



"EXPLORING FAMILY ADJUSTMENT CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES AMONG WORKING WOMEN": WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KANPUR NAGAR

Ragini Kumari¹

Research scholar, Department of Sociology
Sri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Barabanki.
Email - raginigupta845@gmail.com

Dr. Suneel Deepak²

Assistant professor, Shri Ramswaroop Memorial University, Barabanki.
Email-id suneeldeepak.humanities@srmu.ac.in

Dr. Vinod Singh³

Associate professor, Shri Ramswaroop Memorial College of Engineering & Management,
Tiwari Ganj, Faizabad Road, Lucknow (UP).
Email id: vs3188@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This research delves into the family adjustment challenges faced by working women in Kanpur nagar, a city where traditional gender roles intersect with the demands of urban modernization. The study explores how these women navigate the dual pressures of professional responsibilities and familial expectations, examining the obstacles they encounter, the coping mechanisms they adopt, and the broader societal and systemic factors shaping their experiences. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates quantitative data from 200 participants across various sectors with qualitative insights derived from in-depth interviews. Key areas of focus include work hours, household duties, stress levels, support systems, and coping strategies.

The findings reveal that entrenched gender norms significantly heighten the burden on working women, with 65% experiencing moderate to high stress due to extensive work hours coupled with additional household responsibilities. Support systems, such as family assistance, hired help, and flexible workplace policies, play a pivotal role in reducing stress levels and enhancing overall satisfaction. However, only 25% of respondents had access to supportive workplace measures,



while societal pressures and stigma surrounding career-oriented women and the use of domestic help further amplified their challenges.

This study highlights the critical need for systemic changes, including a more equitable distribution of household responsibilities, the implementation of inclusive workplace policies, and a cultural shift toward embracing women's professional ambitions. Addressing these interconnected issues will create an environment where women can balance their personal and professional lives more effectively, fostering both individual empowerment and societal advancement.

Keywords: Work-life balance, family adjustment, societal expectations, institutional support

INTRODUCTION

The integration of women in the labour force is a revolutionary change in the socio-economic order, which works towards both personal empowerment and national development. The achievement comes with intricate issues, especially for women who have to play multiple roles within the workplace and at home. In urban centres such as Kanpur nagar, where pre-modern ideals exist side by side with modernization, the dual roles of working women become an important element of their daily lives.

This research investigates the family adjustment processes of working women in Kanpur, specifically exploring the interaction between their work commitments and familial responsibilities. It seeks to understand the problems they experience, the coping strategies they employ, and the systemic and societal determinants of their capacity to achieve a balance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existing literature highlights the work-life balance challenges faced by working women, especially in urban Indian settings. Traditional gender roles often place a heavier burden on women, requiring them to balance professional obligations with household duties. Bianchi and Milkie (2010) suggest that traditional gender roles disproportionately assign family responsibilities to women, leading to stress and reduced well-being. Studies in the Indian context, such as those by Desai and Jain (2018), highlight additional burdens on women due to extended family expectations and limited organizational support. Studies have predominantly focused on metropolitan cities, leaving a gap in understanding the dynamics in smaller cities like Kanpur. In smaller cities like Kanpur, women



often encounter unique challenges arising from a lack of robust institutional mechanisms, societal pressures, and limited awareness of work-life balance practices. This paper aims to fill that gap, while building upon the existing researches in the field and thus contributes to the broader understanding of family adjustment issues in diverse socio-economic contexts.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the main issues encountered by working women in balancing work and family life.
2. To analyse the role of support systems, including family, workplace policies, and societal norms, in enabling family adjustment.
3. To make suggestions for developing a supportive work environment for working women in Kanpur nagar.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to explore the family adjustment of working women in Kanpur, combining primary and secondary data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The primary data was obtained from the surveys and the interviews while the secondary data was obtained from the academic literatures, government reports and websites majorly used for insights. This study also tries to use a mix of quantitative data from surveys with qualitative data received after a thorough thematic analysis to extract patterns and narratives from interview responses.

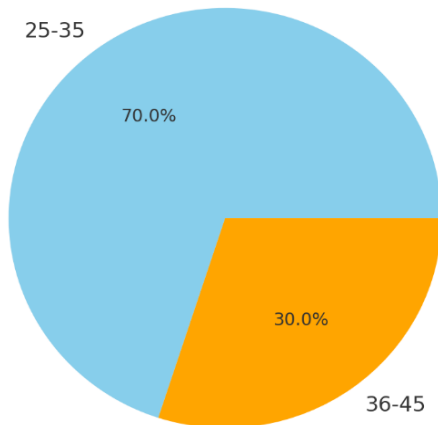
Quantitative Data as well as Qualitative Data:

The sample size taken here was of 200 working women from diverse sectors such as education, healthcare, IT, retail, and small-scale enterprises. The variables that this paper has tried to focus upon are work hours, family responsibilities, stress levels, access to support systems, and coping mechanisms. This was all done through structured questionnaires using a Likert scale for assessing the stress and satisfaction levels. Also special focus was given on the personal experiences, societal expectations, and strategies for managing dual roles.

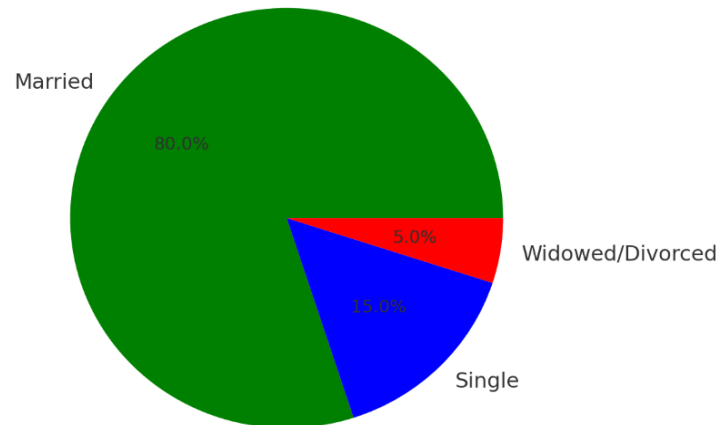


Demographics:

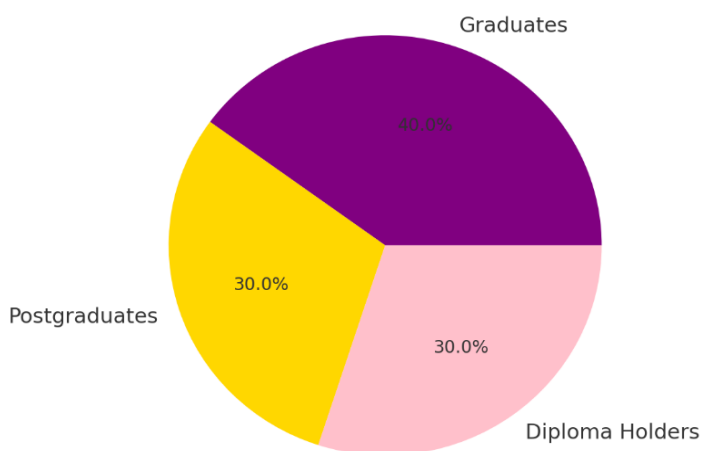
Age Distribution



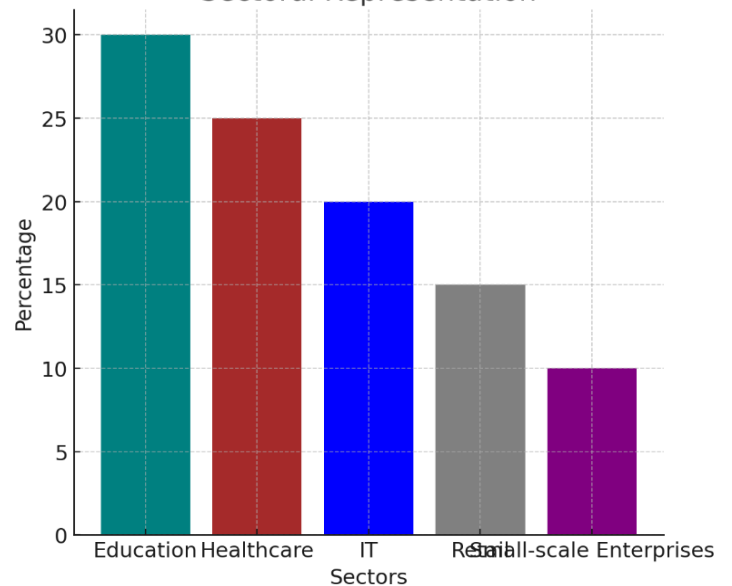
Marital Status



Education Levels



Sectoral Representation



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings reveal a pronounced imbalance between professional and family responsibilities for working women in Kanpur nagar, driven by traditional gender norms and societal expectations that compel women to excel in both roles, often at great personal cost. Around 60% of respondents reported working 8–10 hours daily, while 20% worked more than 10 hours. For 75% of married women, these demanding work hours were compounded by an additional 2–4 hours



of household chores daily, creating a significant source of stress for 65% of respondents, who reported moderate to high stress levels. Stress was found to be strongly correlated with work hours ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.01$), and its impact was visible in physical health issues such as fatigue and headaches (40%) and mental health concerns, including anxiety and sleep disturbances (30%).

Support systems emerged as a crucial factor in mitigating stress levels. Family support, reported by 45% of respondents, was significantly associated with lower stress levels ($r = -0.50$, $p < 0.01$). Among those with family support, many noted that shared responsibilities with spouses or extended family members substantially reduced their stress. Thirty percent of women relied on hired domestic help for tasks like cooking, cleaning, and childcare, while 25% managed all responsibilities on their own. This latter group, comprising women without any form of support, reported the highest stress levels and lowest satisfaction. Regression analysis further highlighted that support systems accounted for 45% of the variance in stress reduction ($\beta = -0.45$, $p < 0.01$), emphasizing their significance, while workplace policies contributed a smaller yet noteworthy impact ($\beta = -0.20$, $p < 0.05$).

The workplace also presented challenges. Only 25% of respondents had access to supportive workplace policies, such as flexible hours or childcare facilities, leaving 50% dissatisfied with their organizations' lack of initiatives for achieving work-life balance. This organizational gap forced many women to navigate their dual responsibilities without adequate institutional support. Qualitative analysis identified organizational gaps as a recurring theme, with respondents calling for more inclusive workplace policies tailored to their needs.

Cultural and societal norms further exacerbated the issue. About 70% of respondents expressed feeling judged for prioritizing their careers over traditional family roles, leading to guilt and self-doubt. The stigma associated with relying on hired domestic help added another layer of difficulty for some women. These societal expectations, which reinforce the idea that women should primarily focus on family roles, compounded the stress and created additional emotional and psychological burdens.

Qualitative insights revealed three dominant themes: the burden of societal expectations, the importance of emotional and practical support, and significant gaps in organizational policies. Respondents shared how societal norms often clashed with their professional aspirations,



creating a constant struggle to meet conflicting expectations. Women with robust support systems, whether from family or hired help, expressed greater satisfaction and lower stress levels, underscoring the critical role of shared responsibilities. Many also highlighted the need for workplaces to provide flexible hours, childcare facilities, and other inclusive policies to alleviate the burden of dual responsibilities.

These findings underscore the multifaceted challenges faced by working women in Kanpur nagar, a city where modernity and tradition often coexist uneasily. The dual pressures of professional demands and traditional family expectations are further exacerbated by limited institutional support and societal stigma, leaving many women to shoulder an overwhelming load. The data emphasizes the urgent need for shared responsibilities within families, greater societal acceptance of career-oriented women, accessible childcare options, and workplace policies that prioritize work-life balance.

CONCLUSION

This research delves into the complex realities faced by working women in Kanpur nagar as they navigate the intersection of professional demands and traditional family roles. The study reveals that these women often endure significant physical and emotional strain, with long work hours compounded by household responsibilities and societal expectations rooted in deeply entrenched gender norms. Stress levels are especially pronounced among women who lack robust support systems, while societal judgment surrounding career-oriented women and the use of domestic help further magnifies their struggles. Yet, their resilience and determination to manage these dual roles remain a testament to their strength and adaptability.

The role of support systems, whether familial, institutional, or external, proves to be pivotal in alleviating these challenges. Women with shared domestic responsibilities, access to hired help, or supportive workplace policies such as flexible hours and childcare facilities experienced noticeably lower stress levels and greater overall satisfaction. However, the findings also expose significant gaps, with many women expressing dissatisfaction over workplace environments that fail to accommodate their dual responsibilities and cultural expectations that perpetuate guilt and self-doubt for prioritizing their careers.



This study underscores the critical need for systemic reforms, including the equitable division of household duties, progressive workplace policies, and a societal shift toward embracing women’s professional aspirations. Such efforts are not only vital to improving the well-being of working women in Kanpur nagar but are also essential for fostering societal progress. By addressing these interconnected challenges, a more inclusive, balanced, and empowering environment can be cultivated—one where women can thrive both personally and professionally, driving both individual and collective growth.

REFERENCES

1. Bianchi, S. M., & Milkie, M. A. (2010). Work and Family Balance. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 135–150.
2. Desai, S., & Jain, D. (2018). Women in the Workforce: An Indian Perspective. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 25(3), 321–344.
3. Kanter, R. M. (1977). Work and Family in the United States: A Critical Review and Agenda for Research and Policy. *Family Coordinator*, 26(1), 6–18.
4. Ministry of Women and Child Development (2011). *Report on Working Women and Family Balance*. Government of India.
5. Census of India (2011). *Primary Census Abstract: Uttar Pradesh*. Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India.
6. National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) (2019). *Women in Workforce and Employment Trends in Uttar Pradesh*. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.