

An Analysis of Work Environment of Women

Manisha Arora

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,
Government College, Naraingarh, Ambala

ABSTRACT

The present study undertakes to investigate the work environment of working women. Various variables like the family size, the age and number of children, the work hours, the level of support provided by family, friends, colleagues and supervisor, etc. has an influence on balancing the personal and professional life. In addition to the work related responsibility, women have to shoulder full responsibility at home. This is due to the reason that in Indian society we are confused about the 'gender roles'. Men are not equipped with basic life skills like managing home, taking care of children and elderly or cooking, etc. and thus, they cannot contribute much. In this background, the current study was undertaken to gain an insight into the life of working women. For the purpose of study, the sample consists of one hundred and fifty women working in Ambala District in the state of Haryana. The questionnaire responses were collected from the respondents. Apart from that the respondents were also interviewed personally as well as telephonically so that the emotional and subjective aspect of the study may also be adhered to.

KEY WORDS: Working women, Sensitive responsibility, Gender roles, Work-life balance.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today, women in India are making remarkable contribution not only as a traditional homemaker but also in the areas which were earlier considered as

reserved only for males. They are expanding their horizon to meet the changing and increasing demands of family like increase in cost of living, rising expenses on education of children, increasing medical expenses as well as peaking cost of residential property. Though the role of Indian women is changing and they are contributing amply to the society, yet there are areas which are considered to be taken care of only by women, as for example- taking care of home and family, cooking, upbringing of children, etc. The role of males in such areas is considered secondary.

Irrespective of the area an Indian women is coming from- Urban or Rural and engaging in different fields based on varying educational capabilities, they are confronting numerous obstacles in discharging their work related duties and in balancing their personal-professional responsibilities. The historical tradition reveals the male dominance in almost every sphere of work. However, the trend has now been shifting towards the wider participation of women inwork area. Despite this changing trend, various studies reveal that although women are earning majority of the college and doctoral degrees and are representing very well in the entry and mid- level positions, they have made a very little progress in stepping up to the higher level positions in almost all economic sectors. All this is due to the unconscious bias and stereotypes that exist in every organization- to list a few among others are- seeing women as the caregivers, fulfilment of the non-career advancing service work and judging the women according to one's own perception.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

For our current study, a Questionnaire Survey (Questionnaire in Appendix A) along with face to face and telephonic Interview was conducted between October 2019 to March 2020 targeting 150 women working in various Government and Private Organisations in District Ambala for data collection. The Questionnaire consisted of 24 questions out of which 11 Questions were based on General Information and 13 questions were based on Specific Information related to our study. The collected data was then analyzed using Percentage Analysis, Pie Diagrams and Tables.

3. OBJECTIVES

- ✓ To study about the obstacles faced by working women.
- ✓ To know about their personal and work life satisfaction.

- ✓ To study about the ways and means used by them to balance their twin role in the society.

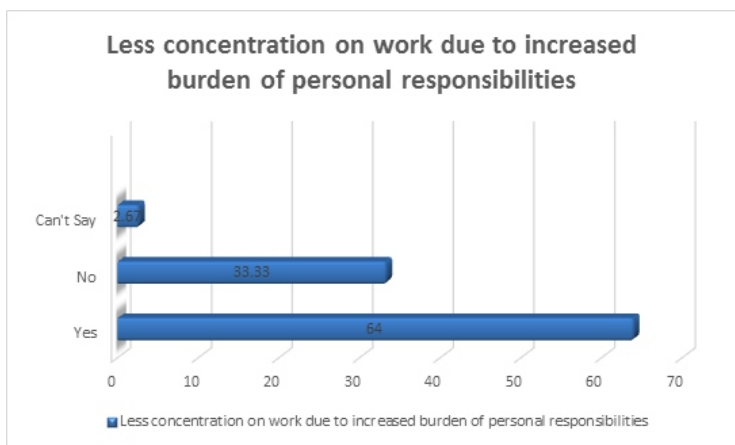
4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The graphical and tabular presentation of each item is given below:

I. Do you think that due to increased burden of personal responsibilities you are able to concentrate less on work?

Table-6.1: Less concentration on work due to increased burden of personal responsibilities

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	96	64
No	50	33.33
Can't Say	4	2.67



Source: Primary Data

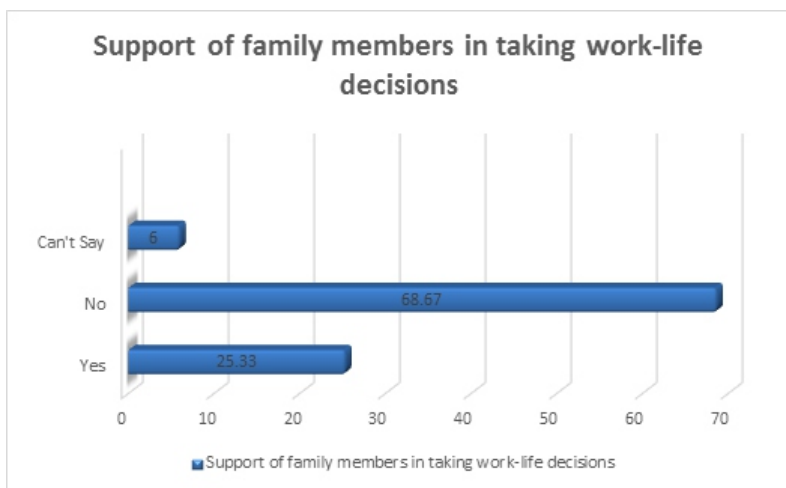
Interpretation: The above analysis show that 64 % of working women are able to concentrate less on work due to increased burden of personal responsibilities, whereas 33.33% of them feel that the increased burden of personal responsibilities have no impact on their working abilities. Remaining 2.67% were unsure about their answers. The interview session with the sample group highlighted that very often the emotional disturbance and responsibilities in the family take away their attention from the work place. Further, it is noticeable that most of the women in the

red and green segment in the pie diagram are the women with unmarried marital status which is the reason why they do not face much conflict in balancing home and work responsibilities.

II. Does your family members support you in taking important work-life decisions- like working overtime or taking up self development courses, etc.?

Table-6.3: Support of family members in taking work-life decisions

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	38	25.33
No	103	68.67
Can't Say	9	6



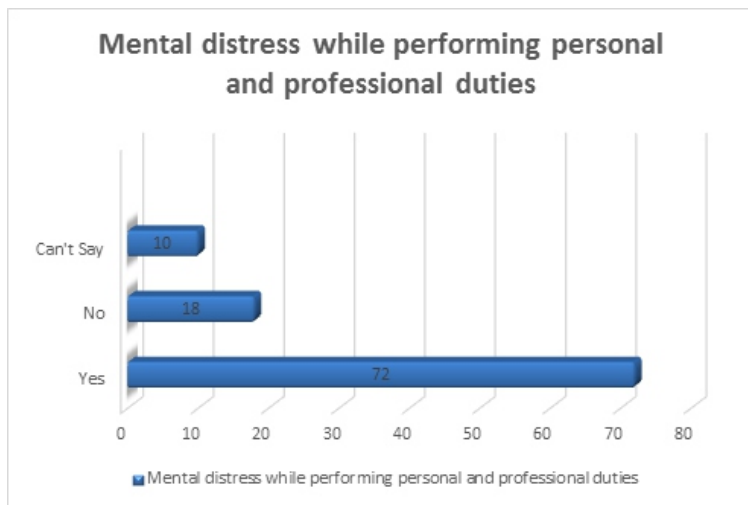
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 68.67% of the working women do not get support of their family members in taking work-life decisions. Among this category of respondents, the majority were the married women who were held back from taking up developmental courses and other work-life decisions due to family responsibilities or non-cooperation of the family members. 25.33% of them get family support in taking work-life decisions. Remaining 6% were hesitant in answering the question.

III. Do you think that you are facing mental distress while performing your personal as well as professional duties?

Table-6.4: Mental distress while performing personal and professional duties

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	108	72
No	27	18
Can't Say	15	10

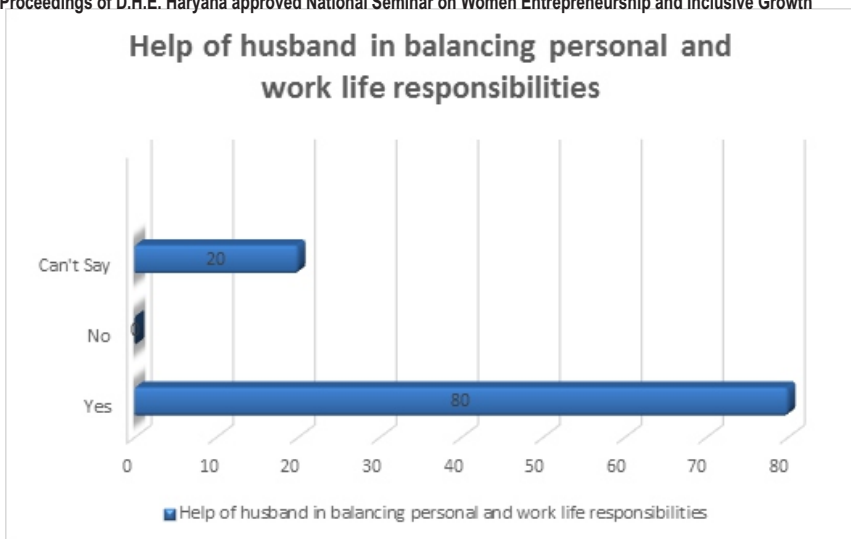


Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 72% of the working women face mental distress while performing personal and professional duties. The interview session with the sample group revealed that the very fact of thinking about balancing both the duties leads to imbalance between the two. Whereas 18% of them do not face any such mental distress. However, 10% of them were unable to express any opinion on this matter.

IV. Do you think that husband's attitude at home helps you in balancing the personal and work life responsibilities?

Table-6.5: Help of husband in balancing personal and work life responsibilities

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	120	80
No	0	0
Can't Say	30	20



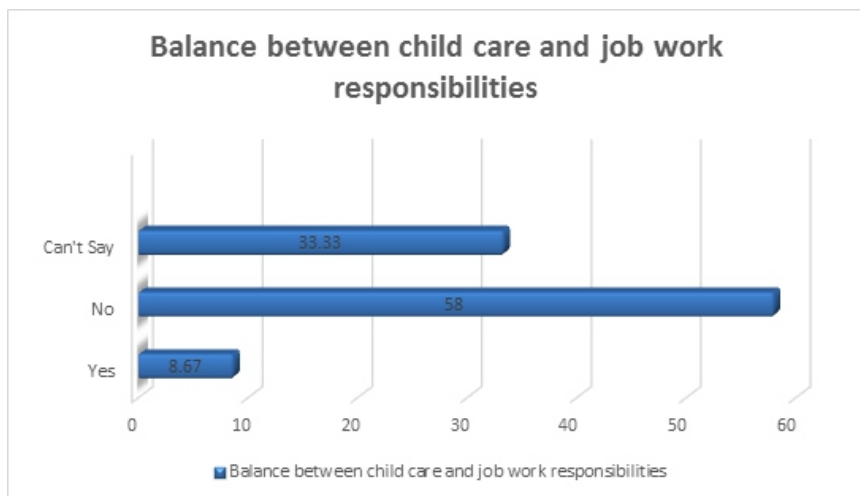
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that a good majority i.e. 80% of the working women gets the help of husband in balancing personal and work life responsibilities. This is the area which should be appreciated for. Irrespective of the fact that our society is male dominated, the males are playing a remarkable role as far as supporting their spouse is concerned. Though the role of husbands in daily home chores is secondary but while talking to the sample group, it was revealed that the little help of their spouse in the daily chores and their emotional support in the hour of need, helped them in balancing their work and family responsibilities. However, 20% of them are unable to express their opinion on this matter because of their unmarried marital status.

I. Do you think that child care responsibilities have caused you to neglect your job work responsibilities?

Table-6.6: Balance between child care and job work responsibilities

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	8.67
No	87	58
Can't Say	50	33.33



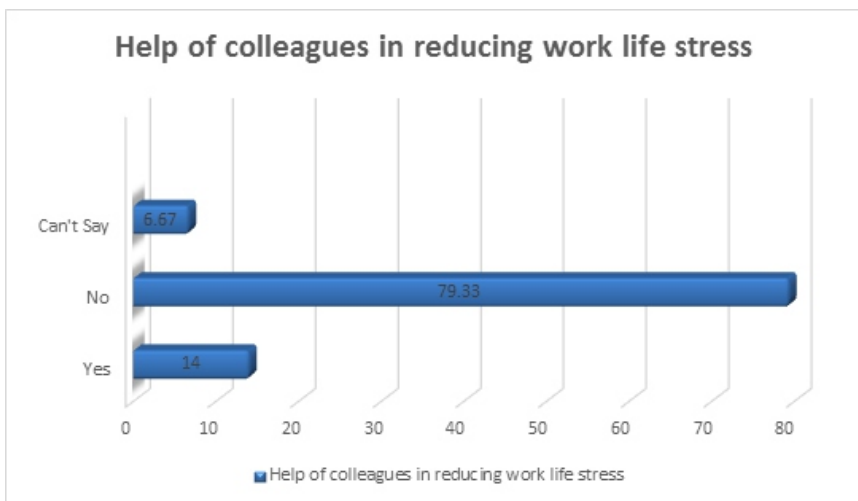
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 58% of the working women are able to maintain balance between child care and job related responsibilities. The reason that came to limelight was the joint family structure of their family or the presence of their maternal or in-law family to take care of the children. However, 8.67% of them were unable to maintain balance between the two responsibilities. Remaining 33.33% were unable to express their opinion on the above matter because some of them were unmarried and rest of them were married but did not have any child.

VI. Do you think that your colleagues helps in reducing work life stress or facing challenges at work place?

Table-6.9: Help of colleagues in reducing work life stress

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	21	14
No	119	79.33
Can't Say	10	6.67



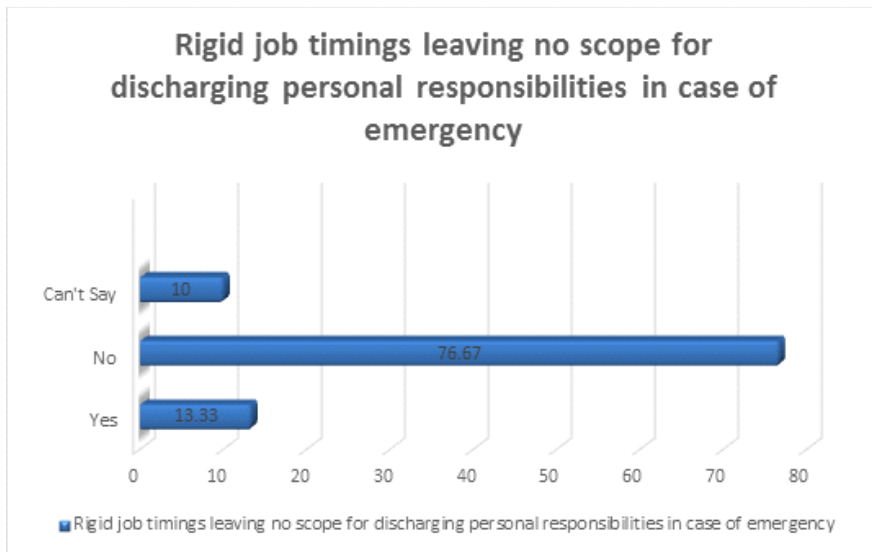
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 79.33% of the working women do not get much help of the colleagues in reducing work life stress, however 14% of them get such help in reducing the work life stress. Another 6.67% of them are unable to express any opinion on the above matter. The revelations made during the interview of the sample group were that instead of the desired help, the female colleagues tried to pull them down whenever the respondents tried to make progress. Adding to this, were all the negative emotions of the colleagues like jealousy, sycophancy, etc.

I. Do you think that your job timings are rigid leaving no scope for discharging your important personal responsibilities in case of emergency?

Table-6.10: Rigid job timings leaving no scope for discharging personal responsibilities in case of emergency

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	115	76.67
No	20	13.33
Can't Say	15	10



Source: Primary Data

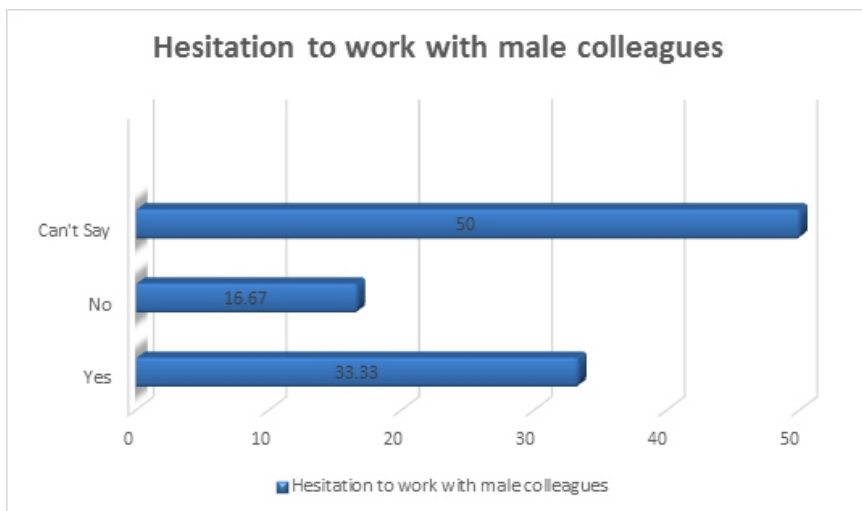
Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 76.67% of the working women are of the opinion that the job timings are rigid, however only 13.33% of them are of the opinion that the job timings are not rigid. Another 10% are unable to express any opinion on the above matter.

Since, the structure of job timings in most of the sectors is 9 to 5 types, the job timings are considered as rigid.

VIII. Do you feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass or underestimate you on the basis of gender?

Table-6.11: Hesitation to work with male colleagues

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	33.33
No	75	50
Can't Say	25	16.67



Source: Primary Data

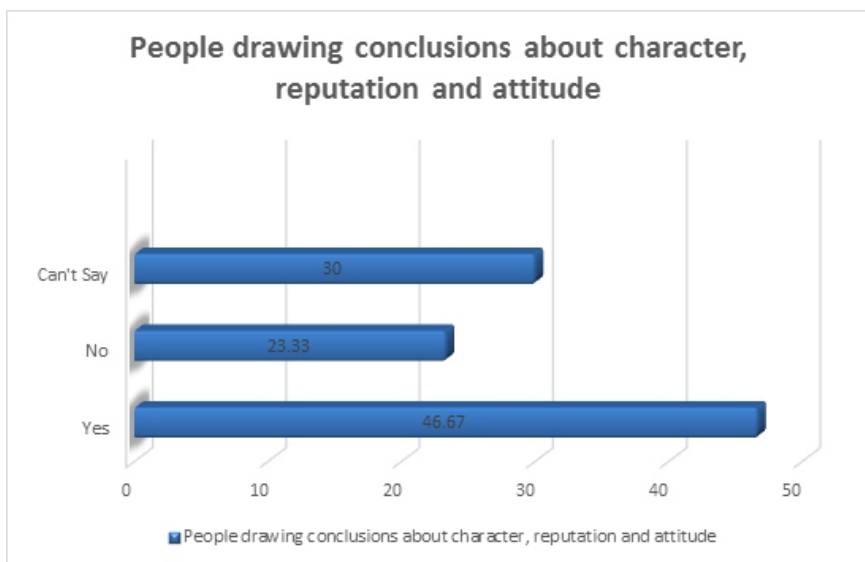
Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 50% of the working women do not feel hesitant to work with the male colleagues. Also, it was observed that underestimation on the basis of gender was not much prevalent which is considered to be a healthy sign. However, 33.33% of them feel uncomfortable to work with the male colleagues. Remaining 16.67% of them did not say anything about the matter.

Since, sexual harassment is a very sensitive topic, it was observed during the interview session that some women who were uncomfortable in working with male colleagues or might have experienced sexual harassment tried to avoid the question.

I. Do you think that people draw conclusions about your character, reputation and attitude the way they like?

Table-6.12: People drawing conclusions about character, reputation and attitude

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	70	46.67
No	35	23.33
Can't Say	45	30



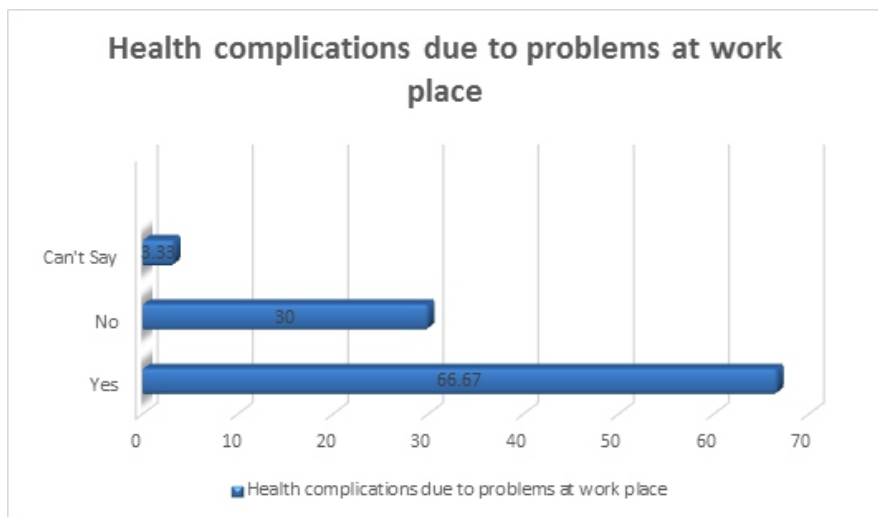
Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 46.67% of the working women feel that people draw conclusions about their character, reputation and attitude, however 23.33% of the working women do not feel the same way. 30% of them are unable to express their opinion on this matter.

X. Do you suffer any health complications like depression, mood swings, etc. due to problems at work place?

Table-6.13: Health complications due to problems at work place

	No. of respondents	Percentage (%)
Yes	100	66.67
No	45	30
Can't Say	5	3.33



Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The analysis of the above data indicates that 66.67% of working women face health complications due to problems at work place, however 30% of them do not face any such health complications. Another 3.33% of them are unable to express any opinion on the above matter.

5. CONCLUSION

Recent past has witnessed an increase in the number of female employees in various sectors. But almost every economic sector is full of those “stereotypes” that poses hurdles to the career growth of the female employees. The biggest challenge that every working women faces is to balance the twin responsibilities of work and family. The moment she starts focusing more on any one of these aspects, the another aspect starts getting imbalanced.

Further, are barred/exploited for getting promoted to the higher positions. They are not prepared for leadership roles due to multiple factors- like lack of self confidence in taking up such roles due to additional responsibilities of family, lack of support from the family members, exploitative behavior of the senior persons, etc. If at all they aspire for leadership, they were frequently rejected for the senior positions.

Adding to all these issues, the attitude of female colleagues towards their counterparts is the most bitter thing that is being experienced by them. In the

interview session that was conducted along with the questionnaire responses, the respondents expressed their disappointment over the behavior of their female co-workers. The negative emotions of jealousy, unauthentic gossiping and spreading false rumours about other female colleagues, practicing sycophancy to gain undue advantage over others are the most common reasons of unrest and mental disturbance among the female employees.

It is utmost important that the female employees engaged in various sectors should first of all be sensible towards each other. Then only will it be possible for them to fight against the rest of the world for gaining equality in gender roles and combating other hurdles that hinders their personal and professional growth.

6. REFERENCES

- (i) Andal, N. (2002), *Women and Indian society: Options and constraints*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi.
- (ii) Majumdar, M. (2004), *Social status of women in India*, Dominant Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi.
- (iii) Anil Dutta Mishra (1994), *Problems & Prospects of Working Women in Urban India*, Mittal Publications.
- (iv) Sharma, A. (2002), *Women in Indian religions*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi.
- (v) Ahmad, Fakhr and Ahmed (2011), "Working women work-life conflict", *Business Strategy Series*, Vol. 12 No. 6 pp. 289-302.
- (vi) Shiva, G. (2013), "A Study on Work Family Balance and Challenges faced by Working Women", *IOSR Journal of Business Management*, Vol. 14 No. 5 pp. 01-04.
- (vii) Cotterill, Pamela & Letherby, Gayle (2005), "Women in higher education: Issues and challenges", *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 28 pp. 109-113.
- (viii) Gururaja U. Maiya E. S. and Devi A. George (2013), "Perceptions and

Attitude towards Quality of Worklife Balance among nursing teachers”, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, Vol. 3 pp. 52-54.

- (ix) <https://bized.aacsb.edu/articles/2018/12/leadership-barriers-for-women-in-higher-education>
- (x) <https://www.deccanherald.com/content/459249/women-represented-higher-education-india.html>

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE ON AN ANALYSIS OF WORK
ENVIRONMENT OF WOMEN

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Address:
4. Contact No.:
5. Email:
6. Marital Status:
7. Highest Educational Qualification:
8. No. of Children:
9. Age of youngest child:
10. How long have you worked in this organization? -----
11. What are your average working hours per week? -----

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

12. Do you think that due to increased burden of personal responsibilities you are able to concentrate less on work?
YES NO Can't Say
13. Do you think that more responsibilities at work has impacted your personal life?
YES NO Can't Say
14. Does your family members support you in taking important work-life decisions- like working overtime or taking up self development courses, etc.?
YES NO Can't Say
15. Do you think that you are facing mental distress while performing your personal as well as professional duties?
YES NO Can't Say

16. Do you think that husband's attitude at home helps you in balancing the personal and work life responsibilities?
YES NO Can't Say
17. Do you think that child care responsibilities have caused you to neglect your job work responsibilities?
YES NO Can't Say
18. Do you think that more supportive role of family members will help you in balancing the personal and work life responsibilities?
YES NO Can't Say
19. Do you think that your supervisor plays a supportive role in reducing stress at work place?
YES NO Can't Say
20. Do you think that your colleagues helps in reducing work life stress or facing challenges at work place?
YES NO Can't Say
21. Do you think that your job timings are rigid leaving no scope for discharging your important personal responsibilities in case of emergency?
YES NO Can't Say
22. Do you feel hesitant to work with male colleagues because they may sexually harass or underestimate you on the basis of gender?
YES NO Can't Say
23. Do you think that people draw conclusions about your character, reputation and attitude the way they like?
YES NO Can't Say
24. Do you suffer any health complications like depression, mood swings, etc. due to problems at work place?
YES NO Can't Say