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A sociological study of challenges of working women in their social lives

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Abstract

The hardship of women in every stage of life is very difficult and stressful in despot patriarchal society. They are following their duties as employed and in family too. It is very challenging to create a balance between outside and inside home. Women have to face a lot of problem in their workplace and also have to fulfil their duties in their family as mother, as wife, as daughter in law and others. Studies have identified several variables like the size of the family, numbers and age of the children, working hours and level of support etc. influenced the balance between the personnel and professional life of a woman. In present era, working women are facing a lot of issues more than men because while dealing with the professional life, they have to deal with household and the social world also and Because of all these, lots of imbalance arise while balancing professional and personnel life which troubled them at some point of time to prove them. This makes the life of women so stressful and difficult. Therefore, the present paper focuses on the issues and challenges faced by the working women to balance their social and economic life. The research has used primary method of data collection for the analysis of the study.

Keywords: Women, working women, social life, role conflict

Introduction

Women and men are the two side of the same coin. Both are equal in their life world. The development of Nation depends on the development of both men and women. The country cannot be developed by the efforts of men only. Traditionally, men were the bread earners of the family and all the economic activities of family were fulfilled by the men. Women were only limited to do household activities. They did not participate in economic life. But as women started to get opportunities to get involve in economic activities, they came out of the houses to share the economic life with men. They took the burden of economic and social life on their both shoulders and tried to solve the problems arises in economic and social life as well. In the recent era, most of the women are involved in sharing economic activities outside the homes. They are making their contribution in both government and private sector as-higher post in education, advocacy, medical department, CEO, fighter-jet pilots, HR, banking, admin head, telecom sector, company executives etc and with all their roles, they are also centre and foundation of socio-cultural life of the family. Women are contributing in personnel and professional life as well. Take care of the family, socialization and primary education of the children, transfer of the culture, etc. all depends on the women itself. The participation of women in economic activities is increasing as per increasing education and job opportunities. According to the Time Use Survey released by Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the participation of women in employment related activities increase 25% in 2024 in comparison to 21.8% in 2019.

The participation of women in economic activities is increasing and with that various challenges, issues and problems also arising in the lives of women. Because of the social mental setup and traditional values system, women are managing household and workplace activities together. Women are trying to change the traditional role playing system but they are facing lots of challenging which negatively impacted on the mental and physical health of women.

Women have capabilities to manage personnel and professional life and they are managing it very well.

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But somewhere, making balance between work and life create imbalance and chaos which affects mental, physical and social well-being of women. Women are working to get equality in social life, but they are still not treated equally either in home or workplace. Playing multiple roles resulted in lots of stress, irritation and role conflict in daily life of women, which required more adjustment and accommodation to create a balance life. Working women face more challenges and issues in counterparts the women

who are doing household activities and this issue need to resolve in order to grow concern about work-life imbalance of working women.

Challenges of working women in India

Working women in India have to confront a lot of issues at home and workplace together, which can be understood through the picture attached below.

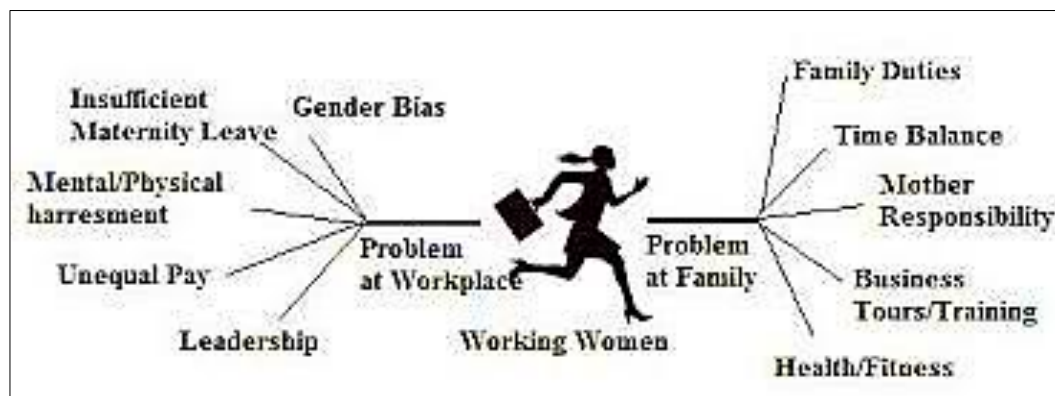


Fig 1: Challenges Faced by Working Women: Workplace and Family Responsibilities

Challenges of women at home and at workplace

The figure 1 well explains the challenges and issues of working women balancing work-life together. Family duties, time balance, mother responsibilities, business tours and training health and fitness are some of the problems facing at home and gender bias, insufficient maternity leave, mental/physical harassment, unequal pay and leadership are the problems facing at workplace by the working women.

Review of Literature

Manimekalai & *et al.* (2017) ^[3] in their study, issues of work-life balance faced by working women, analysed that socialization, patriarchy and male chauvinism affects women by making them responsible and traditional role player and because of that women have to face conflict in work life and personal life. The study highlighted that lack of time, work stress, child care, dual personality, family, marital and parenting issues are shaping women towards irritation and mental illness. Verma and Mulani (2018) ^[4] analysed the challenges of working women in 21st century and highlighted the issues related to social, psychological and professional aspects. The study shows that gender biases, mental and physical harassment, insufficient maternity leave, poor security, unequal pay and lack of personnel space are some of the issues facing by women at workplace. With that, lack of family support, stress, role conflict, children arrangements and rigid scheduled create adverse effect on the mental, physical and social well-being of working women. Prabha (2019) ^[19] in her study examined the challenges and problems of a working woman and revealed that discrimination and sexual harassment at work place, challenges to safety & dignity, balancing between home and work, male ego, unequal opportunities in job and no ownership on her own earning were creating problems in balancing work and life and majorly affected the status of women. Nithya and Gomathy (2020) ^[6] examine the challenges of working women in balancing work and life through secondary research method. The study depicts that women are facing mental and physical harassment and

discrimination at work place. Lack of family support, insufficient maternity leaves, job insecurities workplace adjustment are some other reasons which create hurdle in balancing work and life of working women. Sangeetha and Kumar (2020) ^[7] conducted a primary study on the problems of working women in present time and the objectives were to know the problems of working women and types of problems faced by them. For this study, they collected data from 100 working women through structured undisguised questionnaire and applied chi square test for the analysis of study. The findings shows that maximum women are suffering from mental and sexual harassment, discrimination, no safety while travelling, lack of family support, lack of maternity leave, job insecurity and workplace adjustment. Shah & *et al.* (2025) ^[9] conducted a primary study on work-life balance of working women and collected data using questionnaire from 88 women working in industrial sector in Ahmedabad city. The responses were measured on five-point Likert scale and the data was analysed through SPSS method. The study highlighted that family care, workplace support, self-management and personal expectations worked as integral support system to women to enhance their work-life balance in service sector.

Objectives

The objectives of the present research paper are as follows-

- To describe the social responsibility fulfilled by the working women.
- To identify the problem faced by the working women.

Research Methodology

Population and Sample: The present research is descriptive type of research. The universe of the study is Agra city and the area of the research is Dayalbagh. The sample size is 50 working women engaged in different occupation. The units of the present research are the working married women employed in different sector.

Collection of Data & Sources of Data: The present study is based on primary and secondary sources of data collection. For this study, the researcher has collected primary data through offline and online sources. Offline data has been collected from 20 respondents through self-constructed questionnaire tool and online data has been

collected from 30 respondents using Google form created by the researcher. The secondary data has been collected from the various published and unpublished journals, books, government records, newspaper etc.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Socio-Demographic profile of Married Working Women

Age of the Respondents				Caste Category of Respondents			
Sr. No.	Age	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Caste Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Below 25 Years	03	06.00%	1.	General	26	52.00%
2.	25-35 Years	28	56.00%	2.	OBCs	15	30.00%
3.	35-45 Years	12	24.00%	3.	SCs	09	18.00%
4.	45-55 Years	07	14.00%	4.	STs	-	-
5.	Total	50	100.00%	5.	Total	50	100.00%
Class Category of Respondents				Religion of Respondents			
Sr. No.	Class Category	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Religion	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Upper Class	11	22.00%	1.	Hindu	47	94.00%
2.	Middle Class	34	68.00%	2.	Muslim	03	06.00%
3.	Lower Class	05	10.00%	3.	Christian	-	-
4.	Total	50	100.00%	4.	Total	50	100.00%
Education of Respondents				Area of Residence of Respondents			
Sr. No.	Education	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Area of Residence	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Secondary	05	10.00%	1.	Rural	07	14.00%
2.	Graduate	14	28.00%	2.	Urban	43	86.00%
3.	Post-Graduate	21	42.00%	3.	-	-	-
4.	Ph.D	10	20.00%	4.	-	-	-
5.	Total	50	100.00%	5.	Total	50	100.00%
Family Structure of Respondents				No. of Family Members in the family of Respondents			
Sr. No.	Family Structure	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	No. of Family Members	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Joint Family	18	36.00%	1.	1-4	26	52.00%
2.	Nuclear Family	32	64.00%	2.	4-8	18	36.00%
3.	-	-	-	3.	8-12	03	06.00%
4.	-	-	-	4.	12-16	03	06.00%
5.	Total	50	100.00%	5.	Total	50	100.00%
No. of Children of Respondents				Age of Children of Respondents			
Sr. No.	No. of Children	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Age of Children	Frequency	Percentage
1.	1-2	29	58.00%	1.	0-5 Years	21	42.00%
2.	2-4	11	22.00%	2.	5-10 Years	11	22.00%
3.	4-6	06	12.00%	3.	10-15 Years	05	10.00%
4.	6-8	04	08.00%	4.	15-20 Years and above	13	26.00%
5.	Total	50	100.00%	5.	Total	50	100.00%

The table no.1 demarcates the socio-demographic profile of those respondents who have participated in the data collection process. The table shows different variables representing frequencies and percentages. The first variable represents the age of the respondents and it shows that 6 percent of the working women are below 25 years of age, 56 percent of the working women are 25-35 years of age, 24 percent of the working women are 35-45 years of age and rest of the working women are 45-55 years and above 55 years of age. Depicting the caste categories of respondents, almost half of the working women belong to General category, 30 percent of the working women are OBC and rest of them belong to Sc category. Showing the class categories of respondents, 22 percent of the respondents are from upper class category, 68 percent, the majority of them are from middle class category and rest of them belong to lower class category. If we talk about the religion to which the respondents followed, 94 percent of the respondents are Hindus and rest of them are the followers of Muslim

religion. No respondent belong to any other religion. Regarding education of respondents, 10 percent of the respondents have secondary education, 28 percent of them are Graduate, 42 percent of them are Post-Graduate and 20 percent of the respondents are Ph.D., degree holders.

Depicting the residential area of respondents, 14 percent of the working women are from rural areas and 86 percent of them are from urban areas. If we talk about the family structure of respondents, 36 percent of them live in joint family and rest of them live in nuclear family. 52 percent, the majority of respondents responded that they have 1-4 members, 36 percent of them have 4-8 members and rest of them have 8-12 and 12-14 members in their family. Showing the number of children of respondents with their respected age group, 58 percent of the working women have 1-2 children with 0-5 years of age, 22 percent of them have 2-4 children with 5-10 years of age, 12 percent of them have 4-6 children with 10-15 years of age and rest of them have 6-8 children with 15-20 and above 20 years of age.

Table 2: Economic profile of Married Working Women

Nature of Occupation of Respondents				Monthly Income of Respondents			
Sr. No.	Nature of Occupation	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Teacher/Professor	25	50.00%	1.	Less than 25,000Rs	13	26.00%
2.	Advocacy	03	06.00%	2.	25,000Rs-50,000Rs	10	20.00%
3.	IT Professional	02	04.00%	3.	50,000Rs-75,000Rs	15	30.00%
4.	Private Business	12	24.00%	4.	75,000Rs-1,00,000Rs	08	16.00%
5.	Government Services	08	16.00%	5.	Above than 1,00,000Rs	04	08.00%
6.	Total	50	100.00%	6.	Total	50	100.00%
Job Location of Respondents				Workplace of Respondents			
Sr. No.	Job Location	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Workplace	Frequency	Percentage
1.	At Home	15	30.00%	1.	Inside City	27	54.00%
2.	At Workplace	35	70.00%	2.	Outside City	23	46.00%
3.	Total	50	100.00%	3.	Total	50	100.00%
Daily Working Hours of Respondents				Years of Service of Respondents			
Sr. No.	Daily Working Hours	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Less than 6 Hours	09	18.00%	1.	1-4 Years	22	44.00%
2.	6-8 Hours	34	68.00%	2.	4-8 Years	22	44.00%
3.	8-10 Hours	03	06.00%	3.	8-12 Years	04	08.00%
4.	Above 10 Hours	04	08.00%	4.	12-14 Years and above	02	04.00%
5.	Total	50	100.00%	5.	Total	50	100.00%

Table no. 2 represents the economic profile of the respondents. It is clear from the above table that half of the respondents are teachers/professors, 6 percent of the respondents are advocates, very few are IT professionals, 24 percent of them own private business and rest of them are doing government job. If we talk about the monthly income of respondents, 26 percent of the respondents earn less than 25,000 Rs, 20 percent of them earn 25,000-50,000 Rs, 30 percent of them earn 50,000-75,000 Rs, 16 percent of the respondents earn 75,000-1,00,000 Rs. and rest of them earn above than 1,00,000 Rs/month. Depicting the job location, 30 percent of them are doing work from home and 70 percent, the maximum women are working at workplace. In

regard to the workplace of the respondents 54 percent women work inside their city and 46 percent women work outside their city and returned home in the evening. Highlighting the daily working hours of women, 18 percent of the respondents work less than 6 hours, the majority 68 percent women work 6-8 hours, very few of them work 8-10 hours and rest 8 percent work above than 10 hours in a day. In regard to the years of services of working women, each 44 percent of the respondents are working from 1-4 and 4-8 years back, 8 percent of them are working from 8-12 years and rest of them are working from 12-14 years and above 14 years.

Table 3: Challenges of Respondents

Proper attention to the study of children				Time to family members			
Sr. No.	Proper attention to the study of children	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Time to family members	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	27	54.00%	1.	Yes	39	78.00%
2.	No	23	46.00%	2.	No	11	22.00%
3.	Total	50	100.00%	3.	Total	50	100.00%
Time to self-care				Irritation and stress			
Sr. No.	Time to self-care	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Irritation and stress	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	16	32.00%	1.	Yes	35	70.00%
2.	No	34	68.00%	2.	No	15	30.00%
3.	Total	50	100.00%	3.	Total	50	100.00%
Family support				Try to quit job			
Sr. No.	Family support	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Try to quit job	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	08	16.00%	1.	Yes	13	26.00%
2.	No	42	84.00%	2.	No	37	74.00%
3.	Total	50	100.00%	3.	Total	50	100.00%
Attend all functions				Role Conflict			
Sr. No.	Attend all functions	Frequency	Percentage	Sr. No.	Role Conflict	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Yes	18	36.00%	1.	Yes	40	80.00%
2.	No	32	64.00%	2.	No	10	20.00%
3.	Total	50	100.00%	3.	Total	50	100.00%

The present paper discusses about the challenges and issues of working women in their social lives. In this regard the table 3 represents the responses of respondents about the effects of being working women in their social lives. Regarding giving proper attention to the study of their children, 54 percent of respondent said that they give proper time and attention to the care and study of their children

whereas 46 percent respondents said that they do not give attention to their children due to lack of time which is very problematic. Regarding time given by working women to their family members, 78 percent of the working women manage their works and give time to family members including their husbands, in-laws and relatives whereas 22 percent of them do not get time to give their family

members and other relatives. 32 percent of the working women give time for their self care but 68 percentages of them, the majority do not get time for their self care due to their busy scheduled and lack of time and the little time they get, they give it to family members and their children but not to themselves. Asking about irritation and stress, 70 percent of women responded that they get irritated and stressed due to managing their work and family together and not getting time for their rest whereas some of the women responded that they do not irritate or stressed rather they are enjoying their job with family. Regarding support of the family, 16 percent of the respondents said that their family support in balancing their work and life but somehow the

maximum 84 percent of them refused the family support and said that because of not getting family support it is getting very difficult to manage work with life. Regarding quitting their job, 26 percent of the respondents said that they try to quit the job but are not quitting because they are supporting financially to their family and 74 percent of them are not thinking about quitting their profession. 36 percent of the respondents attend all the family functions but maximum of them do not attend all but very few family functions due to lack of time. Regarding role conflict, majority 80 percent of responded feel role conflict balancing social and professional life whereas few 20 percent of them do not feel role conflict. They manage their work and life together.

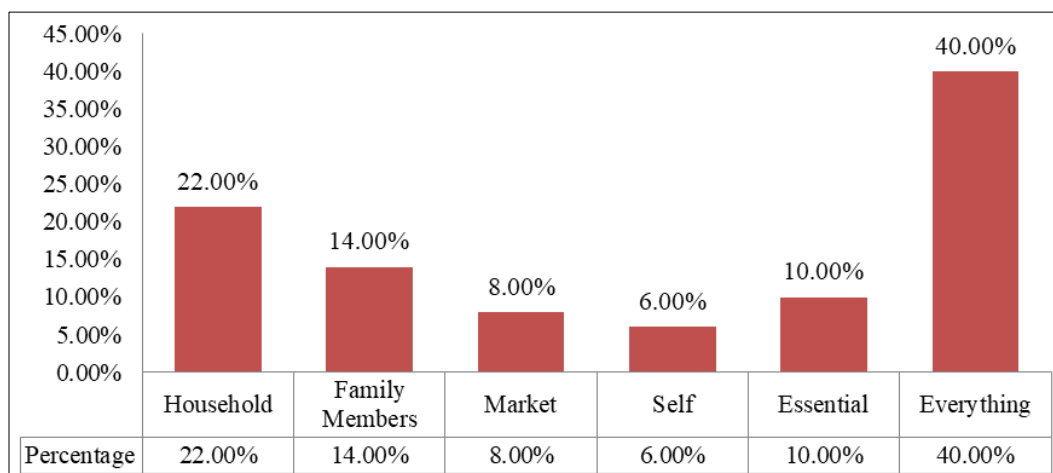


Fig 2: Responsibilities fulfill at Home

Figure no. 2 shows the responsibilities fulfilled by the respondents at home and it is clear from the above figure that 22 percent of the respondents fulfill household responsibilities, 14 percent of them fulfill responsibilities related to their family members, 8 percent of them do

market works, 6 percent of the respondents work for themselves only, 10 percent of them fulfill only essential ones and rest of them the maximum fulfil all type of responsibilities at home and create balance with their professional life also.

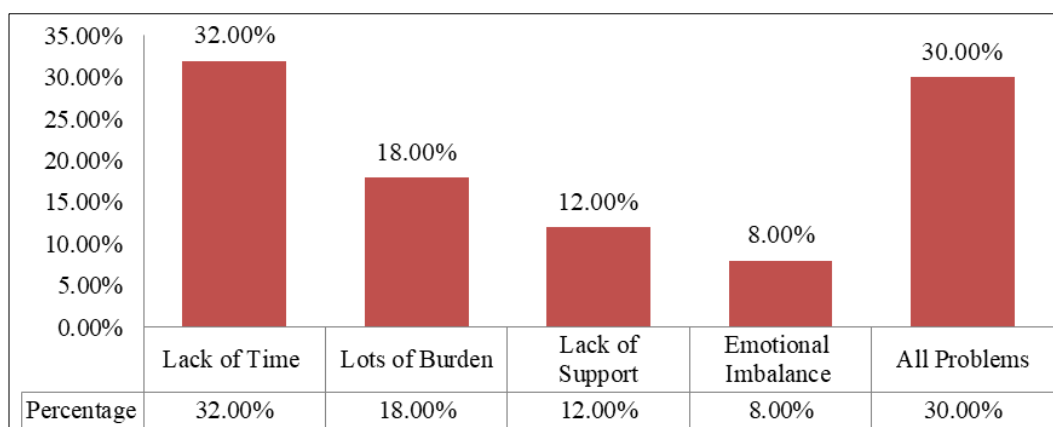


Fig 3: Problems facing at home

Figure no.3 represents the problems faced by working women at their home. It shows that 28 percent of the working women, the highest do not get time for their family, children and for themselves, 18 percent of the respondents suffer due to lots of burden at home, 12 percent of the respondents do not get family support in doing their job, 8

percent of women are emotionally imbalance due to balancing work with life and rest of the respondents are facing all type of problems. They are emotionally imbalance and not getting time for their family, children and self care due of lots of burden at home and lacking of support by the family members.

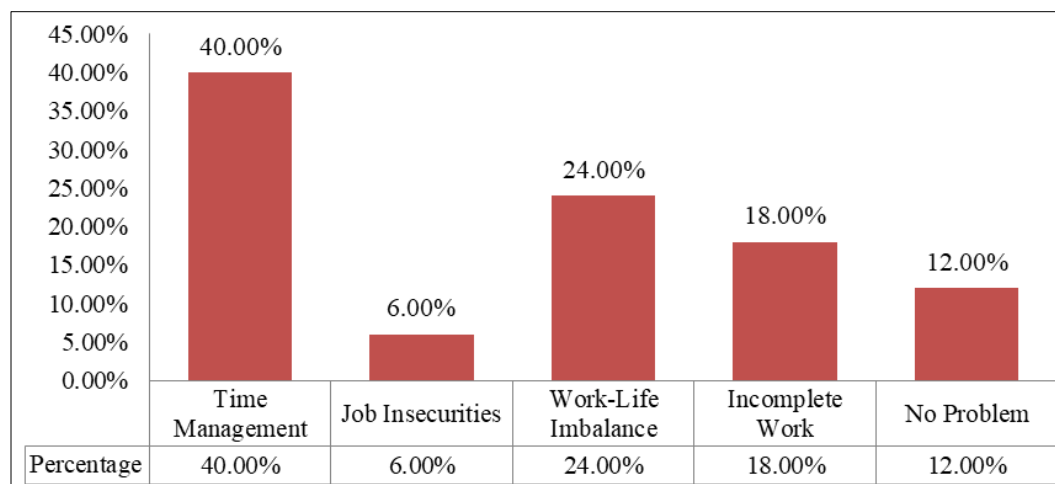


Fig 4: Problems at Workplace

Figure no.4 depicts the problems which are facing by the working women at workplace. The figure shows that the highest, 40 percent of the respondents are struggling due to time management. It is getting very difficult to manage workplace due to lots of burden with lacking of time at home. 6 percent of the respondents are facing job insecurities due to time management, 24 percent of the respondents are in problems due to work-life imbalance, 18 percent of the respondents could not complete their work because of being tensed and busy schedule and the rest of the respondents do not suffer from any kind of problem at the workplace.

Findings

The study reveals that the maximum working women are 25-35 years of age, belong to General category and majority of them are middle class working women. The study presents that maximum of the respondents are Post-Graduate, followers of Hindu religion living in nuclear families of urban areas having maximum 1-4 family members with 1-2 children of 0-5 years of age. The study further states that majority of women are teachers/professors and earn 50,000-75,000 Rs/month. Majority of them work at workplace inside their city. The maximum women work 6-8 hours in a day and majority of them are working from the last 1-4 years.

Revealing the issues and problems of working women, the study depicts that maximum women have time for children and family members but they do not have time for themselves. They care for the children and family while working but they do not focus on their care and because of that maximum women remain irritated and stressed throughout the day. The finding shows that majority of the working women do not get support from their family in balancing personal and professional life, but still they do not think about quitting their job and try to manage both together. The study shows that majority of working women do not attend all family functions but essentials one and feel conflict in their behaviour in fulfilling the expectation of home and workplace.

The study shows that majority of the working women fulfill all responsibilities of home. They work not only in office but they do all activities of social life and because of it maximum women suffers from lack of time at home and time management at office.

Conclusion

The study points out the challenges of working women affecting their social life and it can concluded as the working women put lots of efforts to balance their social and professional life together but somehow it becomes difficult to manage both and they have to face a lot of problems at home and at workplace also. While balancing social and professional both life together, they forget to balance their personal life. They do not get time for personal care and do not do any activities and meditation to come over their stress and balance mental peace. Majority of the working women are housewives also, therefore they stuck only in the work does not matter it is home or office which negatively affected the behaviour of working women. Women are very strong and it can realised that despite of having lots of problems they do not quit their job and think about the family because while facing all these problems they are financially supporting their family and are doing hardships for the better upbringing and education of their children.

Limitation

Although the researcher had tried to include all the points favourable for this research problem, but there are some limitations of the study which make possible for the further research study. The limitations are that the study is particularly limited to only 50 working women and restricted to Dayalbagh area only which could not be generalised to the whole society. Another research could be conducted on the large number of units of various areas or the city to make it generalised and implication on the society.

Suggestions

The study suggests that although the working women are struggling for their family and children but it is important that their family support in doing job with household. It is also important to give some time for their personal care and add stress relief activities in daily routine so that they can enhance their strength and power to improve their mental imbalance and to work proficiently at home and at workplace. Giving time for themselves may increase their work capacities to manage social and professional life together and they can enjoy their journey much better than earlier.

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