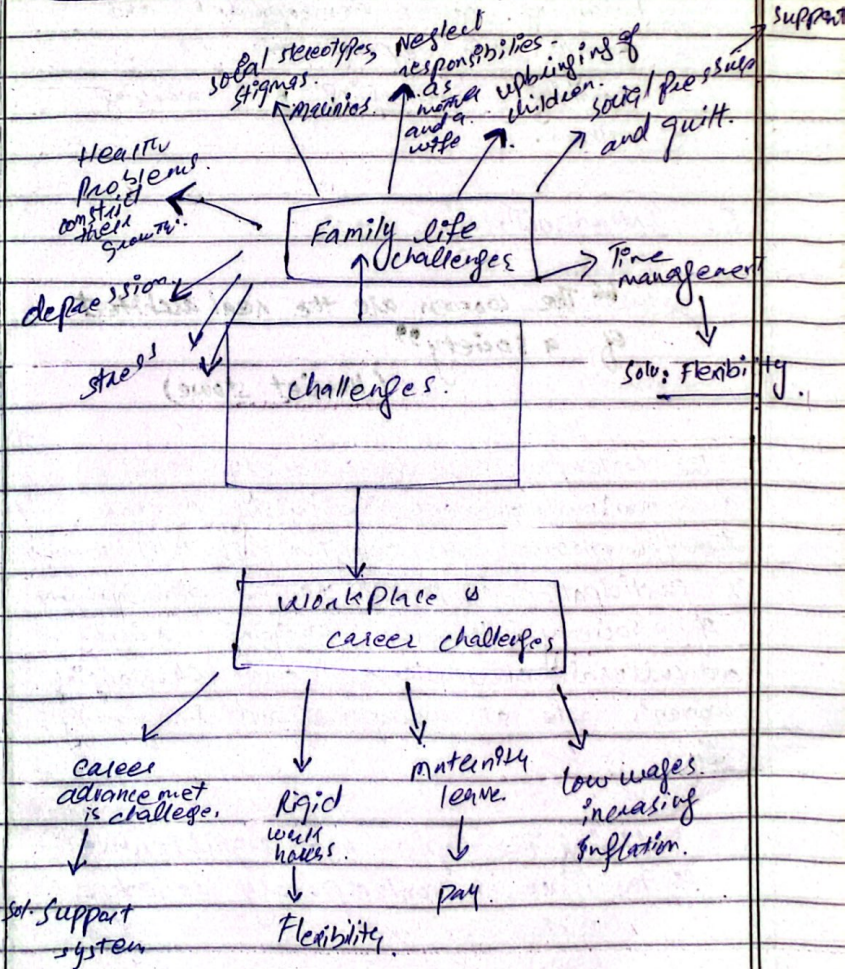


BALANCING CAREER & FAMILY:
THE STRUGGLE OF WORKING

WOMEN MOTHERS

Brainstorming:



OUTLINE

THESIS STATEMENT:

Being a working woman is the requirement of modern life but balancing career development and family life responsibilities is becoming challenging for working mothers.

I. INTRODUCTION

“The women are the real architect of a society”
(Harriet Stowe)

The contemporary modern society requires a woman's involvement in building a state, therefore no one can deny the fact that women's participation is pivotal for the development of a society. However, ongoing social and cultural circumstances are challenging women's role at workplace and in family life.

II. Defining the topic and significance of the issue in contemporary society.

III. Multifaced challenges faced by working mothers while balancing work and family life.

A. Family life and social challenges faced by working mothers.

1. Time management for family life is challenging

2. Social pressure and guilt faced by working mothers.

Case in point:

John Macinno's
Memoir - Sociology

3. Societal expectations, stereotypes and social stigmas.

Case in Point:

The Pakistani woman: where does she stand and where is she going

4. The struggle of finding quality child care

5. Neglect responsibilities as a mother and a wife

6. The socialization of child is compromised.

B. Health challenges faced by working women mothers.

1. Deteriorating Health of working mothers

Case in point:

Every 6 woman out of 10 is facing health issues.
(Women Health Index Report-2024)

2. Depression and stress faced by working mothers.

E. Workplace challenges faced by working mothers.

1. Career advancement is compromised

Case In Point: (UNWD Report)

35% of total working women leave their career pursuing other interests.

2. Rigid working hours and time schedule.

Case in Point: (UN-CEDAW Report)

40% women leave workplace because of strict working hours.

3. Gender Pay gap is a strained factor.

Case in Point:

UN Framework on Gender equality reports: 24% less wages are received by women.

4. Workplace challenges

IV. Call to action to support working mothers.

1. Day care facilities must be provided in every office
2. Flexibility in working hours must be ensured.
3. Higher wages must be provided on dual responsibilities of working mothers.
4. Strong support system by family, partner and workplace must be ensured.
5. Maternity leave and pay must be ensured.
6. Sensitization of society regarding challenges to working women must be escalated.

V. Conclusion

1. Summary of ideas & challenges.
 2. Possible solutions
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"The women are the real architect of a society"
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Gone are the days when women were supposed to run only family life and their whole purpose of life was to nurture children and house chores.

The contemporary society demands equal involvement of women in workforce. Taking a story of Michelle Obama, the writer of "Becoming" says in her book,

"For me being a mother made me a better mother and a better professional, because coming home reminds me what I am working for."

Doing jobs is a fundamental requirement of today's mother. For the development of their children and to give them a better future, both of the parents have to work together but working mothers face multifaceted challenges in managing their professional and family responsibilities, such as socialization of children is compromised. Besides, working mothers in Pakistani society are socially stigmatized on neglecting their family life and responsibilities that eventually pressuring working mother's career development and mental health. Moreover, the conditions

at workplace are also not very satisfied. Working mother cannot groom their career and personality at workplace as their attention is divided. This dilemma of keeping balance between workplace responsibilities and family life is putting pressure on women which is a significant call for action to support such brave women. For that matter, day care facility for children, higher wages, flexibility in working hours and family support must be ensured. This essay highlights the prevailing challenges for working mothers and also suggests some possible solutions to compensate the issue.

Women's participation in work life is significantly important. To keep a society in a working state, both of the genders must work together. All of the developed societies and nations firmly hold the principle of women's active involvement in the society and they progressed. History gives plenty of examples when women stood shoulder-to-shoulder to men. Islam, which provided a code of life, always favours women's participation in developing society. **Hazrat Ayesha (R.A)**, the beloved wife of **Hazrat Muhammad (SAW)** used to educate children of Muslims. Similarly, **Hazrat Khadija (R.A)** was a businesswoman, who managed both her family and career together with ease.

Moreover, women have always been working with men while keeping in balance their family life too. Having a glance of the life of wives of Holy Prophet (PBUH), one cannot deny the fact that women's participation in shaping society is a matter of crucial importance. But that was only possible with the support of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) support as a partner. All of the problems regarding multiplying challenges for working mothers are because of the fact that today's social structure is not supporting women in workplace and in house.

However, this is such an indispensable need of time that women's role in building a nation must be supported and efforts should be made to ease the challenges of women and working mothers.

The significance of working women can be noticed from a few examples of history how women played their role in revolutionizing society.

Marie Curie, the Nobel prize winner in physics and chemistry gave a new direction to the science. Similarly,

Susan Anthony, a female rights activists paved the paths of gender empowerment and equality through her marvellous work. **Margaret Thatcher**, the first female Prime minister of United Kingdom set splendid examples for later political

figures with her political tactics and Prudence. Similarly, **Benazir Bhutto**, the iron lady of Pakistan, shocked the world by becoming Asia's first female Prime minister. The fact is the history is laden with such commendable examples of female figures who changed the destiny of the world but that was only happened by giving them courage, support and opportunities to reach their career's heights. Therefore, it is pertinent to shed light on the prevailing importance of women and working mothers in fabricating social life. However, there are plenty of gruesome challenges that hinder working mother's growth in the society and that need to be addressed. Therefore, the society should assist working mothers to manage their roles and responsibilities as a working mother.

The working mothers face multiple challenges in managing their professional and family responsibilities, the most important of them are social challenges, such as social pressure, biasness, time management, neglecting family life, unavailability of quality care to children and social stigmas.

• In today's world, it is getting

quite difficult for working mothers to manage time for both of their roles. The 9 to 5 work or job left only a few hours for fulfilling family roles. Working mothers leave home after dropping children schools and enter home when children are almost done with their education and studies and go to sleep. 9 to 5 jobs do not provide much time for working women to spend time on the socialization of their children, leaving children on the hands of schools and unskilled teachers. The starting 3 to 4 years of a toddler's life are considered crucial for their physical and mental growth but tough workplace routine is depriving children from their basic right.

Following the first is the societal pressure and working mother's guilt of compromising on her motherly responsibilities and roles. In the wake of such negligence, working mothers are severely criticized by some traditional underdeveloped and developing societies. Says John Mavinios in his book, **Sociology**.

“Some Societies in Asia and Africa, such as India, Sudan, Nigeria, Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan, working females are socially

criticized on neglecting their roles as a mother.

which eventually pushes mothers to guilt and sorrow for not being a good mother of their children, impacting their physical and mental health.

In Pakistan, women are socially bound and restricted in their family life and motherhood which exclusively curtails them to progress in their careers. Hence, there are brave and motivated women who do not compromise on their career growth and motherhood and try hard to fulfill both of their roles and responsibilities but society does not support them as a working mother professional. Multiple social stereotypes, such as "children of working mothers are usually stupid and they disrespect elders" or "she does not need to work while putting her children's nurture at risk" or "what kind of mother is she who does not have time for her children and many more. Not fulfilling social expectations puts pressure on working mothers which could impact their work life performance as well. Similarly, the negatively pervasive discourses on working women and mothers also impact their work life.

Another significant challenge for working mother is the unavailability of proper and quality childcare. Even close relatives and family does not support a working mother in this matter. A working mother have to take the responsibility of finding a good day care to leave her children in reliable hands when she is not around. Most of the times, children are left with grandparents and uncles and aunts but in a nuclear family structure, it becomes a challenge for a working mother to handover her children to someone.

Likewise, neglectation of a working mother's duties is not an easy challenge, by going to work she also keeps her marital life at stake. Before an architect of a nation, a woman is considered a home maker. Therefore, she is supposed to stay at home with no professional growth and if a woman finds courage to move out she has to face challenges in her family life, such as no one cooks for her family, she has to manage house chores after office hours which is a quite exhausting routine.

The last but not the least is the challenge faced by a working mother is the socialization of her children. A mother is considered the first teacher of a child, as stated in Hadith's books.

"A mother's lap is a child's first school"

By keeping herself busy in career growth and job responsibilities, a mother compromises with her child's first basic right of getting education and nurture from their mother. A child could not perform brilliantly if he or she does not get enough love and affection of his mother. According to the science of moral development of a child, the first five years of a child are crucially important because in those years, a child learns how to speak, his moral and social values and his mental growth and a professional mother compromises on her child's socialization.

All of above mentioned struggles for a working mother lead ^{physical} her to the declining mental and health.

According to the report of Women Health Index, Every six out of 10 women are victim of calcium and iron deficiency, leading them to

osteoporosis and softening of bones. A working mother does not pay attention on proper diet and healthy routine, therefore, neglects her health.

Furthermore, an unsatisfactory career and family life puts an additional pressure on mental health of a working woman, causing depression, anxiety, sleeping problems, stress, indifferent attitude towards children, aggression and lack of sympathy. A disturbed mental health ruins a working mother's career, professional life and family structure pushing her to a stressful and unsatisfied life.

The battle of a working mother with challenges is not over yet. There is a list of workplace challenges making it more worst to meet both ends.

According to a report of United Nation Framework on women development; 35% of working mothers leave their struggle for career persuasion at its peak. That is a consequence of family life and work life struggle, leaving a working mother in lurch. Hence, she

decides to end the journey of her personal growth to not to sacrifice her family life and motherhood. Intelligent and prudent women who are a jackpot for the development of any society stop their career advancement because of lack of support. 70% of women leave offices due to a reason of family life and children's socialization.

Another big challenge faced by working mother in the office environment is rigid working hours and lack of flexibility. A strict structure of working hours is challenging for those females who breastfeed their children. Therefore, to avoid such challenges, they are pushed to leave jobs. According to a study, 40% of women leave their jobs because of working hours rigidity. Behind this fact, there are multiple reasons. Many family structures in societies do not allow females to stay out of home till late hours even for the sake of money. Thus, it is a big challenge which needs to be addressed at official level.

The widening and persistent gender pay gap is also a strained factor which makes it hard for working women to keep a balance

in their family and professional life. According to the CEDAW Report,

In many countries around the world women are paid 24% less than their male colleagues.

This poor conditions of distribution of wages on the basis of gender makes it worst for a working mother to keep a balance. Eventually, she would leave her career which is only deteriorating her family life and paying nothing.

Likewise, workplace challenges such as, gender inequalities, sexual and emotional harassment, gender ceiling and disparities also curtail a woman to pursue her career and family life together. A workplace must ensure gender equality and safe workplaces for a working mother. So that, she does not have to compromise on her career growth.

After mentioning challenges for a working women and mother, it becomes pertinent to find some solutions and ongoing efforts to ensure equal opportunities of professional growth for a mother.

Keeping in mind the most important reason and challenge to a mother,

the government and private companies must ensure the existence of proper and active day care centre for the children of working mother. and those day care centres must meet the standards of healthy and efficient environment for a young child. so that a mother may get chances to visit her children and could feed them on time.

Similarly, flexibility in working hours must be ensured for a working women. she should have a mid^{day} break to check on her children and a few mini breaks to feed infants and toddlers in day-care. Besides, she should be given conducive environment of leave in case of emergency during any hour of the day.

Mothers should be given higher wages on her dual responsibilities of raising a child for the welfare of state and working hard to provide the best facilities to this asset of state. Therefore, state must ensure high salaries and honorarium for raising a child and maintaining her work life as well.

A supportive family and society is the backbone of a working mother. Family members and partners must be supportive to a hard, brave and courageous working mother. They must not forget their individual efforts to raise a competent child for the development and better future of a society.

In the same way, in the office environment a working woman and mother should also given opportunity to bring her children occasionally at office, in case of emergency. So that, professional and family life not be compromised.

In addition to this, maternity leave with pay of three months must be ensured to a mother. So that, without the financial challenge and office work stress, she could give her time to her newborn effectively and all the bills of pregnancy and post natal time must paid without any stress.

The most important effort that must be ensured on government and private office level is the sensitization of society regarding challenges and struggles to a

working mother. Media must advertised such programs and campaigns that spread awareness regarding struggle of a working mother. Civil society must also play its role to sensitize public. Through the nexus of collective efforts, a society could provide a conducive environment for a working mother without compromising her family and professional life.

To conclude, it can be analysed that working women especially mother's face multifaceted challenges that negatively impact their motherhood, a child's growth, and her professional growth. Therefore, with collective efforts on individual, community and state level a mother's professional and happy family life could be ensured, eventually it would lead to the development of a civilized nation.
