

WORK STATUS AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG FEMALE MIGRANTS IN INDIA: A STUDY OF KERALA WOMEN WORKING IN MUMBAI

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Abstract

In India, little attention was given to the research of female migration and its impact on women. Compared to any other states in India, Kerala is economically far behind but ahead in terms of education. Due to unemployment problem a large section of the educated youth including females has to migrate to other countries and states. Mumbai is a city where employment opportunities are available and also it is one of the safest places for a single woman to stay. This has attracted Kerala women to migrate to Mumbai. The present study, based on primary data collected from migrant women from Kerala staying in the working women's hostels in Mumbai, focuses upon the work status of female migrants. The factors such as occupation, income, number of working hours, workload, exploitation or discrimination from office colleagues are found to have an influence on the job satisfaction of these migrant women.

.Introduction

Internal migration is an important factor, which affects the economic development of developing countries like India. In India, although literature on internal migration in general is abundant, little attention was given in the sociological research to the causes and nature of female migration in India and the impact of migration on women (Mazumdar, 1990; Singhal, 1995). Research works on female migrants in other countries have made it clear that there is special need for field research and new methods of investigation. Much of what we know today of female migration in India is derived from census statistics. Census based studies traditionally view women migrating as wives and daughters of the breadwinners. This presents a biased picture of female migration in India as being dominated by low status of women moving to the major metropolises where they become one of the primary examples of the social and economic marginality section of society. Even within metropolises, the reference framework has many times been a segment of the city population usually slum dwellers.

In the post independent India, women who have been entering salaried remunerative occupations and professions, are increasing substantially. Women are working in almost all type of jobs such as technical, professional, and non-professional in both private and public sectors, residing in rural and urban areas with or without their kith and kin. So, the traditional role of housewife has gradually changed into working women and house wife (Reddy, 1986; Anand, 2003). Women constitute an integral part of the socio-economic life and they actively participate in socio-economic development of the nation. Sometimes, the need for supplementing the family income has been considered as the chief motivating factor encouraging women for aspiring jobs (Mittal, 1994).

Women often migrate in response to needs generated by changes in lifecycle phases and therefore the motivations behind migration are not generally the same on every phase. The spread of education, training and technology, increased cost of living, changed norms of measuring one's status in terms of income and the changes in men's attitude induce more and more women to come out and accept jobs outside their homes (Singhal, 1995; Philip, 2002). The changing social and economic conditions have

compelled the women to actively participate in work and earn thereby. Their increased participation in the economically productive work, particularly outside the four walls of the house in many cases had made them self-dependent (Reddy, 1986; Philip, 2002).

Women constituted a larger proportion among internal migrants in Kerala. Among the out migrants from Kerala to the other states in India, one in four was a woman. During 1970s the number of persons moving from Kerala to Madras, Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and other metropolitan cities exceeded the number who came to Kerala from other states (Zachariah *et al*, 2000). In Kerala, with the traditional agriculture offering very little scope for upward socio- economic mobility and rice cultivation losing out as an investment option, parents turned to education as the best option for ensuring their children's future well being. The gap between the supply of educated persons and the opportunities available for their placement in the state worsened (Zachariah, *et al*, 2002). The number of girl students in engineering colleges, medical colleges, polytechnics etc. increased substantially in Kerala during the period 1980-81 to 1989-90. The growth of women seeking to enter the labour market is evidenced by the unemployment figures. If the number of persons registered in employment exchanges is taken as an indication, then it can be estimated that the number of jobseekers increased from 6.22 lakh in 1981 to 16.25 lakh in 1991 (Gulati, *et.al* 1997). In spite of several employment generation programmes being implemented in this state, the number of unemployed persons is going up every year. Surveys on unemployed at the state and national levels suggest that the incidence of unemployment in Kerala is very high (Prakash, 2002). The 50th round survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation ranks Kerala as a state having the second highest rate of urban unemployment in India. Also, there are a growing number of job seekers with medical and engineering degree on the live register of employment exchanges in the state (Mathew, 1995; Prakash, 2002). It became necessary and attractive for the educated youth of Kerala seek employment in the fast developing metropolitan centres in the other states.

The migrant women's occupational status is low compared to natives. Also, urban life brings with it a variety of unfavourable conditions such as problems of housing, urban

congestion, and the high cost of living (Clausen, 2002). In most of the cases the girls occupy the middle or lower middle ranks of the office hierarchy, where the pressure to prove their worth is constantly present causing a great deal of tension and mental fatigue (Chauhan, 1986). Despite the poorly paid jobs, they may be able to work more hours and earn more money per hour than before migration. Their income levels may not be as high as had been expected; many of these women can improve their level of living (Findley and Williams, 1991).

Migrant women have very little protection against eve teasing and for this reason many of them are forced to live a life of seclusion in their new places of residence. Some times working women have to face exploitation including sexual exploitation from their boss or other colleagues in the office. If she permits them to exploit, it generally creates tensions and conflicts within herself in the form of guilt complex, and apart from this, her home life and interaction with colleagues get affected who look down upon her. If on the other hand if she resists, and if the person happens to be boss, she might loose job or her promotional avenues are liable to become dim and working life painful (Reddy, 1986). The process of preserving image, avoiding exploitation and at the same time keeping the channels of upward mobility open are found very tedious and nerve-racking by most of the girls (Chauhan, 1986).

Occupation is an important factor, which is mostly responsible for the migration of the females as well as their stay in the hostel. An understanding of the role that these women are required to play as employees and the environment where they work is required to get an idea about their life and problems. The problems and difficulties of working women fall into three categories: environmental, social, and psychological (Reddy, 1986). These problems may be more for migrant women since they are staying away from the family. In this context, migrants face several problems of adjustment in their place of destination. These problems include: accommodation, language, adjustment problems in working place, job dissatisfaction, and the health problems.

In this paper, an attempt has been made to understand the work status and job satisfaction of migrant women from Kerala who stay in the working women's hostels.

Methodology

The present study is based on a sample of 125 working women in Mumbai from Kerala who stay in the hostels. The list of working women's hostels in Mumbai was collected from Business Information Centre in Mumbai, which came to 32 in number. Out of these, three hostels were student's hostels and there were no migrant women from Kerala in five hostels. For seven other hostels the authorities did not allow to collect data on the working women. Therefore, data was collected from the remaining seventeen hostels. Out of the seventeen working women's hostels all the women from Kerala who are staying in the hostel for more than six months were selected for the study.

An index of 'living conditions' was computed to understand the facilities in the hostels. The selected variables for computing living condition are food quantity, food quality, availability of water, bathroom facility, cleanliness, use of electricity, safety, guest facility, timing for food and phone calls, visitors timings, watching television and other recreational facilities in the hostel. For each of these variables responses were sought on a five-point scale such as very good, good, average, poor and very poor. The scores given for each response was 4,3,2,1 respectively. A higher score value indicates better living conditions. The values have been categorized into five categories, very good, good, average, poor and very poor.

Another index of 'quality of life' was computed using some selected variables, which includes both the working conditions and hobbies. The variables selected for hostel life are any hobbies, celebrating festivals, participation in festivals, participation in any association, entertainment facilities in the hostel and going out with friends or hostellers for movies and drama. The variables related to working conditions are job satisfaction, overtime work, experienced difficulties in going to the office because of stay in the hostel, traveling problem, exploitation from boss, sexual exploitation from boss/colleagues, discrimination among colleagues and organizing any get together parties

in the office. A high index value shows a better quality of life and this has been categorized into five point scale such as very good, good, average, poor and very poor. Both univariate and bivariate analyses were used for the present study.

Findings

Working Conditions of the Female Migrants in Mumbai

The factors such as the type of work, type of organization, number of hours of work, overtime work and other factors related to working conditions can influence job satisfaction of the migrant women. In the present study, more than half of the respondents are doing permanent job, 34 percent are doing temporary job and 8 percent of them are working on contract basis. Sixty seven percent of the women are working in private (Indian) sector and 14 percent are working in government sector. Others are working in Multinational Companies, non-governmental organisations and semi governmental institutions.

The mean number of hours of work per day for each respondent was found to be 8 hours 25 minutes. Almost 34 percent of the women have reported that they have to work more than 8 hours per day. Eighty five percent of the respondents have to work daytime only. Others have reported that they have to work as shifts and most of the women in this category were nurses. More than sixty percent of women have reported that they have to do overtime work and among women who have reported about overtime work one fourth of them have to do it for more than three hours.

About one fourth of the respondents have reported that there are more than 1000 employees in their office. Thirty six percent of the respondents have reported that the majority of the office staff is male and for about same percentage of the respondents there are almost equal numbers of male and female colleagues in their offices (Table.1).It can be seen from the above discussion that most of these migrant women are working in private sectors even though more than half of them are doing permanent jobs. More than a quarter of these migrant women have to work for more than eight hours and a fair percentage of them have to work overtime.

Commutation to the Workplace

It is interesting to see some of the factors related to commutation to the office as it can affect the job satisfaction of the women. In the present study, thirty eight percent of the respondents reported that their major mode of the conveyance for office is train and 30 percent depends on bus services. Some of them depend on bus and train or both bus and auto; some of them go to office by walk since their hostel is very near to workplace. About 57 percent of the women have to spent Rs.200 to Rs.500 and more than 29 percent have to spend more than Rs.500 per month as travel expenses. For 19 people there was no travel expense for going to office since 6 of them go by office vehicle and 13 of them go to their workplace by walk. Almost 26 percent of the respondents have reported that they face some kind of problems during travelling. Among those who have reported about problems during travelling, more than three fourth have reported the problem as rush in the bus and train. Other problems reported are traffic jams, travelling through dirty area, pollution, changing buses, travelling in the odd timings, no bus route in the hostels etc. (Table 2).

More than half of the respondents have to travel alone to the office and about a same proportion has to travel more than 30 minutes from hostel to office. The preferred mode of transport for going to office is train or bus. More than one fourth of these working women are facing some type of problems during travelling to office.

Relationship with Office Staff

It is important to look into relationship of these women with the head of the office as well as their immediate boss since these factors can influence their job satisfaction. More than three fourth of the respondents have reported that they have good relationship with the head of the institute/office and for about 20 percent of the respondents their relationship with the head of the institute was very good. Only one respondent has reported that she has poor relationship with the head of the institute. In the case of relationship with immediate boss, more than one fourth of the respondents have very good relationship with their immediate boss, about 66 percent of them have good relationship, and no one has reported that they have poor relationship with their

immediate boss (Table.3). So, it can be understood that majority of these women have good relationship with their head of the institute and the immediate boss in the office.

With regard to the kind of relationship with male colleagues in the office, about half of the respondents have reported that they take tea regularly with their male colleagues, more than half of them have reported that they go out to restaurant with their male colleagues occasionally. But, about 80 percent of the respondents have reported that they never go out for movies with their male colleagues and about same percent have reported that they never visit their male colleagues' homes. About 36 percent have reported that they go out occasionally with them for shopping.

In the case of the kind of relationship with female colleagues in the office, more than 60 percent have reported that they take tea regularly with their female colleagues. About a quarter have reported that they go out to restaurants occasionally with their female colleagues and more than half of them go out for movies with them and visit their home occasionally. Almost three fourth of them go out for shopping with their female colleagues occasionally. It is evident that the women share different relationship with their male and female colleagues.

About 80 percent of the respondents have reported that their office colleagues organize get together parties. A fair percent of them reported that there are get together parties in their office at least once in 6 months or yearly one. Among those who have reported that they themselves conduct such parties in their office, about 80 percent participate in such activities. Those who reported that they do not participate in such activities, the reasons reported are it is inconvenient due to odd timings, it is too boring, it is costly and for some the main reason was their close friends also avoid it. A fair percent of the women have reported that they have good relationship with their head of the institute and the immediate boss.

Job Satisfaction

There are a number of factors, which can affect the job satisfaction. These factors include type of work, the number of working hours, income, office atmosphere and relationship with head or boss of the institute as well as other office colleagues.

About 78 percent of the women reported that the present job is their first job after coming to Mumbai and about the same percent have reported that they are happy with the current job. Among those women who have reported that they are not happy with their current jobs, about 60 percent have reported the reasons as less salary and for more than 60 percent the reason was workload. Other reasons reported include workplace far from the hostel (14.3 percent), job is not permanent (3.6 percent), less facility (3.6 percent) and no job satisfaction (3.6 percent) etc.

An educated girl looking for a job in organised sector seldom gets her first job at the right place. So, she gets into service and takes up a job that comes her way first (Samuel, 1995). More than 44 percent of the respondents are trying to change the present job. Out of the 55 respondents who reported that they are trying to change the job, about 8 respondents have reported that they have already changed the job more than three times. Among those who reported that they have already changed their job at least once the reasons reported are less salary, for better prospects, for better opportunities and better income, due to politics in the office, job dissatisfaction, poor working conditions, contract got over and company closed.

Thirty three percent of the women feel difficulty in the office because of the stay in the hostel. Out of those women who have reported that they have some difficulties, about 40 percent have reported the problem as difficulty in food timings, for about 30 percent the problem was difficulty in travelling, for 10 percent the problem was related to work timings. Other problems include problems related to overtime work, stay back in the office till late night and lack of facilities in the office.

The working women have to suffer a number of psychological problems created by the male co-workers and the male boss. Some times, the male boss with the advantage of his position and official status try to exploit her sexuality (Reddy, 1986). Eighteen percent of the respondents have reported that they face some kind of exploitation from their boss such as increasing working hours, low salary etc. Two of the respondents have reported that they had experienced sexual exploitation from their boss / colleagues. About 22 percent of the women reported that there is discrimination among their colleagues

because they are from the other state (Table.4). Almost 70 percent of the women reported that they feel tiredness because of the workload, 42 percent feel tiredness because of travelling and 31 percent because of lack of proper sleeping.

The job satisfaction of these migrant workingwomen can vary according to various factors related to work place. These factors include occupation, income, number of working hours, overtime work, feeling tiredness because of workload, problems during travelling to office, exploitation from boss/colleagues, discrimination from colleagues, relationship with other colleagues in the office etc.

There was not much variation in job satisfaction among different occupational groups. Among professional and related workers, about 85 percent of them are satisfied with their current job. But among non-professionals, more than a quarter of the women are not satisfied with their current job. Among different income groups, women those who are getting more than Rs.10, 000, more than 85 percent of them are satisfied with their current job. But among women, those who are getting an income of less than Rs.5000, about 28 percent are not satisfied with their current job.

In the case of working hours, women those who have to work more than 8 hours and those who have overtime work, more than 30 percent of them are not satisfied with their present job. Women those who have reported that they feel tiredness because of workload about 30 percent of them are not satisfied with their current job. Women who face some problems during travelling, almost 40 percent of them are not satisfied with their present job. Women those who have reported that they are facing some exploitation from their boss and discrimination among the colleagues, more than half of them are not satisfied with their current job. Relationship with immediate boss in the office also shown a significant variation in the case of job satisfaction. Among those women who have very good relationship with their immediate boss in the office, 88 percent of them are satisfied with their current job whereas women those who have only average relationship with their immediate boss, more than 60 percent are not satisfied with their current job. It can be understand from the above discussion that the job satisfaction of these working women is highly related to the working conditions (Table.5).

Summary and Discussion

Majority of the working women are doing permanent jobs and most of them are in private sector. Most of the women reported that the usual working time is eight hours per day but a fair proportion of these women have to work for more than eight hours and overtime work also. About one fourth of the women face some type of problems during commuting from hostel to workplace. A fair percent of these women are facing some type of exploitation as well as discrimination from their office boss or colleagues. But, more than three fourth of the women have reported that they are happy with their current job and about half of the women are trying to change their present job. The factors such as occupation, income, number of working hours, overtime work, problems during commutation to office, work load, exploitation or discrimination from office colleagues are found to have an influence on the job satisfaction of these migrant women.

The present study revealed that about one fourth of the migrant women from Kerala is not satisfied with their present job. But still, due to severe unemployment in Kerala they have to migrate to other places for searching jobs. Therefore, appropriate policies for education as well as employment should be implemented by the State Government of Kerala to reduce the unemployment problem among educated youth.

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Table 1 Percentage distribution of female migrants by working conditions

Working conditions	Number	Percentage/ Mean
Type of work		
Permanent	72	57.6
Temporary	43	34.4
Contract	10	8.0
Type of organisation		
Govt	17	13.6
Private (Indian)	84	67.2
Others	24	19.2
*No of employees		
Below100	49	41.2
100 to <1000	46	38.7
1000 and above	24	20.2
No of hours of work		
<=8	83	66.4
8+	42	33.6
Office timings		
Day time	106	84.8
Shift	19	15.2
Over time work		
Yes	76	60.8
No	49	39.2
**No of hours of overtime work	54	75
<4	18	25
>=4		
Composition of office staff		
Majority male	45	36.0
Majority female	34	27.2
Both roughly in equal proportion	46	36.8
Total	125	100
Mean number of hours of work = 8.4 hours		

* 6 Missing cases **for 76 cases (4missing cases)

Table 2 Percentage distribution of female migrants according to their commutation to the workplace

Commutation to workplace	Number	Percentage
Major mode of transport		
By foot	13	10.4
By bus	38	30.4
By train	47	37.6
Others	27	21.6
*Travel expenses		
<200	15	14.2
200-500	60	56.6
500+	31	29.2
How to go to office		
Alone	87	69.6
With hostel mates	28	22.4
With office colleagues	10	8.0
Time taken to go to office		
Below 30 minutes	56	44.8
30 minutes -1 hour	60	48.0
More than one hour	9	7.2
Problems during travelling		
Yes	33	26.4
No	92	73.6
Total	125	100

**For 106 cases (Others either go by foot or by office transport)*

Table 3 Percentage distribution of female migrants according to their relationship with the office staff

Relationship	Number	Percentage
Head of the institute/office		
Very good	25	20.0
Good	93	74.4
Average	6	4.8
Poor	1	0.8
Immediate boss		
Very good	32	25.6
Good	82	65.6
Average	11	8.8
Total	125	100

Table 4 Percentage distribution of female migrants according to their job satisfaction

Job satisfaction	Number	Percentage
First job in Mumbai		
Yes	97	77.6
No	28	22.4
Happy with current job		
Yes	97	77.6
No	28	22.4
*Trying to change present job		
Yes	55	44.4
No	69	55.6
Difficulty in office because of the stay in hostel		
Yes	41	32.8
No	84	67.2
Exploitation from the boss/colleagues		
Yes	23	18.4
No	102	81.6
Sexual exploitation from the boss/colleagues		
Yes	2	1.6
No	123	98.4
Discrimination among colleagues		
Yes	27	21.6
No	98	78.4
Total	125	100

* *Missing*

Table. 5 Percentage distribution of female migrants according to their job satisfaction by working conditions

Working conditions	Job satisfaction		Total	Significance
	Yes	No		
Occupation				
Professional, technical and other workers	84.8	15.2	33	0.629
Administrative, executive and managerial workers	(73.7)	(26.3)	19	
Clerical and related workers	73.3	26.7	30	
Nurses/pharmacist	(70.8)	(29.2)	24	
Others	(84.2)	(15.8)	19	
Income				
<5000	72	28	25	0.419
5000-9999	75.8	24.2	66	
10,000 and above	85.3	14.7	34	
Number of hours of work				
<=8	81.9	18.1	83	0.116
8+	69	31	42	
Overtime work				
Yes	68.4	31.6	76	0.002
No	91.8	8.2	49	
Tiredness because of workload				
Yes	70.1	29.9	87	0.002
No	94.7	5.3	38	
Problems during traveling				
Yes	60.6	39.4	33	0.013
No	83.7	16.3	92	
Exploitation from boss/colleagues				
Yes	(47.8)	(52.2)	23	0.000
No	84.3	15.7	102	
Discrimination from colleagues				
Yes	40.7	59.3	27	0.000
No	87.8	12.2	98	
Relationship with immediate boss in the office				
Very good	87.5	12.5	32	0.002
Good	79.3	20.7	82	
Average	(36.4)	(63.6)	11	
Total			125	

() less than 25 cases