

**“Concerns of working Muslim women and Impact of various factors on employment of working Muslim women in India”**

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**Abstract:-**

In the era of globalization and sustainability every single individual is striving hard to become economically independent. A combination of social, economic, demographic and cultural factors are bringing about a global revolution and there is incremental increase in the number of females joining workforce. Performance of working Muslim women is directly proportional to the level of job satisfaction. There can be two different relations. High performance leads to job satisfaction or job satisfaction leads to high performance. A woman in India is struggling to achieve name, fame, and money along with trying to balance her relationships at home and at work. Women are working, not just as professionals in companies, but as entrepreneurs and sole-proprietors running their own businesses, and as freelancers.They have marked their presence in almost all fields.

But at the same time they have guilt of not being able to give time, attention, and care to their kids, husband and old age people at home. Appearance is extremely important for working Muslim women.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the factors affecting performance of working Muslim women in India and to give a theoretical framework on performance of working Muslim women.

**Key words:** - Working Muslim Women. Workforce, Participation, Performance.

**Introduction**

In a Muslim society, the people are to follow the commands of Allah the almighty and live a moral life. The word Islam is an Arabic word meaning peace, submission and obedience. In the religious context the word Islam means total submission to the Will of Allah and obedience to Islamic Law. It is Islamic obligation on men for providing necessary means to women who are financially dependent on them. Before marriage it is responsibility of father, brother and after marriage it is husband's duty to look after the economical needs of women in the family. Even if the wife is well-off it is binding on husband to provide her with food, clothing, shelter and medical aides.

But with the increase in the prices of commodities, it has become difficult for families to survive on single income. These days single income would not suffice as the amount spent is higher than the amount earned and finally families have to depend on credit cards to bear the expenses and later this becomes all the more stressful when they could not pay back the money for credit cards or money taken on loan from different financial institutions.

In this case creating a win-win situation is possible if she finds work that doesn't go against her religious beliefs or in any way disobey the commandments of God

.She also has to see that she neither shies away from family responsibilities nor should displease her husband.

**Women’s workforce participation rate 2009-2013**

*Economically active proportion of the population older than 15 years of age*

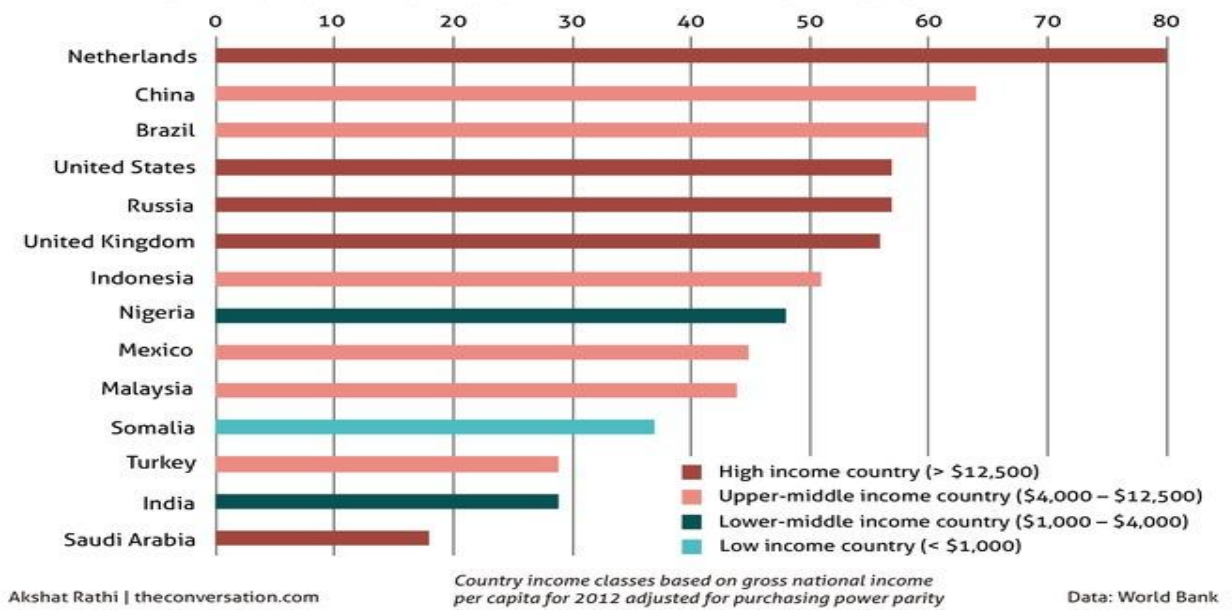


Fig.1.1

Fig.1.1 shows selected countries on the Y-axis which includes India and the economically active proportion of the population older than 15yrs of age across X-axis. India comes under the bracket of Low-middle income country.

**Workers’ sex ratio in some Indian states**

*Number of female workers per 100 male workers*

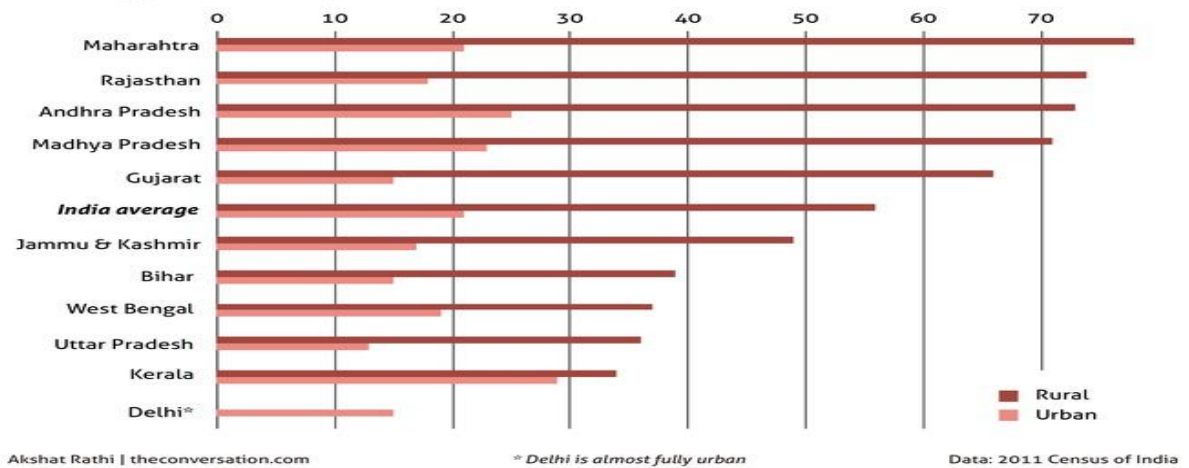


Fig.1.2

Fig.1.2 shows selected Indian states on the Y-axis and number of female workers per 100 male workers across the urban and rural areas. On an average there are less than 20 female workers per 100 males in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Jammu &

Kashmir, Bihar, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. India average is slightly more than 20. Thus we can say that the participation of women is 20%.

In India Female participation rates fell from 34.1% in 1999–2000 to 27.2% in 2011–2012.

Eventually participation of women in India is not more than 30 % out of which most of them are employed in agricultural sector and rural areas. Whereas women from urban areas is half of the women employed in the rural areas.

### **Employment of Muslim women**

Human Development Report 2011 found Worker Population Ratio is comparable among Hindus, Christians, and Sikhs, but was much lower in the case of Muslims. For example rural WFPR for Muslim women was only 25 per cent, compared to 70 per cent for Hindu women.

Muslims represented only 4.9 per cent of all employees (in central and state governments). Their representation in central PSU, at 3.3 per cent was only slightly bettered for those in state PSUs, at 10.8 %. (Government of India 2006: 165). There was also lesser participation of Muslim women in economic activities, as the reason for this poor WPR among Muslims (rural WFPR for Muslim women was only 25 per cent, compared to 70 per cent for Hindu women) explained on account of high dependency rate among Muslims due to a higher share of younger population among Muslim women. (Ibid)

### **Key motives for women joining workforce**

Muslim women intent to join workforce are due to several motives a few of them are as discussed below.

### **Use of education**

Though Muslim women are deprived of education and show a very low literacy rate. Most of them are engaged in unorganized sector with low wages. The Muslim female who have managed to attain higher education are considering themselves as prospective candidates for key positions in government and other private organizations. They want to make good use of their education. Instead of staying at home they join work force.

### **For self-survival and supporting family with finances**

In order to improve and maintain a standard of living in the society women opt for jobs that help them for self-survival and to support family with additional income as it is becoming difficult for families to survive on single income. Many of them are attracted to have multiple incomes in the family.

### **Status in the society**

With the change in the mindset of people in the society it is becoming eminent that working women have a better status than the non-working women as they hold some position in the society due to their designation and financial earnings. This attracts women to join the workforce.

### **Family botherations**

Being away from family is sometimes not only important but also very essential. Staying at home results in boredom and then slowly they start getting into things which are not really very important for them like watching serials /daily soaps to

avoid boredom and unnecessary shopping outings ;also getting into fight with people at home due to frustration of monotonous life. Working breaks the monotony of life and gives it a different meaning rather than getting bored with family botherations and other related issues.

### **Invest time**

Working results in investing time in rather than just whiling away the time on not so important issues or gossiping. You can spend years together doing nothing but if you utilize your time in a proper way, it will lead to betterment of the organization that one joins and also self.

### **Independence**

Freedom is liked by all. Working makes you financially strong and gives you the power to take finance related decisions like buying or selling of properties, purchasing household amenities, spending on education of children, personal expenses etc.Now a days they are giving more importance to becoming economically independent.

### **Ambition**

Women who are attracted to career are very ambitious and due to which they feel an urge to join workforce.

### **Secured Future**

Working hard in younger years help you earn sufficient money so that you spend it wisely during your old age. Everybody wants a secured future for nobody know s what future holds for you.

T here can be some sudden discrepancy like death of the earner at home, divorce, facing difficulties for being a single mother or remaining spinster for the throughout life due to family burdens. Working can give you a better quality of life during old age.

### **Family/In-laws wants me to work**

Due to increasing economic difficulties faced by the Muslim community members some of the families want women to add to their household income by going out for work.

### **Religion and Working Muslim Women**

A leading question for every woman is that “Can a women work?”This question is one of the most difficult questions for a woman. In Islam men and women are treated equally. If a husband’s income is not sufficient to fulfill the demands of the family, women in the house can work but with permission of husband and should also follow the religious obligations or she would be considered as a sinner. She has challenge of working in the non-Muslim environment, mingling with men at work; shaking hands with the opposite gender, discussing private life should be avoided under all circumstances. She must be able to maintain her Muslim Identity.

Allah, Almighty, Says (what means):“And abide in your houses and do not display yourselves as [was] the display of the former times of ignorance...” [Quran 33: 33]

Woman is prohibited to work unless she is compelled to due to difficult situations. Woman has to think of various guidelines that should be followed if a woman has

to work to meet the financial needs of the family or to fulfill the needs of the society (doctors, midwives, and teachers).

### **Performance of working Muslim women**

#### **Dress code**

Hijab comes from Arabic for veil .It covers the head and neck but keeps the face clear. The Naqaab is a veil for the face that just leaves area around the eyes clear. Burkha covers the entire face and body and just leaves a mesh screen to see. The Al-amira is a two-piece veil which consists of a cap and a tube-like scarf. The shayla is a long rectangular scarf wrapped around head and tucked or pinned in place at the shoulders. Khimar is a long cape-like veil that hangs down to just above the waist. It covers hair, neck and shoulders but leaves the face clear. The Chador is worn by many Iranian women.

Muslim women all over the globe is identified through wearing of hijab/headcover /nakab/burkha. She covers herself from head to toe and expects others to respect her intelligence, faith and personality. Rather than considering her strict follower of Islam she was subject to stereotyping as she was considered to be submissive, soft spoken, ignorant or less educated and also with poor command on English language.

In industries like hospitality, aviation and a few other sectors it is made compulsory for them to wear uniforms that reflect western culture, which is not acceptable to a Muslim woman who has strong belief and faith in Islam religion.

They have fewer chances of getting opportunities to present during business meetings and other related activities. Thus they are unable to prove their talent and worth. They are refrained from getting an opportunity and are always back-staged.

#### **Not getting better opportunities**

Muslim women wearing hijab seeks the direction of Allah the almighty and removing hijab for the sake of getting a job is an absolute no for them. In certain cases though it is not fair to ask about exclusion of hijab after selection they do keep it as a point ahead of the candidates and it is upto the candidate to decide on the matter.

#### **Job mismatch**

Mismatch in the individuals perception about the job and the actual job differ from each other thus it leads to low performance and finally exit from the workforce.

#### **Crèches/child care facilities not available or affordable**

Crèches is one of the most important and required facility for a working women. It might be an obligation for an employer to provide with crèche facility according to law in India under certain conditions but if it is voluntarily provided it is cherry on the top. But reality is employers sometimes refrain from recruiting woman so that they don't have to provide them any facilities such as crèche facility, maternity leave, maternity benefit etc.

In case crèche facility is not provided by the employer, working woman has to look for day care facilities which are not always affordable to all and pinch their pockets. Thus they prefer to stay at home than continuing their job after child birth.

### **Role conflict/Dual pressure of house and office**

It becomes difficult for working women to manage both household chores and job duties. Thus it results in more pressure on the working women and ultimately affects the performance of working women at both the places i.e. home front and work front.

### **Earning more than husband**

Sometimes women earn more than men and it is not taken optimistically by men. Thus there is increase in the number of misunderstandings and confrontations at home and eventually results in mental and emotional disturbances which leads to poor concentration at work.

### **Reticence holding women back at work**

A study, carried out by LinkedIn's "Career Control" campaign, has shown that 56 % of women believe they are overlooked for a promotion because of modesty and 43 % of women admit to feeling uncomfortable when networking with people they don't know, compared to 33 % of men respectively.

Also 43 % women are shy and feel uncomfortable while networking with people whom they don't know.

### **Difficulty balancing work and life**

Irrespective of the religion, culture, geographical region and ethnicity women find it difficult to balance their household responsibility and job tasks. This issue becomes more prominent when they don't work because they want to but just because they have to for financial or other constraints or becomes more severe when they don't enjoy the job which they are engaged in.

Muslim women has to see that her work is not affecting Islamic obligations i.e. praying 5 times a day, fasting during Ramadan, reciting Quran , observing hijab, appropriate body language, and staying away from frank verbal communication etc.

### **Conclusions**

Workforce participation can be improved if working women gets supportive and congenial environment. They should also not get squeezed between religious obligations and work factors. Environment should be more liberal at work place to follow religious obligations. Women are job ghettoized as housewives. If not allowed to go out for work they should at least be provided with some vocational training so that in situations of financial crunch they can support their family.

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