



**PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF WOMEN LAWYERS
IN THE DISTRICT COURT : A STUDY IN KALABURAGI CITY****Vijayalaxmi B. Patil****Research Scholar, Department of Sociology, Akkamahadevi Women's University,
Vijayapura, Karnataka.****Dr. Vijaya B. Korishetti****Vice- Chancellor & Senior Professor, Dept of Sociology,
Akkamahadevi Women's University , Vijayapura, Karnataka .****ABSTRACT:**

Women lawyers in their profession and at their families are facing many of the problems. Such problems include gender inequality, discrimination in payment of remuneration or fees, lack of preference to women lawyers by clients, neglecting the families by women lawyers due to their professional commitments and so on. To assess the problems and challenges faced by women lawyers, the present survey-based study has been made in Kalaburagi city by using questionnaires. Total 320 women lawyers practicing in District Court were surveyed. It is found that, many of the women lawyers are under stress, tension, fatigue, etc due to their dual work burden. Some of them are even can't able to give attention to their families including elders, husband and children. Hence, it is essential to empower women lawyers by assuring equal remuneration and such other measures.

**KEYWORDS:** *Women Lawyers, Court, Legal Profession, Kalaburagi, Karnataka.***INTRODUCTION:**

The entry of women into the Indian legal profession marks a significant chapter in the nation's socio-legal history. From Cornelia Sorabjee, the first female advocate in 1922, to the present day, where women outnumber men in many law school graduating classes, the journey has been one of remarkable numerical progress (Kumar, 2019). This increasing participation is often lauded as a testament to the maturing of Indian democratic ideals and the breaking of traditional career barriers. However, this quantitative success obscures a deeply unsettling qualitative reality: women lawyers in India continue to confront a formidable array of systemic problems and challenges that stymie their professional growth, compromise their well-being, and prevent them from achieving parity with their male counterparts.

The legal profession, theoretically a bastion of justice and equality, is in practice a microcosm of the patriarchal society it serves. Despite the initial promise of meritocracy, women lawyers find themselves navigating a labyrinth of invisible and overt barriers. The "leaky pipeline" analogy is particularly apt, as a high rate of attrition is observed among women lawyers after the initial years of practice (Menon & Nair, 2020). This attrition is not a matter of personal choice in a vacuum but a

consequential response to a hostile and unsupportive ecosystem. This paper posits that the challenges faced by women lawyers are not merely individual hurdles to be overcome but are, in fact, institutionalized and systemic issues rooted in patriarchal structures, societal expectations, and a lack of adequate institutional safeguards. Hence, women lawyers are facing many of the problems and challenges in the legal practice.

The significant problems faced by women include preference of clients to men lawyers, lower and discriminatory remuneration to women lawyers, dual work of women lawyers at the courts as well as in their families have resulted in various types of problems such as lack of care towards elders, husband and children, poor physical and psychological health due to dual work and so on. To explore the problems and challenges faced by women lawyers in Kalaburagi city, the present study has been conducted.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

A study by Aggarwal (2018) on women litigators in Delhi found that while women may secure junior positions, breaking into the ranks of Senior Advocates or securing influential briefs remains exceptionally difficult. Aggarwal attributes this to an opaque and informal system of client allocation and mentorship, which overwhelmingly favours male lawyers who are part of established, homogenous networks. Nair (2020) demonstrates that professional networking—which is crucial for client acquisition, finding mentors, and securing judicial clerkships—often occurs in gendered social spaces (such as men-only clubs or late-night gatherings) from which women are implicitly or explicitly excluded. This systemic exclusion severely hampers women's ability to build the social capital necessary for career progression. Women lawyers, like women in other professions in India, are disproportionately expected to manage primary domestic and caregiving responsibilities alongside their demanding careers (Krishnan, 2017). This expectation is not merely a social pressure but has tangible professional consequences, often leading to women being passed over for challenging assignments or partnership tracks that require perceived "unlimited" availability. Global scholarship emphasizes the gendered structure of legal professions, noting the persistence of the "old boys' network" in perpetuating male dominance (Choudhry & El-Gamal, 2019). Studies on women in law highlight the "glass ceiling" in judicial appointments and leadership roles (Fineman, 2016). In contrast, Scandinavian countries have achieved over 40% female representation in judiciaries through affirmative policies (Lamach, 2019), offering a model for reform.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The present study is made:

- To throw light on gender inequality issues in payment of remuneration/ fee to women lawyers.
- To study the problems faced by women lawyers in Courts and at their families due to their professional practice.
- To analyse the career prospects of women lawyers in their profession.
- To know whether women lawyers have recognized and satisfied with their professional work and life.

METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS:

To analyse the problems and challenges faced by women lawyers, the present survey-based study has been conducted in District Kalaburagi. Kalaburagi city is located in Kalyan-Karnataka region. Due to limited time frame, total 320 women lawyers were surveyed using questionnaires. Of the women lawyers surveyed, 41 (12.81%) are single and not married, 236 (73.75%) are married and living with their husbands. Further, 24 (7.50%) of the women lawyers are widows and 19 (5.94%) are divorcees and separated from their husbands. The collected primary data on problems and challenges faced by women lawyers surveyed is analysed, interpreted and discussed as under:

ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION:

The collected primary data is analysed, interpreted and discussed as under.

1. Age Group:

Age of women lawyers reveals the knowledge and experience in legal profession. In this context, the primary data collected on the age group of women lawyers is shown as under.

Table No. 1. Age Group (Years)

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
25 to 35	56	17.5
36 to 50	142	44.38
51 to 60	94	29.37
More than 60	28	8.75
Total	320	100

The age group of all the women lawyers revealed that, 17.5% are young as they belong to 25 years to 35 years of age group, 44.38% are between 36 to 50 years, 29.37% are between 51 to 60 years and the remaining 8.75% are of elderly age group, that is more than 60 years.

2. Caste Group:

Caste group discloses the participation of women belonging to different social groups in legal professions. The primary data collected on caste groups of women lawyers is analysed and discussed as under.

Table No. 2. Caste Group

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Scheduled Caste	61	19.06
Scheduled Tribe	16	5.00
Other Backward Classes	92	28.76
Minority	70	21.87
Others/ Higher Castes	81	25.31
Total	320	100

Of all the women lawyers, 28.76% belong to other backward classes followed by, 25.31% belong to others or higher castes, 21.87% belong to minorities, 19.06% are from scheduled castes and the remaining 5.00% belong to scheduled tribes respectively.

3. Income Discrimination:

Some of the research studies have already revealed that, there is remuneration inequality in legal profession as women lawyers are getting lesser remuneration or fee for their legal practice compared to men lawyers. It was asked to the women lawyers that, whether they are getting equal remuneration and fee compared to men lawyers and collected primary data is presented in the following table.

Table No. 3. Getting Equal Remuneration and Fee for Legal Practice Compared to Men Lawyers

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Yes	184	57.50
No	136	42.50
Total	320	100

It is highlighted that, only 57.50% of the women lawyers have agreed that, they are getting equal or higher remuneration and fee for their legal practice compared to men lawyers whereas, 42.50% have disagreed to the same.

4. Reasons for Getting Lower Remuneration and Fee:

As discussed above, 136 of all the women lawyers are getting lower remuneration and fees compared to men lawyers and the reasons furnished by them for the same, are as under.

Table No. 4. Reasons for Getting Lower Remuneration and Fee for Legal Practice Compared to Men Lawyers

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Gender Inequality in Profession	41	12.81
Clients Prefer Men Lawyers	76	23.75
More Competition in Legal Practice	19	5.94
Any Other	--	--
Not Applicable	184	57.50
Total	320	100

On the reasons furnished by the women lawyers, who are getting lower remuneration or fee revealed that, 12.81% have agreed that, there is gender inequality in legal profession, 23.75% have mentioned that, the clients prefer men lawyers, 5.94% have felt that, there is more competition in legal practice and it is not applicable to 57.50% of the women lawyers as they are getting higher or equal remuneration and fee compared to men lawyers.

5. Personal Financial Independence:

It is observed that, in some families, women are not allowed to spend money and make expenses without permission of elders and husbands. The information has gathered from the women lawyers on whether they are free to spend money and the collected primary data is tabulated as under.

Table No. 5. Personal Financial Independence

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Free to Spend Money Lavishly	150	46.88
Free to Spend on Essential Needs	88	27.50
Need Permission from Husband to Spend Money	57	17.81
Fully Restricted to Spend Money	25	7.81
Any Other	--	--
Total	320	100

Nearly half that is, 46.88% of all the women lawyers surveyed are free to spend money lavishly followed by, 27.50% are free to spend money on essential needs only, 17.81% of all the women lawyers are needed permission from husband to spend money and the remaining 7.81% are fully restricted to spend money.

6. Neglecting Elders, Husband and Children due to Court Cases:

Women lawyers are compelled to discuss with clients, study the laws and cases, then prepare for argument in courts and personally make arguments at courts in favour of clients. Hence, it is essential for every woman lawyer to spend more time on their professional duties and in this context, they may neglect their household duties and neglect elders, husband and children. The primary data has been gathered on the same and disclosed as under.

Table No. 6 Neglecting Elders, Husband and Children due to Court Cases

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Yes	153	47.81
No	72	22.50
Sometimes	95	29.69
Total	320	100

Above table made it clear that, nearly half that is, 47.81% of all the women lawyers have agreed that, they are neglecting elders, husband and children due to their court cases, whereas 22.50% have disagreed to the same and 29.69% of them have felt that, they sometimes neglect their household duties.

7. Marital Life and Family Become Obstacle for Professional Practice:

As discussed above, some of the women lawyers are neglecting their elders, husband and children due to their professional work and it has been asked to these lawyers that, whether marital life and family have become obstacles for their professional practice. The primary data on the same is as under.

Table No. 7. Marital Life and Family Become Obstacle for Professional Practice

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Yes	73	22.81
No	184	57.50
Sometimes	63	19.69
Total	320	100

Surprisingly, it is found that, 22.81% of all the women lawyers have agreed that, their marital life and family become obstacle for their professional practice whereas, 57.50% have disagreed to the same and 19.69% have felt that, sometimes the marital life and family become obstacles for their professional practice.

8. Dual Role of Working Women Lead to Quarrels, Conflicts and Differences of Opinions:

It is noted that, women lawyers have to spend 5-6 hours daily in courts and at least 2-3 hours daily to discuss with clients and prepare for their cases. In this way, most of the time, the women lawyers are busy in their outside work. As revealed by many of the studies, dual role of working women lead to quarrels, conflicts and differences of opinions and the information gathered on the same is presented in the following table.

Table No. 8. Dual Role of Working Women Lead to Quarrels, Conflicts and Differences of Opinions

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Fully Agree	42	13.12
Agree to Greater Extent	71	22.19
Somewhat Agree	23	7.19
Don't Agree	184	57.50
Total	320	100

Among all the women lawyers, on whether dual role of working women lead to quarrels, conflicts and differences of opinions, 13.12% have fully agreed to the same, 22.19% have agreed to greater extent on the same, 7.19% have somewhat agreed to the same and 57.50% have disagreed.

9. Problems Faced in Court and Family due to Dual Role Played:

It was asked to the women lawyers that whether there are any problems due to dual role played by them and collected primary data is shown as under.

Table No. 9. Problems Faced in Court and Family due to Dual Role Played

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Yes	214	66.88
No	106	33.12
Total	320	100

It is emphasized that, majority that is, 66.88% of all the women lawyers have agreed that, problems are faced in court and family due to dual role played by them whereas, only 33.12% have disagreed to the same.

10. Problems Faced in Court and Family:

The results of the problems faced by them in court and family as stated by 214 women lawyers discussed above are as under.

Table No. 10. Problems Faced in Court and Family

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Poor Knowledge	10	3.12
Poor Case Preparation	19	5.94
Lack of Attention due to Family Problems	75	23.44
Difficult to Find Time for Court Cases & Family	103	32.19
Any Other	07	2.19
Not Applicable	106	33.12
Total	320	100

Due to dual role played by women lawyers in courts and their families, 3.12% of the women lawyers have stated that, there is poor knowledge, 5.94% have expressed that, there is poor case preparation, 23.44% have mentioned that, there is lack of attention due to family problems, 32.19% have felt that, it is difficult to find time for their court cases and family, 2.19% have also furnished other types of problems and it is not applicable to 33.12% of the women lawyers as they are not facing any of such problems.

11. There is Bright Future for Women Lawyers:

There is increase in the crimes against women. In this regard, the women have to voice for the destitute women, who have become prey for such crimes. Hence, there may be more cases for women lawyers and consequent bright future career for women lawyers. The opinions of women lawyers on whether they have bright career future in legal profession are tabulated as under.

Table No. 11. There is Bright Career Future for Women Lawyers

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Fully Agree	78	24.37
Agree to a Greater Extent	85	26.56
Don't Agree	93	29.07
Can't Say	64	20.00
Total	320	100

24.37% of the women lawyers surveyed have fully agreed that, there is bright career future for women lawyers, 26.56% have agreed to the same to a greater extent, 29.07% have not agreed to the same and 20.00% have not expressed their opinions on the same.

12. Level of Professional Satisfaction:

Level of professional satisfaction of women lawyers reveals, whether the women lawyers are contented with their practice and found it as their bright career future. The primary data gathered on level of professional satisfaction of the women lawyers covered under the study is presented in the following table.

Table No. 12. Level of Professional Satisfaction

Particulars	No's of Women Lawyers	Percentage
Fully Satisfied	53	16.56
Highly Satisfied	116	36.25
Somewhat Satisfied	88	27.50
Dissatisfied	63	19.69
Total	320	100

It is found that, 16.56% of the women lawyers are fully satisfied on their profession, 36.25% are highly satisfied on their profession, 27.50% are somewhat satisfied on their legal professional practice and the remaining 19.69% are not satisfied with their legal profession.

SUGGESTIONS FROM THE STUDY:

It is observed that, remuneration/ fees discrimination is major problem faced by women lawyers and to solve such problems, it is essential to pass rule in the Bar Associations to ensure equal remuneration for equal work. Further, it is suggested to the family members to understand the professional difficulties and problems faced by women lawyers and must cooperate with them in the household work. It is suggested to women lawyers to plan their works in their profession as well as at their families so that, there should not be any role conflicts.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:

Now, it is essential to ensure gender equality in legal profession by various types of measures such as equal remuneration and fees irrespective of gender. Achieving gender equality in the Indian legal profession is not merely a matter of "women's empowerment"; it is a prerequisite for the creation of a more just, inclusive, and effective legal system. The scales of justice can only be truly balanced when the hands that hold them reflect the diversity of the society they serve.

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