

Vol II Issue IX

ISSN No : 2230-7850

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Monthly Multidiciplinary  
Research Journal

# *Indian Streams Research Journal*

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**RNI MAHMUL/2011/38595**

**ISSN No.2230-7850**

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## Working Women In Private Concern Of Assam: Struggle For Support System

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### Abstract:

*The extreme and sensational change that is emerging on India is the process of liberalization and globalization, which are influencing the traditional socio-economic institutions and the people in multiple ways. These processes have well marked changes in all urban and rural areas of India, especially in cities. It enhances several kinds of organized private concern notably in Super Markets, private telecommunication companies, private insurance sector, private banking sector, private audio- visual media etc. These private concerns employed a large chunk of women population. The scenario of Assam is no different than the picture of India. These changes need sharp attention on the silence of work- family concerns in a high rate. That's, why the present study tries to reflect on the nature of jobs of these employed women workers and their support systems- both social and private. Also interested in work- family issues that need to be accompanied by both social and private support as in due course of time the working women faced the increasing complex responsibilities with the pressure of work and family. The study makes available focus on to what extent the social and private support that the occupational women get in their private domain.*

### KEYWORDS:

private support system, private domain, private organization, social support system, working women

### INTRODUCTION

The extreme and sensational change that is emerging on India is the process of liberalization and globalization, which are influencing the traditional socio-economic institutions and the people in multiple ways. These processes have well marked changes in all urban and rural areas of India, especially in cities. It enhances several kinds of organized private concern notably the Super Markets, private telecommunication companies, private insurance sector, private banking sector, private audio- visual media etc. These private concerns employed a large chunk of women population. The scenario of Assam is no different than the picture of India. The private concerns of the state of Assam employ a large number of women. According to Economic Survey of Assam, 2010-11, the employment of women in organised sector of the Assam was 360.3 thousand during 2009 accounting for 32.7 percent of the total employment. The organized private sector employment of women in Assam is 273.0 thousand against the total women employment of 360.3 thousand in the organized sector (p.180). That means upcoming globalize, open market system gave the women to get more jobs. Globalization has indeed raised hopes of women for a better and elevated status arising out of increased chances to work, but at the same time it is mentionable that these kinds of jobs in nature are contractual or low end work, low paid, which has put the women working in a highly contradictory situation- where they have the label of economically independent paid workers but are not able to enjoy the economic liberty in real sense of the term. These kind of temporary, contractual workers have very few rights, and the employer of the private concern rarely thought about ensuring their

Please cite this Article as :Lakheemi Devee , Working Women In Private Concern Of Assam: Struggle For Support System : Indian Streams Research Journal (Oct. ; 2012)

protection, that's why these women are bound to work during the crisis in their private domain or they need full assistance or support from their families, spouse, neighbour. In other words, the support from society/ community and private domain plays a greater role in their life- both professionally and personally.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

The proposed paper seeks to study the conditions of these women and the basic research questions to be addressed are:

Whether the occupational women of private concern have access to social and private support and whether these support will able to fill their gaps in their private domain.

What are the patterns of support among society and families of occupational women with dependent children or parents?

What are the conditions under which these women substitute public assistance for their private domain?

#### **METHODOLOGY AND THE STUDY AREA:**

The study has been carried out mainly on the basis of primary data collected with the help of two questionnaires- one to interact with the decision making persons and other to approach women workers of private organizations. Altogether the responses of the professional female worker of 75 from different private sector such as private mobile companies, private banks, private insurance companies, supermarkets, private media houses etc., engaged in various occupations have been included in the present study. All total 20 such private organization taken under consideration for the study. The data has been selected through stratified random sampling method in such a way that the different categories of working women belonging to different socio economic groups are taken into account. As study areas, Guwahati city and Jorhat town of Assam are taken since both are major commercial and educational center of North Eastern India as well as Assam. Secondary data on the subject has also been collected from sources such as books dealing with working women, articles and information gathered from the internet.

#### **FINDINGS:**

In urban India as well as in Assam, for skilled expertise women labour force, it has almost become a necessity to obtain a profession to support the family. Besides the trend of choice, when globalization has opened up various opportunities for women labour force, the modern women would like to see themselves as productive and successful like the traditional 'bread-earner'. On the other hand, the increasing cost of living, privatization of services, demanding quality of life and consumerism are a few factors that have created a forced situation of earning for urban couples or young women who mainly living in cities. The situation of independent and individualized livelihood, single family system become a necessity and compulsion for the impact of breaking down of joint or extended family under globalization and open market processes. In a globalized era as a result, the burden becomes double for the working women for maintaining both - their family and the work front. But it should be pointed out that the increasing participation of women in several kinds of workplace with limited financial security, long hour of works are not able to relief them from their responsibilities from their family members, parents, spouse in the domestic chores and childcare, care for old etc., as these tasks are remaining a women responsibilities by the patriarchal ideology. The traditional patriarchal beliefs generally imposes the reproductive role on these women and also demands their productivity in terms of wage earning to meet the changing demand of economy and livelihood under globalization and liberalization process.

This can be better understood from the primary data sources that were received from the visits in concerned fields. Out of 75 interviewed working women in several private concern (all total 20) of Guwahati city and Jorhat town of Assam, 34% agreed that they are working as they wanted to work, 12% said that they are encouraged by their parents, 12% by their spouse or would be husband and others remaining kept silent in this context. That means, women would like to see themselves as productive and successful professional, are encouraged by their family members or closed one.

64% believed that the behaviour of their spouse, family members (especially in- laws) are very good with them and very much co-operative with them. Whenever they need emotional support from their family members they have but when they are asked about space for doing extended office work at home, they mentioned that they don't have space for these kinds of jobs and their family members also don't like it. When they are bound to do their official work at home during emergencies or to fulfill the urgent target, they have to do it in dinning tables after dinner or before wake up of other family members. Mentionable that,

with these over loaded office duty they are not getting any relief from their regular home duties. Sometimes their spouse, other family members help them in cooking and other home related works, but they always comments after completion of work that they are helping a lot in her domestic duties and responsibilities. Means the traditional patriarchal set up considers the work in home domain solely as women duties and responsibilities, whether they are working outside or not.

100% agreed that the household work like cooking, maintaining cleanliness etc. are maintained by themselves or by their mothers, mother-in-laws, sisters, sister-in-laws or part- time female helpers. Their spouse and other family members sometimes help them by bringing kitchen essentials. 33% have to look after their children, parents, have to take care of the studies of their children, have to do household chore with other responsibilities. That means these modern working women face the traditional patriarchal paradigm which play role in keeping women in dual role- professional and personal. On the other hand, they get support services from another woman only in their private sphere.

They never or can't approach their neighbour for to be their support system in their private domain as most of them have similar dual burden and also its not safe to keep their children into the hand of neighbours, they afraid of sexual exploitation as well as physical assault on their children. When an emergency arises in their private domain they have to take leave from the jobs. The male members never took initiatives in this matter and their works are always more important than her. 13% of the respondents stated that in this matter their male family members are not capable of handling the responsibilities or they do not have confidence that their male members can carry on these kind of duties properly. The remaining means 87% respondents expressed that the responsibilities of maintaining household works, childcare etc. are considered as women duties by their family members. Greenhaus and Parasuraman, (1999) in the chapter 'Research on Work, Family and Gender in the book 'Handbook of Gender & Work' stated that "Women generally devote fewer hours than men to paid work especially when there are children in the family. On the other hand, women continue to spend more time than men on home and family activities, even when the women are employed outside the home..... Women experience more substantial trade- offs between their work and family lives than men" (p.400). The changing socio economic scenario with growing open up market system and the phasing out of the joint family system along with poor community based protection systems are some of the reasons why women are becoming increasingly prone to stressed, selflessness and abuse. They have to lead their dual role without any social or community and private support.

13% opined (out of 75, 36 are married women) that they can't afford child now and going underneath the family planning process as there are no support system in community in their workplace and in private domain as well. That means due to limited support system they neglect the basic natural instinct too. This kind of emerging contradictions may lead to marital disputes, resulting in divorce and separations, leading to malnutrition, increase in maternal mortality rate, child mortality rate, jaundice, etc. Greenhaus and Parasuraman, (1999) in the chapter 'Research on Work, Family and Gender in the book 'Handbook of Gender & Work' stated that "Research partially supports the belief that marriage hinders a women's career. Married women are more likely than unmarried women to hold low- status and part time jobs.....it is likely that the presence of children has a more substantial effect on women's work lives than their marital status" (p.404).

When the question arises on taking responsibilities of their private domain by spending their salaries for domestic chores and childcare, care for parents, old etc., 100% agreed that they do contribute towards the economic needs of family as and when required, for domestic chores and consider this as their responsibilities too. The single women who are unmarried expressed that they save the major portion of their income for their marriage purpose as they want to share the financial burden of their parents. All the respondents feel proud that they can spend their income for their family members, or for expenses of home and also opined that they do expenditure on their own control. That means they have power over their earnings. But it should be noted down that many of the working women expressed that they need to take permission from their spouse, parents or other family members when they have to spend their income on their support system like buying of electronic gadgets, appointing part time helper, buying of cars, use of personal car in transportation etc. and other personal belongings - which can make their life more comfortable, easy going one. That means, in Indian as well as in Assamese culture women are expected to devote virtually all of their time, energy, and earnings to their family and they themselves also loved to share the financial burden but when question arises on social, economic, private support, women are still legging behind. Also in real sense, their earning controlled by other family members and closed one and due to the ongoing patriarchal system, the women not able to realize these things too.

A major problem arises with the working women who are generally do tour or selected for attending training programmes, workshops in other places. In these conditions, the woman faced the problem that with limited support system she can't leave the household responsibilities on others shoulders.



So, in most of the cases, the working women bound to reject these kind of tours or offers which ultimately diminish their name in the good book of their concerned organizations and therefore debarred from further promotion, remuneration etc. in their workplace.

It may be mentioned here that while women draw equal wages for equal work from their concerned organizations that's why they are not considerable in their workplace for their family burden. In the interview through questionnaire, 70% HR personal or the head of the organization out of 20 private concerns complained that the women workers took more leave compared to men due to the family problems and for health issues. That's why, they prefer male workers for placing any responsibilities than female workers. All of them also mentioned that they have both maternity and paternity benefit schemes in their organizations, but till date no man took any paternity leave. In other words, the women workers are pressurized to do the job in equal footage with men and if not able to do with same capacity, they are pressurized to withdraw from their lucrative grape work. The women are generally expected to perform in the workplace in the same spirit and enthusiasm as they do in their private sphere.

When the HR personal or the head of the organizations are asked about the crèche facilities in their office premises or in their organization, all of them said that there are no such facilities are available. On the other hand all the women workers are of supporting crèche or other allied cell/ centre in their office premises or organizations. This would enable them to keep an eye on their children without being distracted from work; clearly, they can be freer, efficient in their performance.

#### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In conclusion we can mention that due to lack of proper alternatives of support system for working women who are engaged in private concern, have to bear double and triple burden. Both personal and professional roles creates simultaneous pressure on women, as women engaged in workplace are demanded by the interference to the quality of family life or interfere into workplace by the family responsibilities, and the other times when family pressures interfere with responsibilities at work. It observed that the organization's demands on the time and energy of an employee being more compelling than those of the family because of the economic contribution of work to the well being of the family. Individual are also likely to have somewhat more latitude in adjusting family schedules than work schedules.

The private concern with growing time will become more intensive and highly competitive one, which will bring sharp deterioration on performance of women's work for lacking the social and private support. This can make impact on women's health due to stress, selflessness and extra burden of work. So we need greater attentions for getting support from private sphere, for this we drastically required changing in the value system of patriarchal society. We can change the existing picture if Government as well as other allied organizations took serious steps for providing support system to working women such as rampant establishment of child care centre, day time shelter for old age people, high quality and secured transport facilities, laws on availability of food court at workplace etc. At the same time Government can do strict steps on opening of day care centre at the office premises, regular health checkup- both physical and mental for the workers with immediate effect. The Government and the NGO can took initiatives in organizing some gender sensitivity awareness campaign for both genders, capacity building workshop, training programmes for women etc. at their office premises in regular intervals. These kinds of workshops and training programmes may weaken the complexity among the genders in their workplace and also will be helpful for women in dealing their personal and professional roles efficiently, actively.

In other words, the difficulties that faced by working women today are inevitable in a transitional situation, but can be removed if the commitment of providing social and private supports can be intrude in due course of time. It should be noted that it is imperative that the society in general and the State in particular, provide the necessary conditions and support to enable women to perform their various multiple roles successfully and also give space to enjoy it. Without the supportive services and institutionalized aids the multiple roles of these working women will continue to impose a tremendous strain on the physical and mental resources of women. It will also affect the welfare and development of the future generation through inadequate care in childhood, also drastically affect in active participation of women workforce in developing economic processes of the country.

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