

Impact of Multiple Roles on Professional Women's Life in India - An Overview

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ABSTRACT

During earlier decades, there were some man-made boundaries and restrictions for women, but now with the progress of time, there is a huge change in the status of women in terms of education, employment, and economic standard. Today's women are playing various crucial roles in different sectors of economy as well as in their day-to-day life. They are likely to manage multiple roles at the same time. Roles like looking after the family and children, managing professional responsibilities etc. However, the primary expected responsibility of the women is to manage home while working. Nevertheless, the major problems for working women arise from balancing responsibilities of both work life and personal life simultaneously. It is also perceived that failure in any role would lead her to social disapproval and rejection. When women step out from her home to work, she is likely to have mixed experiences. While the standard of living may improve, they are also likely to face greater demands from their roles, whether professional or personal. This may cause a considerable amount of stress and strain to her, which also affects her professional and family life and sometimes affects her mental and physical health. The present study attempts to answer a few questions regarding working women and their multiple roles. The study is completely based on secondary data. With this study, an attempt is made to give a better understanding of the different roles played by women, how it is difficult for women to juggle between different roles, and lastly, how these roles affect the career-related decisions of women.

Keywords: Career challenges, Career decisions, Family responsibility, Multiple roles, Working women.

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INTRODUCTION

Currently, Indian society is experiencing a rapid change in the economy, cultural structure, and family structure. The nature and environment of the workforce are also changing very speedily. One major change in the workforce is the increasing presence of women in almost every occupation. As there is an increase in women's literacy, awareness, opportunities, and government support (Sinha, 2017), womenfolk are encouraged to take up a gainful career to supplement their family income which helps them enjoy a more secure and comfortable life.

The career women, who step out to work, breaking all traditional images of women and fighting against social restriction, emotional bonds, cultural clutches, and many more, may enjoy an advantage in terms of their financial status and a road ride of success and achievement. There are benefits and psychological advantages when women work outside. Women with careers enjoy greater self-esteem, competence, efficiency, and more monetary satisfaction. They also prove to role models for their children and society. However, dealing with multiple roles and managing various responsibilities of home and work make them exhausted both mentally and physically. The ones who eventually rise to the forefront in professional career have to struggle hard to prove themselves at both the fronts i.e. personally and professionally. Moreover, sometimes due to lack of adequate

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facilities, less family support, physical isolation and fear of social disapproval acts as major factors that cause role burden.

The status of women in modern India is evoked as highly polarized in nature, especially when a woman is working and have multiple roles and responsibilities on her shoulders to perform. When a professional woman undertakes responsibilities of career and family, they have to take care of the respective role responsibilities of both fronts. These roles may be enacted with different degrees of involvement. An important element of role structure is aspirations, which refer to the goals and ambitions an individual strives to attain. High demands from one of the dual roles will limit capabilities and capacities to meet the demands of the other role. The outcome of this multiple role and responsibilities is role overload, work stress, and physical strain, which affects their role commitment for their career and family engagement.

Further, we can't deny that in a largely male-dominated society like India, where women are concerned for all the major duties of home and children, have loads of multiple tasks and responsibilities on her, which comes with so many challenges. The issue of continual workforce engagement becomes a major challenge as many women quit their careers because they want to invest most of their time fulfilling the role demands of the family as a daughter, wife, and mother.

Priyanka Panchal *et al.* (2016) find that today Indian women are allowed to work, but still, they face many more social and professional life problems to balance both as priority needs. It is widely accepted that the lack of women in senior corporate positions is due to conflict between family and career, and for this, women feel the need to choose between their career and family. Shambunath (2017) finds that career women's major problems and difficulties arise from the dual responsibilities of domestic work and office work.

Despite many challenges and opportunities, women still consider their primary duty to look after the family

affairs, while men find earning for the family as their prime responsibility. Women are thus confronted with the challenge of playing multiple roles to manage home and work successfully. In a bid to prove her capability and competence on both fronts, women face the problem of multiple roles, workload etc., and are often being stressed out or drained of their energy (Chandra, 2010).

For an Indian woman, all the social roles are equally important, be it daughter, wife, or mother. Playing the duties entitled by these roles is mandated by society. Therefore, it is not astonishing that 'commitment to family responsibility is often a huge barrier for career continuance and advancement for women. The societal and familial demands make it highly challenging for Indian women to pursue a continuous career. The problems related to extreme work pressure, target-oriented jobs, long working hours, cut-throat competition, lesser holidays, problems in getting leaves, frequent work tours, job transfers, and many more adds further challenges in her life and leaves her overburdened and dissatisfied.

Literature Review

S.no	Researchers/ Authors	Findings
1	Singh (2002)	Stated that women delayed their decision to have a child because they are committed to their jobs and preferred to have only a single child since responsibility of home is considered their duty. They do not give much primacy to their promotions and career growth as they prefer to give quality time to their children and family. Unmarried women can do better because they do not have many home responsibilities and duties.
2.	Punia (2005)	Found that many domestic factors make it challenging for women to advance to higher jobs and careers. They need to choose between two apparent opposites- an active and satisfying career, or marriage, children, and happy family life.
3.	Buddhapriya (2009)	Finds that 'commitment to family responsibility and 'lack of gender-sensitive policies by the employer' hinder women professionals' advancement to senior positions. Women professionals believe that putting career ahead of family leads to social disapproval and rejection.
4.	Sandhu (2010)	Finds that marriage and job bring in more difficulties for the women. While going to work, there is the daily tension of driving safely on busy roads. She has to work at office and compete with the male colleagues in a desperate effort to prove that she is performing an equally good, if not better job. She buys groceries while returning home, cooks food for the family members, cleans the house, helps the kids do school assignments, and makes the beds. At the end of the day, she might think: why is it so though being a woman.
5.	Rani (2013)	indicates that working married women have to face more difficulties and challenges in their lives than non-working married women. She further adds that on some aspects working married women cannot contribute significantly as their attention is diverted because of working in two situations. They cannot give proper attention to their marital lives and well-being of their family because of the added responsibilities of job and workplace duties, they may suffer maladjustment at home or in the office.
6.	Prabhjot Kaur Mahal, (2014)	Her study concludes that women professionals have not achieved as much as men have. This can be explained by the fact that certain attitudinal and structural constraints have hampered their progress. Female professionals who aspire for career advancement have to face several barriers. Lack of network access, gender discrimination and a complex set of stereotypes and attitudes held by member of society act as obstacles to their advancement as professionals.

OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study are as follows

- To study the different roles of women.
- To discuss the effects of the role on women's working lives while balancing work and family responsibility.
- To study the impact of family responsibilities on the career decisions of women professionals.

A broad review of existing literature on multiple roles of working women suggests that one of the most important reasons inhibiting women's rise in her career is the difficulty in balancing working life and personal life and role conflict that women professionals experience because of their strong commitment to family responsibilities.

Statement of the Problem

With this paper, an effort is made to study multiple roles portrayed by women in her day-to-day life, and focus is given to evaluate the importance of each role. The main challenge for any woman is managing her various roles perfectly and maintaining a balance between all the roles, as failure in anyone brings a great disturbance in her life both mentally and socially.

Further, the study tries to explore and investigate the impact of family responsibilities on the career decisions of women professionals. When career women enter matrimony or a simple homemaker tries to enter into a corporate world, they have multiple duties and responsibilities to play. They try to balance the two by stretching their working hours and making adjustments at home and at work, which results in tremendous amounts of physical and mental strain. Thus, this study aims to clarify various roles challenges a woman faces to prove her competency at various points of time.

The issue of women roles and career is a much-debated topic now days. As a result, over the past three decades, there is the rise in research on the topics like work-life balance, problems and challenges faced by working women, women's multiple roles, and their well-being and many more, because there is an increase in the number of professional women, who are performing multiple roles to fulfill career duties as well as family needs simultaneously.

Importance of the Study

The present study would help us explore the reciprocities between work and family, the multiple roles of women, and the impact of family responsibilities on the career decisions of women professionals. It provides insight into the dilemmas, challenges, and barriers of working women in our society. The information obtained from various literature and research work conducted by different authors facilitates us in uncovering some of the complexity underlying women's social roles and increases our understanding on the real problems of working women in our society.

Multiple Roles and a Multitasker

A woman wears many hats on day-to day basis, she is the face of a house, employee of a company and a multitasker. Common social roles may include daughter, wife/partner, mother, daughter in law, and employee for a woman. She supremacies in various areas of her life. She plays multiple roles and performs multiple tasks, including domestic chores, taking care of children and elderly parent and managing professional work obligations and other roles. However, fulfilling the demand of so many roles, she often feels stressed and strained with time pressures and un-met obligations. In a study, Gove (1984) finds that additional roles come additional responsibilities, which are likely to negatively impact health. Many researchers studied that there is a direct effect of employment on health. Women with multiple roles, especially the role of mother, wife, and employee, would exhibit higher levels of suffering and distress than women with fewer roles. (Barnett, 2004).

Women have taken on multiple roles to adapt to changes in society today. They are meeting household and family responsibilities while at the same time trying to maintain personal interests. Multiple roles can increase women's resilience in the face of troubled relationships at home or at work. It appears that the more baskets a woman has to put her emotional eggs into, the better off she is. (Barnett, 2004).

Let's discuss the different roles juggle by a woman in day-to-day life. Here are only a few that makes women, a super women.

Wife

In reality, married working women tend to subordinate their career and life ambitions to those of their husbands and tend to reduce their work involvement in office work to be able to meet out the demands and requirements of her husband and other family members. We have generally seen that it is expected from the female spouse that she should take care of the family and other household responsibilities.

Many professional women agree that family responsibility hinders their ability to advance in their professional careers. They think that they cannot utilize their full skills and potential and at times they have to make career trade-offs because of these responsibilities. They also believe that putting a career ahead of family leads to social disapproval and rejection. (Buddhapriya, 2009).

Mother

Women have been the sustainers of the "Care-giving Institution" in Indian society. The most important component of caregiving is the rearing up of children. (Chandra, 2010).

Mostly women's have put their careers and aims of life on the back-burner during the childbearing and child-rearing phase to perform their motherly and family responsibilities satisfactorily. Even most of the husbands also accepted that

their wives made lots of compromises on the professional front to upbringing their children.

It is a general view that the academic performance of school-going children is a key responsibility of the mothers. Mothers often have to sit with their children to help them with their home assignments and coursework. When children fail to perform well academically, the blame is often put on their mothers. Mother means to look after the child emotionally, physically and mentally. Various studies have shown that lack of sensitive, responsive, and consistent care from overworked parents can lead to decreased cognitive, rational, and social skills (Parcel & Menagham, 1994) and promote feelings of insecurity in children. In this way, we can conclude that the child's overall development totally depends on mother and how they bring up their child.

Elder-care/ Family care

Many Indian families are still living as joint families along with the parents and in-laws and taking care for the elderly members is largely carried out by women in the home. This adds role stress to a working women's life because for women to balance employment and income generation along with taking care of family members, listening to their complaints and fulfilling the demands that they make to her and performing all the household duties is perceived as a major challenge that she faces every day. But on the other hand, we cannot deny that looking after the elders and the sick person in the family is of great importance from the preservation of human values (Chandra, 2010).

Working Employee

Despite so many challenges faced by women employees, the rate of women participation in the labor force has increased because today's new generation of women want to pursue their dream career as they work hard during their academic time to become successful in life, they not only work for the growth in their career, but they also want to support their family financially. With the sky-rising prices of everything, it is difficult to manage a home with a single income. We can say that mostly women works to bring happiness for their family member. This life is not a bed of roses, she face many problems like work overload, security issues, transportation problem and many other problems while she is out for work but family support and children smiles work as a fuel to energize to keep going.

Multi Tasker

At work, she juggles with professional duties and responsibilities for climbing the corporate ladder of success. She takes up the lead on multiple office projects, attend conferences and meetings, and travel to so many different places for official tours and lot more. And back home, she cooks, cleans, wash the dishes, and serves family with love and smile to make all happy and satisfied and do it all again and again.

Other Roles

A part from above roles, women also play the role of mentor, a cheer-leader, a nurturer, and a role model for lots of people within the family and the people in society. When a woman successfully manages her life both personally and professionally, she sets an example for many. With all the efforts she puts in managing her life, she is not serving her family, but she is serving her nation.

Research Methodology

The study is completely based on Secondary Data. Data is collected from various research papers, articles, journals, books, and websites.

Impact of Family Responsibility on the Career Decision of Women Professionals.

Research on career women in India shows that work and family dilemmas are often different from those reported by women in the West (Sekaran 1992). As compared to their counterparts in other countries of the world, Indian female employees face more difficulties and problems in managing their work and personal life because India is still a patriarchal society, where primary responsibility of taking care of the children and household work is of women and most of the time she sacrifices her career and job for the sake family and children. Many researchers in their study indicate that major obstacle that hinders women from being in the top position is the critical balancing act of combining a family and a career. A combination of career and family roles is often associated with conflict, overload, and stress (Frone, Russel and Cooper, 1991). For maintaining work-life balance, social support plays a very important role for women managers (Buddhapriya 2009). We have seen that many husbands support their wives' participation in the workforce, but they are yet to shoulder the responsibility of sharing domestic chores. Some researcher supports the fact that combining office work and motherhood is a major source of tension for many women, especially the mother of young children. Rather than the fathers, it is the mothers who alter their jobs and career to meet family needs and commitments. Many times due to high demanding job and work pressure, women experience lot of role conflict and work stress from their career and family roles tend to reduce their level of involvement and participation in work and sometimes even quit their career or take a career break to fulfill the role demand of a home maker. So with this brief discussion, we can only conclude that women are thus distressed with the challenge of playing the multiple role, to excel at home and at the workplace.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the study above, an attempt is made to discuss about women and their multiple roles. Woman in her life has much heavier responsibilities than men. Double role-play of woman has responsibilities at home as a wife, mother and daughter

S.no	Roles of women	Literature support
1.	As mother (child care)	Sharma,Sarla(1999); Sinha (2017); Usha R. Rout(1997); Raffaella Patimo and Thaís García Pereiro (2017); Knight (1994); Tang and Cousins (2005); Gutek et. al., (1988);Buddhapriya (2009); Aaron-Corbin, Cheryl(1999) Chandra(2010); Barnett (2004);Mahal (2014); Varsha kumara (2014); Bishnoi & Kaur (2017), Thana Whitehead (2003); Michelle C Stefanisko (1997). Brines, 1994; Hertz, 1986; Hochschild, 1989
2.	As wife	Sharma, Sarla(1999); Sinha (2017); Usha R. Rout(1997); Aaron-Corbin, Cheryl(1999); Gutek et. al., (1988); Barnett (2004); Varsha kumari (2014); Thana Whitehead (2003); Michelle C Stefanisko (1997).
3.	As care taker (elder/dependents)	Sharma, Sarla(1999); Doress-Worters, (1994); Sinha(2017); Riemenschnieder & Harper (1990); Aaron-Corbin, Cheryl(1999), Raffaella Patimo and Thaís García Pereiro (2017); Buddhapriya (2009); Chandra (2010); Mahal (2014); Varsha kumari (2014); Thana Whitehead (2003).
4.	As a career women /employee	Sharma,Sarla(1999); Sinha (2017); Usha R. Rout(1997); Aaron-Corbin,Cheryl(1999); Buddhapriya(2009); Chandra (2010); Mahal (2014); Varsha kumari(2014); Thana Whitehead (2003); Michelle C Stefanisko (1997).

Source: Primary

and out of the door as a professional worker. For a woman it is very important to have a balance between professional life which includes career growth, achievements, and ambition on one hand and personal life, which includes pleasure, leisure, family satisfaction and overall development on the other hand (Tomar, 2017). Moreover, we have tried to examine the effect of different roles of women on her career and how she juggles between them and attempted to study how she manages the demands of many different roles. After reviewing the literature and all the other studies, it could be concluded that if working women get enough support from family and organization, they would be able to manage all the roles and duties successfully. In addition to this, with provisions like flexible work schedules, affordable childcare services and employee-friendly policies, it will be easier for working women to benefit from the opportunities in their workplace as their counterparts. We hope that things will change soon.

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