



## A study on the problems faced by urban working women in Kashmir

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### Abstract

A very important aspect of Kashmiri woman is to meet the expectations and obligations corresponding to her various roles within the fold of the family. If she fails to meet the expectations of the members of the family, it creates familial tension within the family. It is quite obvious that the working woman is required to play dual roles; first familial roles as wife, mother and housewife and the other as an employee. The new status involves a fresh array of expectations from those constituting the 'role-set' of the incumbent. The purpose of this study is to find out the various problems faced by the working women while dealing with the dual responsibilities. The focus is also on the reasons behind women taking up the jobs. Purposive random sampling method is used to obtain the related data from among the working women of various institutions like educational, health, etc. The study reveals that the main problems encountered by the working women include role conflicts, immense work load, constant child care worries, dealing with fatigue and less time for personal care. Reason behind opting for a job is to attain the economic stability and to become self-reliant. Despite various facing constraints they contribute tremendously towards their family and hence it ultimately increases their level of satisfaction and they feel economically independent.

**Keywords:** working women, employment, role conflict, dual responsibility, self-reliant

### Introduction

While a majority of the women still face discrimination and gender bias, in the last few decades, the number of women successful in politics, technology and business etc. is definitely on the rise. Society has started seeing women in a different perspective. They work as lawyers, nurses, doctors, social workers, teachers, secretaries, managers and officers etc. There is no profession today where women are not employed. However, it is true that working women have to face problems. There are innumerable challenge and problems faced by them both at home and workplace. In the context of women becoming keen on shouldering responsibilities as professional and enter in new professions in all concerned spheres, there is an increasing need to discuss this aspect exclusively from the point of view of challenges she has to face and keeping in mind that properly qualified women professionals also aspire no loss for acquiring knowledge expertise and training to develop their capability to shoulder higher responsibilities, achieve professional excellence and to be involved in decision making. In today's changing society, it is very appreciative to find women working outside their homes and becoming self-reliant. Now they are no more dependent on anybody and can survive on their own. The work career not only provides a new role to a Kashmiri woman but also affects her role and status in the family and demands a new adjustment in her personal and social life. Thus, woman's role in work situation is an important area to be explored in order to understand the changing role of the woman. Kapur (1970) [1] in his study of hundreds of working women employed in various salaried jobs and professions found that their problems are of three types: environmental, social and psychological. In each of them the problems

emerged due to the strained situations at home and workplace. Charlotte O' Kelley (1985) found that working women feel more economically independent. Moreover, modernized households gave greater autonomy to women in household decision making. Aneesa Shafi (2002) [3] carried out a study based on Kashmiri working women with reference to their role conflicts arising out of the occupancy of double roles in contemporary Kashmiri society. The demands of the new situation and the age-old requirements of womanhood are often in conflict and call for adjustment and accommodation. Women in the workforce earning wages or a salary are part of a modern phenomenon. Economic, social and political empowerment of women is essential for the development of any society. Working women are essential for the development of the society, so empowerment of women is important to the process of upliftment of economic, social, political status of women.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the various problems faced by the working women while handling the dual responsibility.
2. To identify the reasons behind opting for a job.
3. To identify the self-concept among working women.
4. To find out possible solutions that could help them to overcome the problems that they face in the workplace.

### Methodology

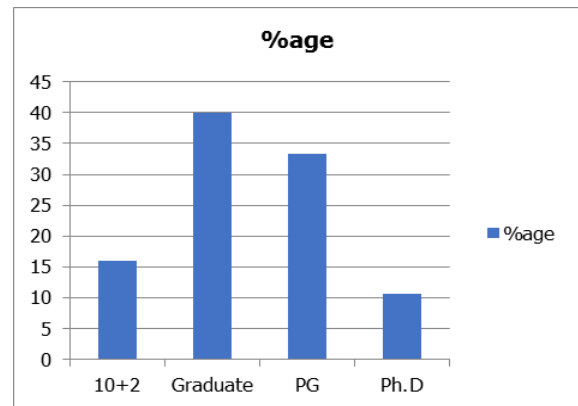
The study has been carried out in Kashmir valley among women working in different situations, belonging to various social, economic, cultural, demographic and professional groups and categories. The respondents were selected from different institutions. The data has been collected through

‘purposive random sampling’ method using closed ended questionnaire as the main tool. To analyze the data, collected information has been classified in the light of objectives set forth for the study.

**Results and Discussion**

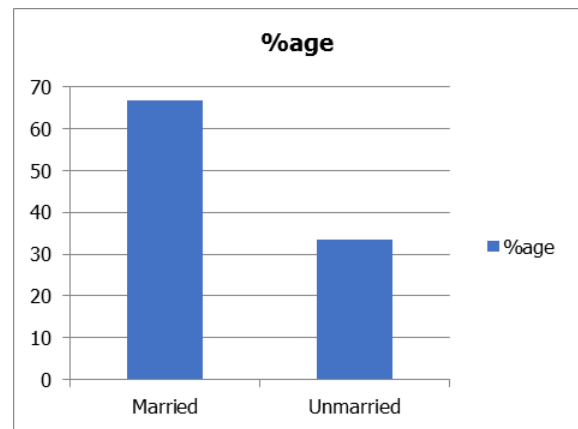
To present a comprehensive picture of the contribution of a working woman towards her family, a detailed study to this effect was conducted. Majority of the working women were married and had two children and were engaged in teaching profession. To become self-reliant and to cope up with the economic pressures were considered to be the main factors responsible for their opting for a job. Only a few of them had a strong desire for it. The study reveals a pretty much higher percentage of respondents face many difficulties in handling the dual responsibilities. Combining the two roles- *home making* and *employment* is the main problem that they face. The physical and psychological stress has been felt as disturbing and unbearable by many of them since they have to fulfill all the expectations of people whether inside the home or at work place. The problems they encounter include constant child care worries, dealing with fatigue, work load, role conflicts, less time for personal care, etc. The majority of the women opt for a job in order to cope up with the economic pressures and to become self-reliant. Majority of the working women utilize their earnings for the welfare and betterment of their families. They earn in order to fulfill the needs and requirements of the members of their family. Working mothers have the urge to provide all kinds of facilities to their kids. They contribute not only economically but at the same time socially and emotionally as well by nurturing their kids and taking care of the other members of the family. Considering the many objections that could be anticipated to the idea of women working outside their homes, it is amazing that a large percentage of working women are being provided with full support from their families, especially from their husbands in case of the choices they make which proves to be a real boost for their enthusiasm and enhances their courage. The motivational factors that gave constant encouragement to the working women to carry on with their jobs despite various constraints included the desire of being self-reliant and self-sufficient and the need to stabilize the financial conditions. High standard of living was also a factor for few of them. The

study revealed that a very high percentage of working women felt economically independent and were contented with the way they were living which is indeed the most positive and beneficial outcome of being a working woman.



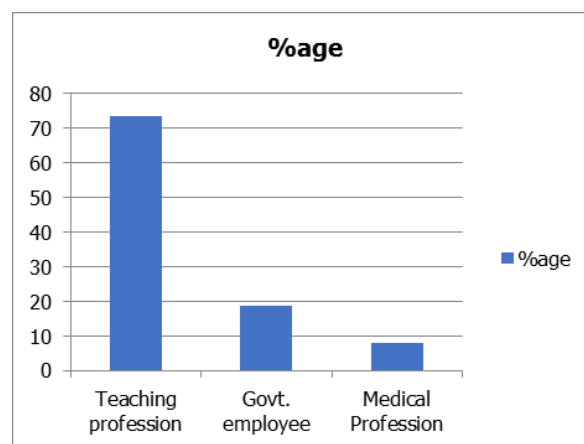
**Fig 1: Educational Qualification**

Fig 1 reveals that the qualification of the respondents mostly is graduation. It shows that the maximum numbers of the respondents are well qualified in accordance to their job profile.



**Fig 2: Marital Status**

Fig 2 reveals that the majority of the respondents are married i.e. 66.66% and the remaining 33.33% are unmarried.



**Fig 3: Type of Occupation**

Fig 3 depicts the frequency of different occupations vis-à-vis of the respondents. A large percentage of working women (73.33%) are involved in the teaching profession and the least (8%) being in the field of medical sector.

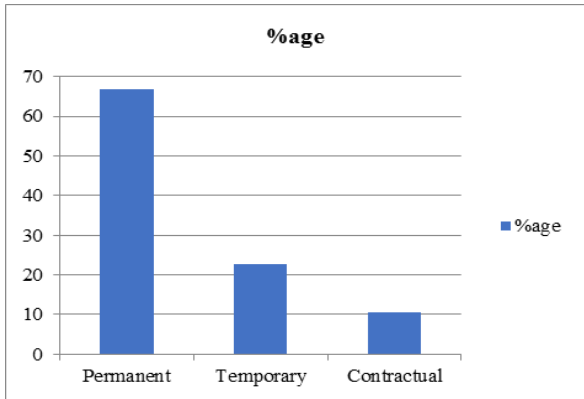


Fig 4: Nature of Occupation

Fig 4 reveals the nature of occupation of the respondents. Among them one-half (66.66%) of the working women belongs to the permanent category and less than one-half (22.66%) to the temporary category and very few (10.66%) to the contractual/adhoc category.

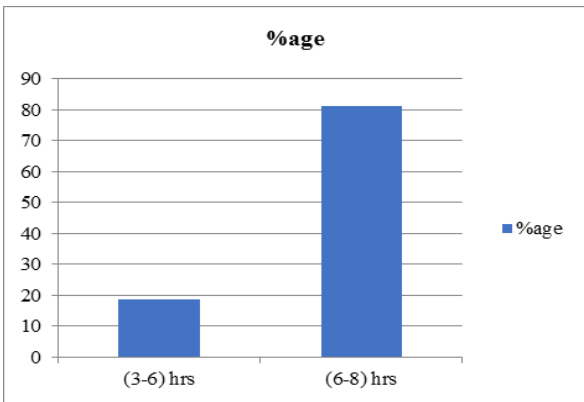


Fig 5: Duration of Work

Fig 5 depicts the working hours of the respondents which reveals that as many as 81.33% of working women work for 6-8 hrs per day and 18.66% working women work for only 3-6 hrs.

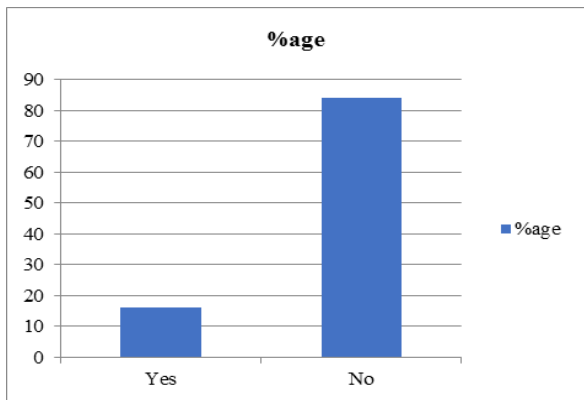


Fig 6: Problems at work place

Fig 6 reveals the problems (if any) faced by the working women at their work places. It shows that the majority (84%) didn't face any problem and are very much satisfied with the way they are working while as few of them (16%) did complain of having some issues which were related to their promotions, work environment and the amount of salary that they receive.

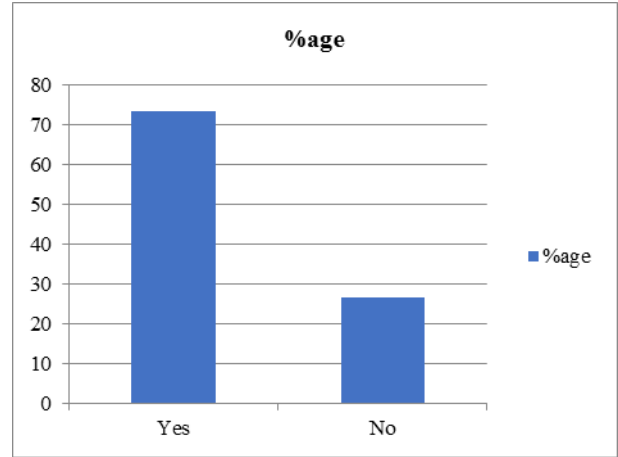


Fig 7: Problems in handling dual responsibilities

Fig 7 reveals the problems of dual responsibilities faced by the working women. It shows that as much as (73.33%) of the respondents do face certain problems in handling the dual responsibilities which include constant child care worries, dealing with fatigue, more work stress, role conflicts etc. Less than one half of the respondents (26.66%) expressed their satisfaction since they didn't face any problem and are able to manage well.

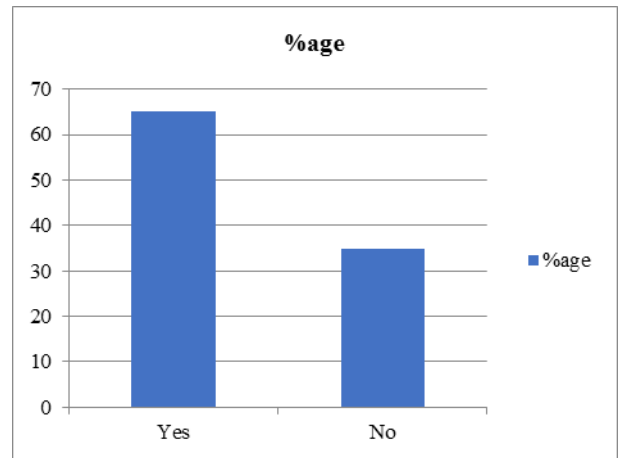


Fig 8: Overburdened with Dual Responsibilities

Fig 8 depicts the burden of dual responsibilities among the working women. It reveals that more than one half of the working women (65%) feel overburdened while as 35% are able to manage and cope up with the difficulties. This analysis is in accordance to the research carried out by Kapur (1970) [11] on working women where the majority of the working women have felt overburdened and the problems emerged due to strained situations at home and work place.

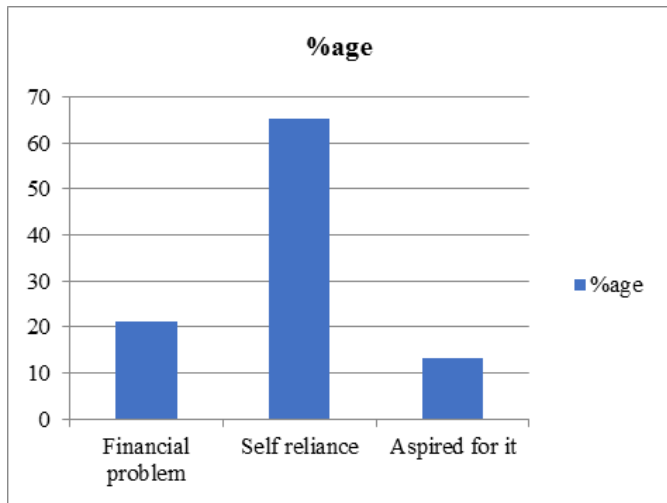


Fig 9: Reasons behind Job

Fig 9 depicts the reasons behind opting for a job. The percentage distribution of responses given by the working women stating reasons of employment shows that they essentially worked in order to become self-reliant which accounted for 65.33% and about 21.33% mentioned the financial problems to be the main cause of their employment. Aspiration for work is mentioned by a very small number of working women (13.33%).

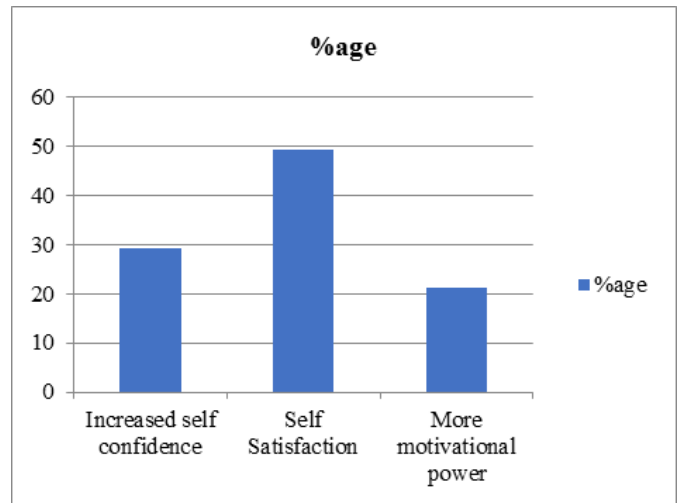


Fig 11: Rewarding factors of Conflict Management

Fig 11 depicts the rewarding achievements arising out of the decisions made in order to balance the conflicting situations of work and family life. It reveals that the maximum number of respondents achieve self-satisfaction by managing these conflicts.

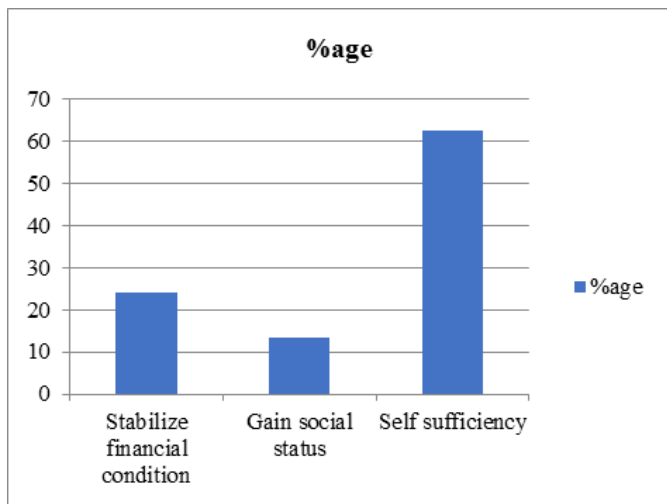


Fig 10: Motivational factors

Fig 10 reveals the motivational factors of the respondents to carry on with their jobs. It shows that more than one-half of the working women (62.66%) want to become self-sufficient and least number of respondents (13.33%) want to gain social status which is in accordance to the study carried out by Hackman and Oldham (1980) [8] who have found that the maximum number of the working women who strongly value and desire personal feelings of accomplishment and growth want to become self-sufficient.

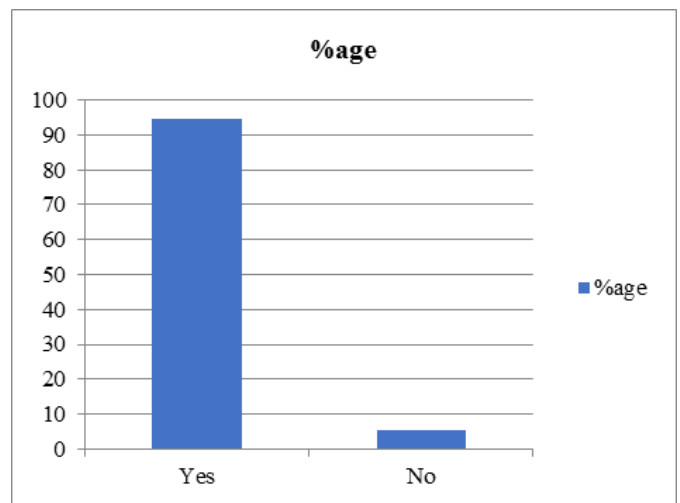


Fig 12: Economical Independence

Fig 12 reveals the economic independence and emancipation of the respondents. It shows that the highest percentage of the working women (94.66%) feel economically independent while as a negligible number of respondents (5.33%) don't feel so. This analysis is in accordance to the study carried out by Charlotte O' Kelley (1985) where the majority of the working women have felt economically independent since they have gained more power due to employment.

**Conclusion**

Working women face innumerable problems while handling the dual responsibilities at home and at work place. These

problems include excess of work load, constant child care worries, role conflict, less time for personal care, etc. But these women never give up because they are determined to contribute towards the betterment and welfare of their families. The result of the study shows that the strongest reason attributed to the decision of taking up a job by a woman is to cope up with the economic pressures and to become self-reliant/self-sufficient. They assist their families not only physically, socially and emotionally, but also economically which promotes better standards of their living. Significantly a very high level of satisfaction is achieved by them which eventually raise their confidence as well. They no longer feel dependent now. Hence, it can be concluded that opting for a job by these women is an appreciable decision on their part which shapes up their lives despite the fact that it involves considerable amount of drawbacks too which can with the passage of time get fixed with an appropriate time management and dedication towards work.

### Suggestions

Despite various obstacles, a satisfying balance between work and family life is achievable. Following are some of the suggestions for working women to cope up with the difficulties that lead to role-conflicts: -

1. Appropriate time management.
2. Set reasonable goals.
3. Get organized and set priorities.
4. Build a support network and delegate chores.
5. Stay positive and focused.
6. Establish limits and boundaries.
7. Determine your own standards.
8. Spare time for yourself.
9. Let go off guilt and stress.
10. Enjoy quality family time.

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