

Challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Indian states of Haryana and Punjab present numerous difficulties for female employees. Uneven opportunities and limited job advancement are caused by gender bias, which is still a major barrier. A hostile work environment is caused by ongoing safety issues, including harassment. Social pressures and a lack of accessible childcare make it difficult to strike a balance between work and life. Women's underrepresentation in leadership positions also prevents them from receiving crucial mentoring and impedes their ability to advance in their careers. These challenges are exacerbated by poor legislative implementation, particularly in relation to maternity leave and workplace flexibility. A further barrier to women's access to career prospects is educational inequality. It is essential to address these problems if we are to create for women in these states a workplace that is egalitarian, inclusive, and powerful. In Haryana and Punjab, cultural biases and traditions also persist, making it difficult for women's abilities and talents to be appreciated at work. In order to ensure that women have equal opportunities and can fully participate in the workforce, it is imperative that society and policymakers work together to address these deeply ingrained issues. Sample of 220 women employees from different occupational sectors were surveyed to know and compare the challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab and concludes that there is significant difference in terms of different challenges between the women employees of Haryana and Panjab state.

Keywords: Gender bias, Workplace harassment, Work-life balance, Underrepresentation in leadership, Legislative implementation, Educational inequality, Cultural biases, Women's empowerment.

Introduction

Women's participation in the workforce is characterized by a complex mix between tradition and modernity in Haryana and Punjab, two northern Indian states with extensive cultural heritage. Although there have been improvements in a number of fields, women workers still face significant obstacles in these fields. In Haryana and Punjab, women confront numerous barriers that range from gender bias and safety issues to problems juggling work and family obligations, all of which impede their ability to advance professionally and gain economic empowerment. Saryal (2014) examined the broader context of women's rights in India, emphasizing the underlying concerns that permeate all facets of Indian society, including the workplace. It brought to light the ways in which cultural expectations, prejudices, and established patriarchal systems still affect the experiences of female workers. In states like Punjab and Haryana, such standards may be a factor in gender discrimination, unequal chances, and constrained career advancement for women. It becomes clear that addressing workplace gender discrepancies necessitates a complex strategy that includes both governmental reforms and changes in society attitudes as a result of the recognition of these systemic difficulties and the need for larger societal change.

The varied difficulties faced by "women employees" in the area of "vocational training and employment" were addressed by Singh and Parida (2022), who focussed on the northern Indian states of Punjab and Haryana. They emphasized on a problematic reality in which "women" encountered severe obstacles at work, highlighting the "urgent need" for radical changes. The "vocational training and employment" landscape has glaring "gender disparities" in it. It became clear that, in contrast to their "male counterparts," "women," notwithstanding their abilities and aspirations, experienced significant discrepancies in the "opportunities available to them" and their "earning potential". The fact that female vocational trainees had "limited access" to "skill-matching jobs," which was a "critical factor" impeding their career advancement,

was a physical manifestation of this imbalance, not just an abstract idea. When it came to giving "women" in Punjab and Haryana equal opportunity, the vocational training industry, which is sometimes seen as a "pathway to economic empowerment," fell short. "Women," who were anxious to advance their careers and contribute to society, frequently found that "systemic inequalities" prevented them from doing so. The "lack of access to employment opportunities" that were compatible with their "vocational training" hampered their ability to advance professionally and maintain financial independence.

Sarin and Lunsford (2017) highlighted the particular difficulties faced by female community health workers in India, which can be generalized to comprehend difficulties faced by women workers in diverse industries. They emphasized how performance gaps among female health workers were a result of gender-related difficulties, excessive workloads, and deficient support systems, with a particular emphasis on the maternity and child health area. This brought attention to the more general problem of juggling work and family obligations, which many women in Punjab and Haryana experience. In order to address these issues, it is necessary to not only acknowledge the value of female employees but also to put in place support systems and policies that help them advance professionally.

Literature Review

Mehta et al. (2021) assessed how women's employment and digital technology interacted in India and revealed a wide range of difficulties that women faced at work. The emergence of a digital gender difference was one of the most obvious problems found. Women were less likely to have the essential digital abilities and frequently had limited access to digital technology. Their capacity to successfully compete in the contemporary job market was hampered by this disparity in access and abilities. Women's opportunities for economic empowerment and career advancement were limited by this digital disadvantage. Singh et al. (2018) examined how women in North India perceived information and communication technology (ICT) and their access to it. They emphasised the ongoing difficulties women faced in closing the gender gap in technology. Their ability to participate in the digital workforce was hampered by a lack of resources, training, and ICT tools. Women's employment opportunities and potential for career advancement were constrained by their exclusion from the quickly changing digital scene.

Singh and Goyal (2019) identified alarming patterns that suggested rural women's work opportunities were diminishing. Women have frequently had few options for official employment in rural places where historical gender roles have been deeply ingrained. They revealed that these difficulties had not only continued over time, but had also gotten worse. This fall was probably caused by a combination of factors, including changing economic structures that may not be gender-inclusive, restricted access to chances for skill development, and the pressure of traditional home duties that constrained women's participation in the labor sector. The dearth of employment opportunities for rural women in Punjab seemed to be compounded by social and cultural restrictions that limited their capacity to enter the workforce.

Singh et al. (2020) assessed the employment outcomes among young people with vocational training in a few districts of Punjab and Haryana and highlighted the unique difficulties experienced by women who had received such training. It highlighted barriers that were particular to gender and caused the region's poor job outcomes for women with vocational training. Women's access to work prospects in industries previously dominated by men may have been hampered by gender bias in hiring procedures, for instance. Additionally, there might have been a mismatch between the skills learned through vocational training and the career prospects available, leaving women with vocational training but still underemployed or unemployed.

Kaur and Kaur (2012) assessed the factors influencing female labor force participation in Punjab. This examined the wider socio economic struggles that women in the area confront. They showed that women in Punjab faced a wide range of difficulties that prevented them from participating in the labor force. Inadequate access to school and vocational training, gender-based workplace discrimination, and cultural norms and expectations that restricted women's mobility and employment options are a few examples. It's crucial to recognise that these difficulties weren't confined to a particular area but instead had systemic effects on women's employment throughout Punjab, highlighting the necessity of region-specific policies and initiatives to overcome gender inequities in the labor market. According to Bhat (2014), gender bias still affects women employees in India and is a pervasive problem. It brought attention to the bigger socio

economic problems that women faced. Gender bias frequently resulted in unequal possibilities, lesser earning potential, and few prospects for women to advance their careers in the workplace.

A major issue for female employees, referred to as "wage disparity," was highlighted by Padhi et al. (2019). They revealed that women in India still experience wage inequality and receive lower pay for equivalent labor than men. This inequality not only has an impact on women's financial security but also continues "gender-based disparities" in the job. The results imply that despite laws prohibiting this type of discrimination, "gender pay gaps" still exist, posing a significant obstacle to women's economic empowerment and job satisfaction. Female CHWs may face gender-specific challenges, such as inadequate pay or societal expectations that can affect their job satisfaction and effectiveness. Sarin et al. (2016) highlighted the complexity of employment in community-based roles, underscoring the importance of identifying and addressing these issues.

Kaur and Kaur (2018) addressed the "changing dimensions of women's status" in Punjabi society and how such changes can affect women's roles and opportunities in a variety of contexts, including the workplace. They emphasized the evolving opportunities and problems women may encounter in the workplace in Punjab by looking at changing dynamics in women's status. Sharma and Saha (2015) focused on the employment trends for women in India and the difficulties they confronted paved the way for comprehending the changing nature of women's employment in the country. They exposed discrepancies in employment trends, pointing to potential difficulties women may have faced in particular industries and positions. These tendencies included problems including restricted access to formal employment, salary inequality, and occupational segregation, which frequently impeded women's career advancement and job satisfaction.

The emphasis of Kaur and Singh (2017) was the difficulties faced by female employees at work, and it gave insight into the larger sociocultural setting in which these difficulties took place. Family dynamics had a big impact on women's job choices and experiences, thus it was essential to understand the values and aims of families in various professional groups. The degree to which women could overcome professional problems including juggling work and family commitments or following career objectives depended critically on societal expectations and family support networks. The difficulties that female employees who were also business owners experienced were examined by Pareek and Bagrecha (2017). They identified a variety of issues, such as managing work-life balance, access to resources, and overcoming gender-specific barriers to entrepreneurship.

Objective

1. To know and compare the challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab.

Methodology

Sample of 220 women employees from different occupational sectors were surveyed to know and compare the challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab. A questionnaire was designed to conduct the survey of this empirical study whose "primary data" was collected through "random sampling method." "Independent sample t-test" is the statistical tool used to analyze the data and reach to end results.

FINDINGS

Basic details of the respondent are represented by the table below in which it is found that in total 216 respondents 34.5% are below 35 yrs of age, 42.8% are from the age group 35-40 yrs and rest 22.7% are above 40 years of age. 36.8% of them are graduate and below, 40.9% are post graduate and above and rest 22.3% are having professional degree. 43.6% are married, 36.4% are unmarried and rest 20.0% are separated from their family.

Table 1 Basic Details of the Respondents

Variable	Respondent	Total Percentage
Age profile		
Below 35 yrs	76	34.5
35-40 yrs	94	42.8

Above 40 yrs	50	22.7
Total	220	100
Education		
Graduate and below	81	36.8
Post graduate and above	90	40.9
Professional	49	22.3
Total	220	100
Marital status		
Married	96	43.6
Unmarried	80	36.4
Separated	44	20.0
Total	220	100

Table 2 Challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab

Challenges of women employees	State		t value	Mean diff.	Sig.
	Haryana	Panjab			
Uneven opportunities for women in employment sector	3.51	3.16	1.607	0.35	0.11
Women face limited job advancement in their state	3.80	3.37	1.983	0.43	0.05
Gender bias in work place	3.73	3.48	1.122	0.25	0.26
Finding a balance between work and life is challenging because of the lack of readily available daycare	3.46	3.11	1.766	0.35	0.08
Unfriendly work environment is caused by ongoing safety issues	3.54	3.25	1.383	0.29	0.17
Due to their underrepresentation in leadership roles, women are unable to get essential mentorship	3.62	3.08	2.724	0.54	0.01
Barrier to women's access to career prospects is educational inequality	3.34	3.14	0.912	0.20	0.36
Poor legislative implementation in relation to maternity leave and workplace flexibility	3.76	3.22	2.340	0.54	0.02
Underdeveloped public transport system	3.89	3.62	1.200	0.27	0.23
Lack of vocational training	3.57	3.21	2.262	0.36	0.02

Table above is showing the comparison of challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab. It is found that higher mean value for all the challenges are shown by the respondents of Haryana state in comparison to Panjab such as Uneven opportunities for women in employment sector with mean value 3.51, Women face limited job advancement in their state 3.80, Gender bias in work place (3.73), Finding a balance between work and life is challenging because of the lack of readily available daycare (3.46), Unfriendly work environment is caused by ongoing safety issues (3.54), Due to their underrepresentation in leadership roles, women are unable to get essential mentorship (3.62), Barrier to women's access to career prospects is educational inequality (3.34), Poor legislative implementation in relation to maternity leave and workplace flexibility (3.76) and Underdeveloped public transport system 3.89, Lack of vocational training with mean value 3.57. The results of Independent Samples Test which was applied to compare challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab shows that all the challenges are showing significant difference between the women employees of Haryana and Panjab state as the value under Sig. column is below 0.05.

Conclusion

Women who work as employees face a number of significant obstacles in the Indian states of Haryana and Punjab that obstruct their ability to progress professionally and have positive work experiences. Due to the ingrained nature of these

obstacles in underlying social, cultural, and economic variables, society and governments must give them immediate attention. Women's job options and possibilities are constrained by gender stereotypes and ingrained social conventions, which continue to be severe obstacles. Gender-based discrimination is sustained by these deeply ingrained patriarchal views that dissuade women from pursuing employment in industries where men predominate. The threat of verbal and physical harassment at work puts women's safety at risk, making it difficult for them to commute or put in late hours. This problem is made worse by the underdeveloped public transport system. Additionally, Punjab and Haryana continue to suffer from the stark income disparity between men and women. For comparable tasks, women frequently earn less than men do, which threatens their financial independence and exacerbates existing inequalities. Furthermore, women find it extremely challenging to combine their career and personal obligations because there aren't enough family support systems and childcare options are few. As a result, many women must make the agonizing decision of whether to choose their jobs or their families. In conclusion, Haryana and Punjab's female workers face numerous obstacles that hinder their ability to advance professionally and negatively impact their general well-being. These difficulties, which include income discrepancies, safety concerns, gender stereotypes, and a lack of proper work-life assistance, have deep roots in society. To address these problems, society, industry, and government must work together to build an inclusive and equitable workplace where women are empowered to succeed in the workplace. It is critical to understand how the advancement of these states as a whole may be advanced by empowering women, in addition to the benefits that empowerment brings to individual women.

The study was conducted to know and compare the challenges for women employees in Haryana and Punjab and concludes that there is significant difference in terms of different challenges between the women employees of Haryana and Panjab state.

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