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Familial and Socio-cultural Barriers Faced by Working Women: Evidence-Based study of District Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

Women's empowerment through participation in the productive market is one of the most imperative aspects for the socio-economic growth and development of any nation. In recent decades, drastic changes have been observed in the role of women as they have made remarkable contributions and proved their abilities and capabilities in all spheres of life. Despite rapid globalization and astonishing improvement in the traditional role of women, gender segregation, discrimination, and masculine culture persist in families, communities, and productive sectors, especially in developing countries like Pakistan. Families are the basic, informal, and fundamental agents that provide rudiments and play a vital role in determining women's performance in their personal, social, and professional lives. To understand the familial and socio-cultural barriers faced by working women, this qualitative study obtained primary information through snowball and convenience sampling techniques from women working in different occupations in the district of Gujrat. The study focuses on women with more than five years of work experience. The study found that familial and socio-cultural barriers significantly affected the social, psychological, and physical health of working women. Findings indicated that women who belong to supportive families and societies have more confidence, participate in decision-making, possess better interpersonal communication skills, and play a significant productive role for their families and society.

Keywords: Women Empowerment, Working Woman**,** Barriers By Family And Society, Women Participation, Gender Discrimination.

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Introduction

Women participation in productive market is the fundamental to achieve sustainable development in communities and Without equal participation of woman in all spheres of life no nation can rise to the height of glory (World Bank, 2020; Ramos et al., 2022). In recent decades globally, drastic changes has observed in the role of women in society, and they provide remarkable contribution and proved their capabilities in each field. Today's women hold the bottom to top positions in different fields as health, education, personal business, governmental and non-governmental organization among others (Nazia et al., 2020). Inspite of this extraordinary improvement in the traditional role of women, there are still multidimensional challenges and deprivation faced by working women. The gender discrimination and the masculine culture of families in the world, especially in developing countries have multi factorial issues, which create obstacle for working women (Nogrady et al., 2019).

Traditionally, women's roles were considered mainly to take care of families and nurture them inside the house, while men took charge of decision-making and livelihood (Almathami et al., 2022). Families expected women to be more inclined to stay at home, pampering the children and elders of the family, cooking and cleaning, and confining themselves to closed-off spaces (Alhejji et al., 2018). The general perception is that if women work outside their homes, participate in socio-cultural events, and become economically independent, it may prevent them from playing their affective role within the family. Patriarchal values and socio-cultural pre-determinants confine the role of women, and most people focus on women marrying well rather than finding a good job or developing their careers (Zakham et al., 2019). This approach shapes the critical perception and expectation regarding the role of women in the family and society. Such stereotypical thinking, in most families and society members, makes it challenging to observe or tolerate the personal growth, development, and progress of women outside their homes (Chung, 2019). In most developing countries, a significant portion of working women faces pressure from their parents, spouses, children, relatives, and socio-cultural norms to settle down. Various factors such as education, religion, traditions, family status, and cost systems, among others, contribute unanimously to developing a standard for the role of women, and these so-called standards are more related to the prospects of working women (Margaret et al., 2018).

The unequal status of women in Pakistan is influenced by various factors such as the family system, class system, religious beliefs, and socio-economic status, among others (Rizwana, 2018). The country's socio-cultural situation has created a divide between men and women, with women being confined to household responsibilities while men are responsible for outside the home

obligations (Ramos et al., 2022). This division is maintained through concepts such as honor and purdah, which demarcate the public and private world, leading to discrimination and segregation of women. The concept of family honor, which is linked to the gender role of women, threatens their liberty and freedom of movement (Rahman, 2018). This discrimination and segregation have a considerable impact on the roles and life patterns of women. Due to the paternal inheritance approach, men are prioritized in terms of education and job opportunities, while investing in women education or development is believed a wastage of time and resources (Ambreen et al., 2019).

Women in Pakistan have participated in domestic or unpaid work to assist their men, but today, women's participation in productive work is comparatively high. Women are getting higher education, improving their knowledge and skills, and proving themselves as capable leaders in public and corporate sectors. However, despite this remarkable growth, numerous barriers by family and society still affect women's lives at the micro and macro levels (Mirjat et al., 2019). Women's productive work is considered a threat to men's egoistic nature, and their equal participation in household economic activities leads to under-remuneration for their work. The least provision of economic and productive resources, biases in the allocation of opportunities, and depriving women of their legal rights further exacerbate the situation (Inam et al., 2020). The challenges faced by working women in Pakistan are numerous and complex, as they must navigate social, cultural and religious norms that often restrict their access to education, employment, and economic opportunities. Despite recent progress, only a small proportion of women participate in the labor force, with just 25% of women in Pakistan employed (Moazam et al., 2018). This low participation rate is a significant hindrance to the country's socio-economic development.

To explore the barriers that working women face in Pakistan, a study was conducted in district Gujrat, Punjab, which is one of the most industrialized districts in the country and has a significant number of women working in various public and private sectors, as well as running their own businesses. However, even in this relatively progressive area, women still face various barriers imposed by their families and society that hinder their ability to participate in productive work. The study aimed to identify and analyze these barriers in order to propose effective solutions to increase women's participation in the labor force and promote gender equality in the district and beyond.

Scope of Research

Pakistani society is patriarchal, where males hold the position of authority in families and make decisions for the women's education, careers, and personal lives. For centuries, women have been limited to domestic duties and unpaid work. However, in the past two decades, women have gained access to higher education and have started entering the paid workforce. Despite this progress, discrimination against women persists in the workplace. Women in Pakistan have been employed in both public and private institutions for a long time, but they continue to face challenges related to their gender, such as limited opportunities for advancement and disproportionate responsibilities for household duties.

Rationale of study

In developing countries, gender segregation and discrimination persist in productive sectors, despite rapid globalization. Discrimination against women starts within families and society and continues in their workplaces, leading to inadequate career prospects. These issues affect all stages of a woman's career, including access to education, transportation and movement in society, job opportunities, training and skill development, and promotion (Hennekam et al., 2017). Keeping in consideration the importance and sensitive nature of issue researchers tried to understand the familial and socio-cultural barriers faced by working women. The study also explore the multidimetional factors associated such as harassment in communities, workplaces, gender-related segregation in work and careers among others.

Research Problem

In this age of globalaization, women make compromises and struggling to adapt minimum standards of life especially in developing countries like Pakistan. Families and and working environments for a women can influence their self-respect, dignity, social, physical and psychological health among others. The heavy workload at workplace, domestic responsibilities, gender inequalities and unsatisfactory behavior by spouses, children and relatives can also reduce marital harmony. Segregation in the choice of field, low wages, rigid stereotypes, gender norms, and predominant nature by the opposite gender are significant barriers that women face when they desire to work. To deal this situation it is necessary for understanding the basic social, demogaraphic and workplace issues for better adjustment and policy regarding working women in Pakistan.

Objectives of the Study

- To analyze the familial barriers that working women encounter in their everyday life.

- To investigate the socio-cultural barriers faced by working women.
- To evaluate the personal satisfaction of working women from their working environment

Theoretical Framwork

Social Role Theory

According to Eagly's (1987) Social Role gender differences arise from the social roles that regulate behavior throughout an individual's lifespan. This theory suggests that the differences in behavior between men and women are a result of the roles they play, which are shaped by societal expectations and family structures. Gender roles are influenced by the common beliefs that individuals hold in a society, and these beliefs are used to regulate behavior based on an individual's family and social identity. Furthermore, the Social Role Theory explains the common gender stereotypes that organize men and women's roles, which illustrate the differences in their behaviors and the division of labor based on stereotypes that are attributed to a group and then imputed to its individual members solely because they belong to that group. Moreover, Eagly's theory includes the notion that women are communal and men are agentic. Communal gender traits ascribed to women include being helpful, emotional, kind, affectionate, sympathetic, and concerned with the welfare of others. Agentic gender traits ascribed to men include being controlling, forceful, assertive, aggressive, direct, ambitious, and independent from other people. These communal and agentic gender aspects lead to differences in female and male roles in family and work and contribute to the gender differences in their behaviors.

Social role theory at the Macro-level

In patriarchal societies like Pakistan, the division of gender roles has created gender segregation and limited women's access to power, opportunities, and networks compared to men. As a result, the prevailing social roles at the macro-level contribute to a cultural environment that reinforces male dominance and supremacy, resulting in a lack of gender parity throughout society

Social role theory at Meso-level

In many cultures, including Pakistan, social roles are deeply entrenched in traditional beliefs about the capabilities and expected behaviors of men and women. These beliefs can manifest in a variety of ways, such as women being expected to be nurturing and caring while men are expected to be assertive and aggressive. These gender biases can create barriers for women in the workplace, such as being overlooked for leadership positions or not being evaluated fairly for

job performance. Addressing these biases and the segregation that stems from social roles at the Meso-level requires challenging cultural and societal expectations placed on men and women. This can be achieved through various methods such as awareness campaigns, policy changes, and targeted interventions that promote gender equality and challenge traditional gender roles. Ultimately, by fostering a culture of respect and equal opportunities for all, workplaces and communities can become more inclusive and diverse.

Social role theory at micro-level

According to the social role theory, gender roles are learned through socialization processes within the family and society context. These gender roles are then reinforced throughout childhood and strengthened at mature ages through the processes of expectancy confirmation. Children internalize gender-stereotypic beliefs and adopt the anticipated social roles, which may result in self-directed prejudice and women's preference for family and care-giving activities. This internalization of gender roles at the micro-level may lead to different labor market outcomes. Therefore, to fully understand women's career-related barriers in Pakistan, it is necessary to conduct a multilevel analysis that takes into account the influence of family and societal expectations on individual career choices and opportunities. This could help identify and address the systemic gender biases and inequalities that limit women's access to education, training, and career advancement

Significance of Research

With reference to family barriers, there are two important points of views on women less representation, Firstly; mostly family women do not have the skills or the interests or time to do serious administrative or productive work. Secondly, family men intentionally discriminate because they do not want to share power. But it is not as simple as shows rather, there are some more subtle dynamics at work, and that exist both on the individual family, institutional and societal level.

There are predictably some striking differences, or gaps for women’s work responsibilities, household duties, and family situations. Many working women believe that they have disproportionate responsibilities for service in their departments as they tend to put in longer hours than their male counterparts for childcare, housework, and elder care. Some women sacrifice their careers to be wives and mothers. Maternity leaves and shorter workdays for childcare responsibilities can also hinder the chances of women being considered for promotions. This study explore to these women the actual conditions and provide a comprehensive pictures for women, families, societies and policy makers.

Limitation of Research

While this research makes a significant contribution, it has certain limitations, particularly with regard to the sampling method and size. Due to the patriarchal nature of Pakistani society, it is challenging to access female respondents who are willing to openly discuss sensitive issues such as gender bias, sexual harassment, and exploitation. Additionally, the sample size was limited, which is consistent with the logic of exploratory phenomenological research that relies on information-rich cases that can provide ample data.

In the future, it would be interesting to conduct cross-country studies using mixed-method research designs to gain a more nuanced understanding of women's family, societal, and work-related prospects. Additionally, we recommend that future researchers study other potential intersections that may lead to a better understanding of gender disparities in the family, society, and workplace.

Review of Literature

Each research resets on earlier ones and provides the basis for future ones and more links that can be established between a given study and other studies the greater the problem. Alim and colleagues (2019) Conducted a research on "A study on the role of women in family decision making" and focuses of the married women's participation in active family affairs specially her role in gamily decision making. The findings evaluated that the majority of womens held family purse than past and the ratio of participation of women increased with the increase in family income.

Shahid and colleagues (2022) evaluted the family responsibilities and problems of women working at brick kilns the focus of their was to identify the problems of women working at brick kilns like work-in conditions , working hours, pattern of wages health & safely position etc .The attitude of male family members towards women working at brick kilns was also be explored. Almost all women faced environment hazardous at work place. The women were not allowed to join another workplace because of debt bondage most of the male family members did not help their women in domestic work.

Amina and colleagues (2022) conducted a reach stdudy on " Socio-economic conditions, family environment and productivty of working women and findings highlighted the women's social empowerment and their decision making capacity. Through evaluation of the study was that women were talking decision at different levels but their decisions got less importance. Women wanted to come forward in every field of life but set family patterns restricted to change the situation.

Weller and colleagues (2020) found the employed women regardless of their educated trend were likely to report that their husband made decisions regarding the both of an additional child than did women who were no employed. The increased influence in decision making among employed women was associated with lower fertility where's in husband dominant facilities there was no relationship b/w employed status of fertility.

Research Methodology

The research methodology utilized in this study was an interpretive qualitative approach, which was deemed appropriate for exploring the barriers faced by working women in Pakistan. This method allowed for an in-depth understanding of the context and comprehensive investigation of the contextual issues that influence working women. Due to the challenges in obtaining a sample in conservative and patriarchal societies, convenience and snowball sampling techniques were employed. Five distinct snowball sequences were initiated from diverse networking sources, including education, banking, healthcare, personal business, and NGOs.

Before data collection, participants were assured of the study's ethical standards and provided informed written consent. Anonymity was maintained using letters instead of names. The target population was women who had been working in different fields for at least a year in the district Gujrat, Punjab, Pakistan. In total 27 respondents were interviewed and analyzed as separate cases. Comprehensive notes were taken after each interview to ensure important discussions and responses were not missed. The results were drawn using a continuous comparative thematic analysis approach in line with the qualitative research method.

The study utilized qualitative research methods, specifically in-depth semi-structured interviews, to collect data. A total of 27 interviews were conducted in accordance with specific protocols, which were adapted based on the requirements of the study. Probing questions were sometimes asked to steer the interviews toward the study's aim. The interviews were conducted face to face to capture non-verbal cues that are important for producing rich qualitative data, especially when examining sensitive topics like gender, family behavior, and social inequality.

The interviews were conducted in a mixed language (English and Urdu) based on the convenience of the respondents to ensure openness. Detailed notes were taken by the interviewer and two female assistants to minimize data loss, and the interviews were not recorded. The average time for each interview was from 35 to 45 minutes. The researcher's reflexivity helped to uncover misperceptions and plan particular questions that assisted in interpreting the

outcomes. Since the interviewer, assistants, and respondents had the same gender and socio-religious and cultural identity, no issues arose regarding misperception or misunderstanding of answers or cultural feelings.

To ensure rigor, precision, and credibility, several techniques were utilized, including investigator triangulation, conformability, and member checks. Investigator triangulation involved the participation of two or more researchers (in this case, one interviewer and two assistants) to provide multiple observations and conclusions, adding breadth to the phenomenon of interest. The draft of the final findings, including quotes from respondents, was shared and verified to ensure the credibility of the findings. Despite the moderate sample size, data collection was stopped when data saturation was achieved after 27 interviews, and no new information was being obtained.

Data Analysis

Female respondent denoted a unit of analysis and was studied as a single case. Notes were made right after each interview to ensure that important information was not forgotten or lost. Following the steps suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Braun and Clarke (2006) for qualitative analysis, a continuous comparative thematic analysis was performed. After reading transcriptions word by word numerous times, a coding scheme was established to depict the pertinent thoughts concentrating on specifics about work challenges, barriers, facilitators, and outcomes of gender equality. The original themes were verbalized in the voice of the respondents and latter made transcriptions. Table 1 highlighted the respondents their working department with experience.

Table 1 Demographic distribution of study participants

Respondents	Sector	Working Hours	Experience (In Years)
Ms. A	Education	5	6
Ms. B	Health Care	8	4
Ms. C	Health Care	8	6
Ms. D	Personal Business	10	11
Ms. E	Education	7	5
Ms. F	Education	7	9
Ms. G	Bank	9	3
Ms. H	Personal Business	12	6
Ms. I	NGOs	5	4
Ms. J	Health Care	8	15
Ms. K	Bank	9	5
Ms. L	Health Care	8	10
Ms. M	Personal Business	10	4
Ms. N	Personal Business	12	2
Ms. O	Bank	9	2
Ms. P	Education	5	7
Ms. Q	NGOs	4	2
Ms. R	Education	5	5
Ms. S	Bank	9	3
Ms. T	Education	7	4
Ms. U	NGOs	8	8
Ms. V	NGOs	10	8
Ms. W	Health Care	8	7
Ms. X	Bank	9	5
Ms. Y	Personal Business	10	4
Ms. Z	NGOs	8	5

Research Hypotheses

H1. Higher the level of supportive family attitude, higher the level of women participatiation in work/jobs/business

H2. Higher the level of counducive socio-cultural environment, higher the level of women participatiation productive work

Analyses and Interpretation

Keeping in mind the prime objectives of the study, a total twenty seven respondents from five different fields were interviewed. Table 2 presented that out of total twenty respondents were married, four were widows and three were separated. Majority of the respondents have sixteen years or above education and seven respondents are graduate. All respondents had children and most of the respondents have one or two children while only two respondents who have five or more children. Similarly, the majority of respondents belonged to the nuclear family system, seven respondents reported that they belong to joint family and three respondents have single parent family system. Out of total ten respondent have Rs 40001 – 60000 thousand monthly income while only two respondents have Rs. 100000 or above monthly income. Nineteen respondents reported their husbands are the head of their family and three respondents were herself head of their family.

Table 2 Demographic distribution

Demographic characteristics	Description of Characteristic	N	%
Age	18-24	4	14.81
	25-34	9	33.33
	35-44	8	29.62
	45-54	6	22.23
	Total	27	100
Qualification	1-10	1	3.7
	11-12	3	11.2
	13-14	7	25.9
	15-16 or Above	16	59.2
	Total	27	100
Marital Status	Married	20	74.1
	Widow	4	14.7
	Separated	3	11.2
	Total	27	100

No of Children	1	9	3.3	3
	2	6	2.2	2
	3	7	5.9	2
	4	3	1.2	1
	5 or Above	2	4	7.
	Total	27	00	1
Family System	Nuclear	13	8.1	4
	Joint	7	5.9	2
	Extended	4	4.8	1
	Single Parent	3	1.2	1
	Total	27	00	1
Respondents Income(In Rupees)	20000 – 40000	5	8.5	1
	40001- 60000	10	7.1	3
	60001- 80000	8	9.6	2
	80001- 100000	2	4	7.
	100000 or Above	2	4	7.
	Total	27	00	1
Head of Family	Husband	19	0.3	7
	Husband Parents	4	4.8	1
	Husband Siblings	1	7	3.
	Herself	3	1.2	1
	Total	27	00	1

Family attitude towards working women's and their occupations

The attitudes of families towards working women and their occupations were found to be mixed in the responses of the respondents. Almost half of the respondents reported that their families (parents and siblings) were supportive and

cooperative when they started working before marriage, but the situation changed after marriage. The women had to perform dual responsibilities with minimal cooperation from their in-laws, especially their spouses, who expected them to be perfect daughters-in-law, wives, and mothers, without considering their occupational engagements outside the home. One respondent explained, "*After completing my education and with the intensive hard work and cooperation of my parents, I had employment opportunities before marriage. However, after marriage, the situation changed. On one hand, in-laws expected me to do a job and share the economic burden with my husband, and on the other hand, they expected me to be a perfect daughter-in-law or housewife."*

However, two respondents from the health department and a local NGO reported that their in-law families were very cooperative because they were bearing the economic expenditures of their children and kitchen. Even these women started working after marriage. The reasons were the unsatisfactory economic condition due to the low wage or unemployment of their husbands. One of them shared, *"My husband works on daily wages in the open labor market, and his income hardly runs the kitchen expenditure. He preferred to marry a working woman. At the time of marriage, I was not working, but my husband many times expressed his wish and convinced me to try for a job. After getting a job, my husband gradually changed, and he became rude and annoying. I know his problem because I earned more than him, and this is not easy to bear because of his egoistic male dominant nature."*

Another respondent faced almost similar situations and problems with her husband and in-laws' family, but her situation worsened day-by-day, leading to a divorce. She now lives separately with her daughter, expressing her sorrow over her husband's lack of courage and patience to accept her as an independent human being. Moreover, the attitude of families towards working women varied according to their socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Parents who invest their resources in their daughters' education often support them in their careers and encourage them to come forward and prove themselves as strong women. However, after marriage, the situation changes entirely, with husbands and in-laws expecting more and creating an extra physical and psychological burden. Low levels of education, coupled with poor economic conditions, create critical psychosocial conditions for women, especially those working outside their homes. Such barriers from family attitudes significantly influence the health (physical & psychological), behavior, and life patterns of working women.

Socio-Cultural Barriers Faced By Working Women

All the respondents are qualified, and they expressed their experience from their schooling to job times. A large portion of respondents said that their family and they face multidimensional issues with regard to movement in the

society while for schooling and jobs. Relative's frequent questions with parents regarding their education, marriage plans and careers among others create annoying situations. At the time of marriage people wish that their daughter in-law has its income but they also do not accept her independence in decision making regarding herself and her children. Harassment in its various forms faced in the educational institutes, during movement & transportation, and at workplace is a common phenomenon faced by working women in the society. As the one respondent explains that

"During the early days of her job one of her uncles disliked it for her, to go outside the home and mingle up with unknown people. According to him people gossip about her and their family, which is not acceptable for him. At the workplace most of the people asked them regarding their family and cost and showed uncertain biases due to this."

"Another respondent said that once she was selected in the police department as assistant sub-inspector, which is her dream job, but due to extreme pressure by her fiancée and his family, I and my parents compromised and did not join the police force. Later she got selected in the education department, and still works there.

"Another respondent claimed that once she was opening a beauty parlor in a Mohallah native to her home side, but within six months the closed, because of the annoying behaviour of parlor neighbor and other shopkeepers. They always stare and pass remarks at the movement of her customers and staff members. Many times she complains regarding their attitude and behaviour but in vain."

"One of the respondents explains that due to overburden of work in home and office most of the time she is unable to participate in family and neighbor gatherings. This practice creates a negative image of her and in reaction relatives and other families avoid to mingle up with her and with her children."

"One of the respondents who was working in the health department explained his experience regarding societal behaviour, and said that most of the people living around, visit her home for the checkup of pregnancy cases. But the expected respect was not found in the overall behaviour of people and they make myths and indecency regarding her."

In Pakistan and the other world education is the fundamental for getting a better job or working position in the society. The discrimination and gender based segregation starts at the very beginning from home, and the women's and girls' face various issues in the society also. Commonly societies have set specific roles for men and women which are based on their culture, religious values and social environment. In every male dominating if anyone crosses these limits and

challenges the set patterns, they face serious resistance and obstacles. Due to patriarchy societal approach independence of women is not endorsed nor accepted by the common people of communities.

The experiences of the respondents in this study reveal the many societal barriers faced by working women in Pakistan. Despite being highly qualified, they face multidimensional issues from their schooling to their job times. One of the most significant barriers is the pressure they face from their families and relatives, who frequently question their education, marriage plans, and careers, creating uncomfortable situations. Although some families may wish for their daughter-in-law to have their income, they may not accept her independence in decision-making regarding herself and her children. Harassment is also a common phenomenon faced by working women in educational institutes, during movement and transportation, and at the workplace. One respondent explained, *"That during the early days of her job, her uncle disapproved of her going outside the home and mingling with unknown people, fearing that people would gossip about her and their family. At the workplace, many people asked her about her family and costs and displayed uncertain biases as a result".*

Another respondent was selected for her dream job as an assistant sub-inspector in the police department. "Due to extreme pressure from her fiancé and his family, she and her parents compromised and did not join the police force. Later she got selected in the education department, where she still works".

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Unfortunately, gender-based discrimination and segregation begin at a young age, with specific roles set for men and women based on cultural, religious, and social norms in Pakistani society. Any challenge to these norms is met with

resistance and obstacles, making it difficult for women to achieve independence and acceptance in their communities. Patriarchy plays a significant role in this societal approach, where the independence of women is not endorsed nor accepted by many people.

Personal Satisfaction of working women from their working environment

This study aimed to explore the personal perspectives of working women on their employment status and overall job satisfaction, in addition to societal and familial barriers. The respondents shared their diverse views, ranging from a desire for independence and greater career opportunities to a preference for a domestic lifestyle with their family and children. For many respondents, their initial motivation for entering the workforce was to earn sufficient income for daily expenses, which has now been achieved with their children now capable of supporting themselves. Despite a longing for a more traditional household life, the majority of respondents expressed strong support for women's education, employment, and independent lifestyles. These perspectives were captured in their own words, as follows:

"One of the respondents in the study who was working as head teacher in a high school said she is very much satisfied with her profession and job. She claimed it is only her occupation that makes her able to provide quality education to not only her own children but the children from the whole family and community. She encourages more and more women participation in productive work and argues that this is the only way to deal with biased and discriminatory behaviour of society."

"I am very much satisfied with my job instead of various problems faced in the beginning from family and society. They claim that it is their career which makes them able to be independent and provide a satisfactory education and lifestyle to her children."

"Another respondent said that it's good to have income in life otherwise basic necessities of life may be difficult for her. She thinks a job is a very good option in a woman's life for their personal growth, health and development. She expresses her satisfaction as a working woman and wishes it should be somewhat easy for her."

"Some respondents complained about the people's behaviour at the workplace and said if they have an alternative option they must move forward. They are happy with their job but the working environment does not suit them due to male domination situation and fewer facilities specific for female workers. Male always try to get advantages due to their masculine structure and females

may be ignored and segregated for specific tasks. They have wished to work but these types of discrimination dishearten them."

Discussion

According to the responses gathered from all the participants, it is essential for girls and women to receive higher education and engage in productive work. Despite the difficulties they have faced, all of them have persisted in their careers and demonstrated their capabilities in their respective fields. The participants believe that education is the key to altering the attitudes and actions of family and community members. Notably, those women working in male-dominated workplaces are generally less content with their jobs than those in balanced or all-female workplace are. Additionally, all respondents expressed the desire for their daughters to attain higher-paying and more prominent positions for the betterment of themselves and their families.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to gain insight into the experiences of working women, including the barriers they face from their families and society. The respondents reported various challenges related to their jobs, with varying degrees of intensity. Consistent with previous research (Inam et al., 2020; Chauhan et al., 2022; Maheshwari et al., 2022), the respondents indicated that family and societal issues can have negative impacts on their social, psychological, and physical well-being. Despite facing these challenges, most of the respondents encouraged greater participation of women in the workforce. Based on the findings, it is recommended that the government create a supportive environment for women and implement policies that promote equal participation across all fields. Additionally, institutions and departments should offer specific facilities tailored to the needs of female employees. While families today may have different characteristics compared to the past, more socialization and awareness are needed to promote equal investment in daughters and sons. It is essential to enforce strict laws and ensure their implementation to prevent all forms of harassment in the community and workplace and ensure the security and dignity of working women in society.

Recommendations

The researchers should followed appropriate standards for data retention, confidentiality, and ethics in handling the data. While institutional guidelines and the researchers should ensured that no unethical practices were carried out during the study, which involved in-depth interviews and note taking. This research did not involve human clinical trials, lab experiments in future control case studies should be adopted for better understandings.

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