

TO STUDY THE PERCEPTIONS OF WORKING WOMEN OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES OF SINDH WITH REFERENCE TO THEIR ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Women comprise more than half population of Pakistan but their role in labour market and socio economic development is not praise worthy. They often face many problems and obstacles when they come out of their homes. The research aims to find out the perceptions of women of public universities of Sindh with special reference to work place and environment. A sample of 644 working women was selected randomly from public universities. The data were collected through survey method and questionnaire instruments. Statistical technique t-test was used for item analysis and testing of major hypotheses. It was found that jobs had raised the social status of women. However, the job opportunities for women were not equal to men. In the same way, working women were not satisfied with workplace and work environment. Consequently, the performance of women was affected. The workplace and work environment were not appropriate for women. There was lack of provision of the basic facilities and women felt insecure at their workplace. The male and female workers were not treated alike. The working women were not given respect equal to their male counterparts. The male bosses, rather than to cooperate, harassed the working women. The male colleagues did cooperate with working women and the male subordinates did not respect their female bosses. The working women faced problems more than their male counterparts. They preferred female bosses and colleagues. They felt more secure under female bosses than male bosses at workplace. The female bosses were more cooperative and there was no question of harassment and disrespect. The research recommendations are presented at the end of the paper.

Key words: Perceptions, Work Environment, Workplace, Social Status, Employment

Introduction:

The most important pillars of society are men and women. No society can progress properly without the equal participation of men and women in all spheres of

life. Qureshi (2001) describes that the males and females are the foundation pillars of every society. The growth and development of society is not possible if either men or women remain inactive

and play no part (p. 93). Malik (2000) adds that "without the progress of women, society could not be put on the road to prosperity" (p. 10). As regards capabilities, the women are not less than men. It has been proved by history that women have been equally participating in socio-economic life with men from the Stone Age but the women labour force participation rate has not got the same consideration as that of men. It has been observed all around the world that women have not been given opportunities equal to first class citizens. Their job and professional opportunities are not less than second class citizens. Whatever women are doing, their work and efforts often remain invisible. Majority of women works in those sectors that are neither organized nor formal. They are found doing manual and unskilled work. However, the work of these women does not add anything visible in the growth and development of country.

Pakistan is a society in transitions. Its worldview is shaped by the contradictory sociohistorical currents of Islamic rule, British colonialism, religious ortho-

doxy and Muslim enlightenment launched by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan (Qurashi, 1967). There is disequilibrium of labor force participation between men and women. The work opportunities for women are negligible. There are many restrictions for women regarding availing labour market. The ideologies of society, the norms, values, customs and beliefs of the society restrict the women in every step to acquire skills and take active part in the labor market. This can be observed looking at the labour market participation figures. The labour market figures of Pakistan reveals that women's participation in labour market is only 14.4%, while 70.3% labor market participation is attributed to male gender (Azid, Khan & Alamas, 2010)

Working women face many problems at their work place due to gender inequality and unfavourable work environment. Jahan (2010) believes that neither male counterparts co-operate with working women nor male subordinates respect them as their bosses (p. 33). Being highly educated and skilled women are always kept to work under the superiority of men. Having same

education and skills men are preferred for the jobs rather than women. In most of the leading companies women are not appointed on leading posts. The leading posts are given to males and females are appointed to work under male bosses. Jahan (2010) describes that in the eyes of the most of the people; the women are soft, weak, submissive, devoid of skills and experience (p. 38). This male dominance gives rise to many hidden and visible problems for women at their work place including sexual harassment, unequal pay, lengthy working duration, lack of family support, poor security, insufficient maternity leaves, lack of training, systematic promotion, lack of pick and drop facilities, hostile working environment, lack of complain committees and lack of provision of self esteem. Jacobs and Schain (2009) describe that there are many negative perceptions about women at their work place that gives rise to many difficulties and affect the overall performance (p. 99). It has also been observed that due to male dominance, the majority of the women often face violence and sexual harassment at their work place. It is the responsibility

of the Government or employers to take measures that assure the safety to women. The current practices reveal that safety of working women at workplace is at a risk.

Objectives of the study

1. To analyze the perceptions of working women regarding their workplace, work environment, social status, and employment opportunities.
2. To point out the problems and obstacles of working women regarding their professional career.

Research Questions

1. To what extent working women are satisfied with their social status?
2. To what extent working women are satisfied with their work environment?
3. To what extent working women are satisfied with their work place?
4. To what extent working women are satisfied with their employment opportunities?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant effect of the jobs of women on their social status.

2. There is no significant effect of the women's work place on their performance.
3. There is no significant effect of the women's work environment on their performance.
4. There is no significant difference between men and women regarding job opportunities.

Review of literature

The growth and development of every country depend upon the participation of population in the labour force. Women are not less than half of the world population. If half of the population is not allowed to participate in the growth and development process, how can a country progress. Ejaz (2011) asserts that it is only the increasing participation ratio of women in labour force that ensures the rapid growth and development of the developed countries (p. 1). *Faridi, Chaudhry and Anwar (2009) add that women's participation in labour market plays a key role in the social growth and development. The reduction of poverty is not possible without women's participation in labor market (pp. 351-352)*

It has been observed all over the world especially in developing countries that women's participation in labour force is comparatively lower than men. Most of the women are not allowed to become the part of labour force. Many girls are eager to have jobs after completing their education, yet their male members of the family do not grant them permission to do a job. The smaller number of women, working outside the homes, are neither given their due rights nor able to get fair recognition in the labour force. Hafeez and Ahmad (2002) affirm that "the women work far longer hours than men 'and' majority of South Asian women work from dawn to dusk yet their work has hardly been recognized" (p. 75). However, the labor force participation ratio of women in Pakistan is lower when compared with neighboring South Asian countries. *Sajid, Maqsood, Maqsood and Afzal (2011) point out that "although women in Pakistan are participating in labor force but their proportion is significantly low as compared to other South Asian countries" (p. 254). World Bank (1999)*

identifies that the labour force participation in Pakistan is only 27%, while in India and Bhutan it 32%. Similarly in Nepal and Bangladesh it is 40% and 36% in Sri Lanka.

In Pakistan, women's participation in past was negligible. Female were not allowed to do a job due to social, cultural and religious barriers. However, currently the situation is changing in favour of women's labour force participation. The globalization has brought many changes in Pakistan regarding the jobs of women. Many women are now seeking jobs in Pakistan. *Faridi, Chaudhry and Anwar (2009)* point out that since the last few decades, the women ratio in the labour force has got substantial increase in every nook and corner of the world and in Pakistan the ratio has also got certain attraction (p. 352). The last few decades of Pakistan reveal that labour force participation ratio of women has increased rapidly and at the same time there is a decrease in the labour force participation ratio of men. Labour force survey 1997 (as cited in Hafeez & Ahmad, 2002) witnesses that

during the decay 1980 - 1990, the women's participation in labour market was 4%. It reached to 4.9% during 1990 - 1995. It increased to 5.1% during 1995 - 1998. On the other hand men's participation in labour market has decreased from 3.2% to 2.7% during the decay 1980 - 1990. It further decreased to 2.5% during 1995 - 1998 (p. 75).

Faridi, Chaudhry and Anwar (2009) confirm that women's participation in the labour market is increasing day by day in Pakistan. During the year 2003-2004, the ratio of women's participation in labour force was 15.9% and it increased to 18.9% during the year 2005-2006 (p. 352). *Ejaz (2011)* adds that in Pakistan from 1999 to 2008, the labour force participation of women got rapid increase due to modern technologies introduced in households, modernization of service sector and declining gender gaps (p. 2). *Faridi, Malik and Masit (2009)* conducted a research and found that "there is positive trend between education and female labour force participation" (p. 127).

There are many reasons for the growing labour force participation but the most important

one is perhaps increasing literacy and awareness. The proliferation of technology and explosion of knowledge in the globalization has brought many changes in the attitude of both men and women regarding the employment of women in Pakistan. Both men and women might have realized that progress in the tough global competition is impossible until and unless both male and female do not work jointly.

Methodology

The survey research design strategy was adopted in this study. Creswell (2008) describes that "surveys have been widely been used in education for many years" (p. 388) (p. 1). Gray (2004), Fink (1995), cDeMarraiss and Lapan (2004), Bazeley (2002), Cohen and Lea (2005) and Neuman (2007) have also supported the survey design. To them, survey has got not only general acceptability but also a great popularity in different walks of life. They profess the wide usage of survey design and appreciate its high validity and reliability in education.

The population of this study was all the working women of public universities of Sindh. The method of sampling in the study was random sampling. For this study a sample of 644 working women from various universities of Sindh had been brought under study. The instrument used for the collection of data was questionnaire. The validity of the instrument had been checked in three steps i.e. self validity, expert validity and pilot validity. The reliability of the instrument was .997, checked through spilt half method. The t-test had been used for statistical analysis.

Findings

Table: 1. Analysis of findings

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Df	Mean Dif	t	sig	N
1 The jobs of women increase their status in the society.	3.92	1.183	.047	643	3.922	84.129	.000	644
2. The social status of working women is higher than house hold women.	3.48	1.311	.052	643	3.480	67.371	.000	644
3. The working women are respected more than house hold women in the family.	3.95	1.127	.044	643	3.950	88.966	.000	644
4. The family supports the working women in their jobs.	3.78	1.346	.053	643	3.784	71.344	.000	644
5. The working women are respected more than house hold women in the society.	3.63	1.004	.040	643	3.630	91.771	.000	644
6. The society supports the working women in their jobs.	2.71	1.406	.055	643	2.710	48.914	.000	644
7. The better work place enhances the performance of working women.	3.65	1.300	.051	643	3.649	71.232	.000	644
8. The working women are satisfied with their workplace.	2.55	1.415	.056	643	2.553	45.787	.000	644
9. The female bosses are more cooperative to women than male bosses at work place.	3.73	1.309	.052	643	3.731	72.314	.000	644
10. The women feel more secure under female bosses than male bosses at work place.	3.73	1.266	.050	643	3.725	74.679	.000	644
11. The working women are given respect equal to their male counterparts at their workplace.	2.72	1.409	.056	643	2.716	48.905	.000	644
12. The working women are paid equal to their male counterparts for the same work.	3.74	1.316	.052	643	3.741	72.130	.000	644
13. All the basic facilities are provided to women at their workplace.	2.43	1.274	.050	643	2.433	48.457	.000	644
14. The working women feel secure at their work place.	2.43	1.435	.057	643	2.427	42.929	.000	644
15. The working women are sexually harassed at their work place.	2.95	1.383	.055	643	2.953	54.177	.000	644

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Df	Mean Dif	t	sig	N
16. The better work environment promotes the performance of working women.	3.89	1.187	.047	643	3.887	83.059	.000	644
17. The working women are satisfied with their working environment.	2.68	1.373	.054	643	2.683	49.610	.000	644
18. The male and female workers are treated alike.	2.39	1.435	.057	643	2.390	42.276	.000	644
19. The working women feel secure while working with male colleagues and bosses.	2.42	1.246	.049	643	2.421	49.287	.000	644
20. The male bosses cooperate with working women.	2.66	1.453	.057	643	2.665	46.537	.000	644
21. The male colleagues cooperate with working women.	2.66	1.486	.059	643	2.655	45.352	.000	644
22. The male subordinates respect their female bosses.	2.63	1.439	.057	643	2.627	46.350	.000	644
23. The working women face more problems than their male counterparts.	3.77	1.447	.057	643	3.770	66.129	.000	644
24. The job opportunities for women are equal to men.	2.93	1.458	.057	643	2.929	50.976	.000	644
25. The men are more skilled than women.	2.70	1.375	.054	643	2.700	49.848	.000	644
26. The employers prefer to select men for the job rather women.	3.69	1.281	.050	643	3.686	73.045	.000	644
27. The employers are satisfied with the performance of women.	3.28	1.512	.060	643	3.280	55.048	.000	644

Analysis

The majority of working women believed that:

1. The jobs of women increase their status in the society.
2. The social status of working women is higher than house hold women.
3. The working women are respected more than house hold women in the family.
4. The family supports the working women in their jobs.
5. The working women are respected more than house hold women in the society.

6. The society does not support the working women in their jobs.
7. The better work place enhances the performance of working women.
8. The working women are not satisfied with their work-place.
9. The female bosses are more cooperative to women than male bosses at work place.
10. The women feel more secure under female bosses than male bosses at work place.
11. The working women are not given respect equal to their male counterparts at their workplace.
12. The working women are paid equal to their male counterparts for the same work.
13. All the basic facilities are not provided to women at their workplace.
14. The working women do not feel secure at their work place.
15. The working women are not sexually harassed at their work place.
16. The better work environment promotes the performance of working women.
17. The working women are not satisfied with their working environment.
18. The male and female workers are not treated alike.
19. The working women do not feel secure while working with male colleagues and bosses.
20. The male bosses do not cooperate with working women.
21. The male colleagues do not cooperate with working women.
22. The male subordinates do not respect their female bosses.
23. The working women face more problems than their male counterparts.
24. The job opportunities for women are not equal to men.
25. The men are not more skilled than women.
26. The employers prefer to select men for the job rather women.
27. The employers are satisfied with the performance of women.

Testing of Hypotheses

Table: 2. Hypotheses testing

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	df	Mean Difference	t	Sig
Ho1	There is no significant effect of the jobs of women on their social status	3.92	1.183	.047	643	3.922	84.13	.00
Ho2	There is no significant effect of the women's work place on their performance	3.65	1.300	.051	643	3.649	71.23	.00
Ho3	There is no significant effect of the women's work environment on their performance.	3.89	1.187	.047	643	3.887	83.06	.00
Ho4	There is no significant difference between men and women regarding job opportunities.	2.93	1.458	.057	643	2.929	50.98	.00

Analysis:

The table of t-test reveals that result of all null hypotheses is significant at alpha 0.05 and df 643. All the four null hypotheses are rejected and alternative hypotheses are accepted. It is therefore concluded that women's jobs raises their social status, work place and work environment enhance their performance and men have got more job opportunities than women.

Discussion

The majority of women believed that job is essential for every girl. It raises the social status of girls. The social status of working women is higher than house hold women. The working women are respected more than house hold women in the family and society. Because of this every girl wants to have a job but due to certain social, ideological, cultural and

religious barriers, most of the girls find it very difficult get a job. They further perceived that family supports the women in their jobs. However, the society does not support the working women in their jobs. The norms, values and customs of local society discourage the women to go out of the home and do job. There are many reasons but the most important is lack of safety and security of women. There is always a risk of harassment and violence to most of the women doing a job.

However, better workplace plays a vital role to attract the women to do a job. The performance of working women mostly depends upon the condition of work place. All the same, the working women are not satisfied with their workplace. To most of the working women, they are not safe and secure over there. They feel insecure at their work place. While working under male bosses and with male colleagues, the working women often have to face harassment in different shapes. The working women are not given respect equal to their male counterparts at their

workplace. In addition, the basic facilities are not provided to women at over there. The working women further pointed out that the female bosses are more cooperative to women than male bosses at work place. The women feel more secure under female bosses. However, they are paid equal to their male counterparts for the same work.

Nevertheless, the working women perceived that work environment plays a vital role for the growth and development of an organization. Safe and secure environment, ensuring mutual respect and co-operation between male and female workers is essential for better performance of workers especially female workers. However, the working women are not satisfied with their working environment. They pointed out that the male and female workers are not treated alike over there. The working women do not feel secure while working with male colleagues and bosses. There is the lack of co-operation on the part of male bosses and male colleagues. The male subordinates also do not

respect their female bosses. As a result, the working women used to face problems more than their male counterparts.

Similarly, the working women believed that job opportunities for women are not equal to men. In a male dominant society, women are not free to apply for all the jobs. They are restricted in every walk of life. The most of the jobs are for male members of the family. There are only few areas where women are allowed to apply for the job. The employers prefer to select men for the job rather women. Because of this the share of women in the labour force is comparatively lower. The women further pointed out that the men are not more skilled than women. The performance of women is not less than men while doing same job. The employers are often satisfied with the performance of women.

Conclusion

The working women believed that jobs of women increase their status in the society. The social status of working women was higher than house hold

women in the family and society. Working women were given comparatively more respect. However working women were not satisfied with their work place and working environment. To them, the basic facilities were not provided to working women at work place and there were several security issues. Male bosses and subordinates showed less cooperation with women. They were sexually harassed. Consequently, they were unable perform according to their potential. Furthermore, working women faced problems more than their male counterparts. Their job satisfaction level was comparatively lower. To them, their salary, professional development and other basic facilities were insufficient to lead a tension free life. More over there was inequality between male and female regarding job opportunities. Jobs opportunities were more for men than women. All the girls wanted to have a job but due to social obstacles like family honour, cultural imbalance, religious and political hindrances, most of the girls were not allowed to do a job.

Suggestions

1. Education increases creativity and thinking ability, while job raises the social status of women. In order to make the maximum utilization of manpower, every girl should be given a chance to get education as much as she wants and allowed to do a job as long as she can work.
2. The educational and job opportunities between boys and girls should be made equal. There should be open competition between boys and girls. Any person creating an obstacle in the way of girls' education and job should be punished strictly.
3. The society does not support the working women in their jobs. The norms, values and customs of society should be modified to support the women to participate in economic growth and development of the country by doing a job.
4. Work place is not suitable for women as women. The working women are not satisfied with their workplace. They do not feel secure at their work place. The better work place enhances the performance of working women. So employer should address this issue and modify the work place to make it suitable for women to work there effectively.
5. The female bosses are more cooperative to women than male bosses at work place. The women feel more secure under female bosses than male bosses at work place. So women should be the bosses of women and men should be bosses of men.
6. The working women are not given respect equal to their male counterparts at their workplace. Employer should address the issues and ensure the equality of respect between men and women.
7. All the basic facilities are not provided to women at their workplace. The employers should provide all the basic facilities to make the maximum utilization of women's skills and capability.
8. The better work environment promotes the performance of working women. The working women are not satisfied with their working environment where male

- and female workers are not treated alike. The work environment should be modified according to aspirations of working women where men and women should equally be treated.
9. The working women do not feel secure while working with male colleagues and bosses. Absolute security should be provided to women while working with male colleagues and bosses.
 10. The male bosses and colleagues do not respect and cooperate with working women. Employers should ensure the mutual respect and cooperation between men and women working at the same place.
 11. The women's job satisfaction level increases their performance. The women are not satisfied with their jobs – salary / wages, job security, professional development process, pick and drop facilities, medication facilities, accommodation facilities and recreational facilities. The employers should provide all the facilities necessary for the professional development of working women.
 12. The job is essential for every woman. Every girl likes to have a job but the job opportunities for women are not equal to men. Government should take the notice and ensure the equality of job opportunities between men and women in all walks of life.
 13. The women perceive that family honour, cultural practices, early marriages, religious practices and political practices create obstacle in the way of the job of women. The factors creating obstacles in the way of women's jobs should be addressed seriously.
 14. The performance and skills of men and women are equal. So men and women should be treated equally in every field.
 15. The employers prefer to select men for the job rather women. This trend should be changed and employer should provide equal chance to men and women.

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