint and supportive family. It's observed that if a woman is flexible in her behavior then she can adjust in the joint family easily than a woman with rigid attitude. At the same time it is very necessary to have a good support from husband and in-laws side also. It should be both ways. Sometimes quarrel with in-laws and dispute with husband also force a woman to leave house and work to be financially independent. Thus fine balancing and juggling between her work place and family is almost observed in all working woman in today's hectic, competitive, demanding, high priced world.

CONCLUSION

Researcher after analyzing the hypotheses concluded that it is extremely necessary to have strong family support while managing her career. If there are family clashes or other problems at home then it hampers her job as she is unable to focus on her work. Educating a woman is extremely essential as it is a landmark of prosperity for the next generation. Empowering a woman can revolutionize a better standard of living for the entire family.

Researcher after analyzing case studies (in this paper one case study is presented) has thrown light on the areas of large working women who have managed to work and excel in their careers, though it is not a cake walk for them to reach top levels easily. They had a lot of barriers and adjustments to overcome to become successful working class ladies by efficiently managing their home front and by passionately handling their corporate careers. So it's a walk on tight rope of duties and ambitions which she carries out quite well.

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