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A Study on Working Women as a Central Agent of The Wellbeing and Happiness with special Reference to Karad City

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Abstract

This study explores the role of working women in Karad city as central agents of family well-being and happiness. Their participation in the workforce not only strengthens household financial stability but also nurtures emotional bonds, sustains cultural traditions, and influences intergenerational values. By balancing professional duties with domestic responsibilities, women emerge as key decision-makers who shape family harmony and resilience. The study highlights both their contributions and the challenges they face in maintaining work-life balance, offering insights into evolving gender dynamics in contemporary society.

Keywords: Intergenerational Transfer, work life balance, wellbeing and Happiness.

Introduction

In contemporary society, the presence of working women has become a defining feature of social and economic progress. Their participation in the workforce is not merely an indicator of development but a transformative force that reshapes family structures, community interactions, and cultural practices. Women who balance professional responsibilities with domestic roles embody this transformation in a particularly vivid way. They contribute to the prosperity of households while simultaneously nurturing emotional bonds and sustaining traditions, making them pivotal figures in the pursuit of collective well-being. Their contributions are not confined to financial sustenance; they extend to nurturing emotional bonds, preserving cultural practices, and ensuring the well-being of future generations. The centrality of women in decision-making processes often determines the happiness quotient of households, influencing how families adapt the challenges and celebrate achievements. This study seeks to explore the **working woman as a central agent of well-being and happiness in Karad city**, examining her multifaceted roles, her decision-making power, and the intergenerational influence she exerts. By focusing on the lived experiences of women in Karad, the study aims to highlight how their agency contributes not only to family happiness but also to the broader social fabric, offering insights into the evolving dynamics of gender, work, and well-being in a rapidly changing society.

Objectives

- 1) To study multi-dimensional roles, women play in shaping family, community wellbeing
- 2) To study impact of women's decision-making power on the family happiness.
- 3) To study the intergenerational transmission of well-being practises through women.
- 4) To study the work life balance of women.

Background of the Study

In recent decades, the role of women in society has undergone a profound transformation, particularly with the increasing participation of women in the workforce. Traditionally, women were primarily associated with domestic responsibilities such as caregiving, household management, and preservation of cultural values. However, with socio-economic development, education, and globalization, women have increasingly entered formal and informal employment sectors, thereby redefining their roles within the family and society. Working women today function in a dual capacity, balancing professional responsibilities alongside traditional domestic roles. This dual role positions them as central figures in influencing not only the economic stability of households but also the emotional, social, and cultural well-being of family members. Their contribution extends beyond financial support to include nurturing relationships, managing household dynamics, guiding children, and maintaining intergenerational continuity of values and traditions. Existing literature indicates that employment provides women with financial independence, enhanced self-esteem, and greater decision-making power, which positively impacts family well-being.

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At the same time, theories such as the multiple roles theory suggest that while managing multiple responsibilities can lead to stress, it can also create a buffering effect where satisfaction in one role offsets challenges in another. Thus, working women often emerge as key agents in maintaining family harmony and resilience. Moreover, women's participation in decision-making processes has been found to significantly influence household outcomes such as children's education, healthcare, and overall quality of life. Their role in intergenerational transmission passing on cultural practices, values, and behavioral norms further strengthens their position as pivotal contributors to long-term societal well-being. In the context of Karad city, which represents a blend of traditional values and modern economic structures, the role of working women becomes particularly significant. Understanding how women navigate these roles and contribute to family happiness provides valuable insights into changing gender dynamics and the evolving concept of well-being. Therefore, this study aims to explore working women as central agents of well-being and happiness, focusing on their multi-dimensional roles, decision-making power, and the challenges they encounter in balancing work and family life.

Scope of the Study

The present study is confined to **Karad city**, and the findings reflect its specific socio-economic and cultural context. The study focuses exclusively on **working women across different sectors**, examining their roles within the family and society. The study covers the **multi-dimensional role of working women**, including their emotional contribution (family harmony and support), economic role (income contribution and financial independence), cultural responsibilities (preservation of traditions), health-related roles, and participation in **household decision-making**. It also examines their role in **intergenerational transmission of values** and their ability to maintain **work-life balance** amid various challenges. The analysis is based on **percentage and descriptive methods**.

Conceptually, the study views working women as **central agents of well-being**, contributing to economic stability, emotional satisfaction, social harmony, and cultural continuity.

However, the scope is limited due to a small sample size, restricted geographical area, and reliance on self-reported data.

Importance of the Study

1. Understanding Social Change

The study helps in understanding how the role of working women is evolving in modern society and how they contribute to family and social development.

2. Highlighting Women's Contribution

It brings attention to the multi-dimensional role of women—economic, emotional, cultural, and social—which is often undervalued.

3. Improving Family Well-being

The study shows how women influence family happiness, decision-making, and overall quality of life.

4. Policy and Planning Support

The findings can help policymakers and organizations design better policies like flexible work, childcare support, and women empowerment programs.

5. Academic Contribution

It adds to existing research in areas like gender studies, sociology, and management by providing real data and insights.

6. Awareness and Empowerment

It creates awareness about the challenges faced by working women and encourages society to support gender equality.

Limitation

- 1) The study limited to Karad city area only.
- 2) For the study only working women are taken into consideration, self-employed unorganized sectors and rural women are not taken for the study.
- 3) Due to time constraints study was limited by data collection window, which taken the sample size to 39 participants rather than a broader demographic area.

Research Methodology

Type of Research

The present study is a Descriptive and Analytical Research.

- Descriptive, because it describes the roles of working women (emotional, economic, social, cultural).
- Analytical, because it examines relationships between variables such as decision-making, income contribution, and family happiness based on collected responses.

Research Approach

Data is collected using a questionnaire, it was further analysed using percentage analysis and graphical representation for meaningful interpretation.

Area of Study

The study is conducted in Karad city and it is the pilot testing data, representing a semi-urban socio-economic environment where traditional and modern roles coexist.

Sampling Technique Convenience Random Sampling Technique

Reason:

- Respondents were selected based on accessibility and willingness
- Suitable for small-scale academic research

Sample Size:

Total respondents: 39 working women

Data Collection Method

Primary Data

- Collected through a structured questionnaire covering:
- Emotional role (family harmony, stress management)
- Economic role (income contribution, financial decisions)
- Decision-making power
- Cultural and health roles
- Work-life balance
- Personal well-being

Secondary Data

- Research journals
 - Online website
1. Measurement Scale
- The study uses Nominal and Ordinal scales (multiple-choice responses)

Literature Review

- Existing literature highlights that working women play a significant role in enhancing both individual and family well-being through multiple dimensions, including psychological, economic, social, and cultural aspects.

1. Rosalind C. Barnett & Janet Shibley Hyde (2001)

Barnett and Hyde (2001) proposed the **expansionist theory**, arguing that engagement in multiple roles (such as work and family) is beneficial rather than harmful for women. Contrary to the traditional belief that multiple responsibilities create stress, the study suggests that these roles provide additional sources of income, social support, self-esteem, and psychological well-being. The authors emphasize that participation in both professional and family domains enhances overall life satisfaction and reduces emotional distress (**Barnett & Hyde, 2001**).

2. Arlie Russell Hochschild & Anne Machung (2012)

Hochschild and Machung (2012), in *The Second Shift*, highlight the persistent inequality in domestic labor. Their study reveals that even when women are employed full-time, they continue to perform the majority of household and caregiving responsibilities. This “second shift” leads to increased stress, fatigue, and work–life conflict.

The research underscores the emotional and physical burden on working women and calls attention to the need for more equitable division of household labor (**Hochschild & Machung, 2012**).

3. Jeffrey H. Greenhaus & Nicholas J. Beutell (1985)

- Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) developed a foundational framework identifying **three major sources of work–family conflict**: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict. Their study explains how competing demands between work and family roles can negatively affect individuals’ well-being and job performance. This model remains central to understanding the challenges faced by working women in balancing professional and personal responsibilities (**Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985**).

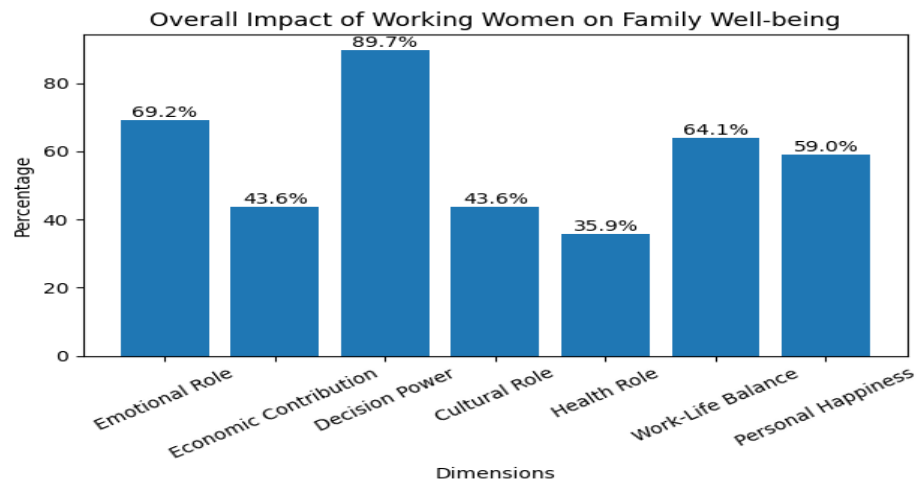
4. Saroj Parasuraman & Carol A. Simmers (2001)

- Parasuraman and Simmers (2001) examined how different types of employment (such as self-employment vs. organizational employment) influence work–family conflict and well-being. Their findings suggest that individuals with greater autonomy in their work experience lower levels of conflict and higher well-being. The study highlights that flexibility and control over work schedules play a crucial role in reducing stress and improving life satisfaction, especially for working women (**Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001**).

5. Recent Studies on Hybrid Work and Gender Roles in India (2020–2025)

- Recent research on hybrid work models in India indicates that while flexible work arrangements offer opportunities for better work–life integration, they also blur the boundaries between professional and personal life. Women, in particular, face increased challenges such as role overload, unequal household responsibilities, limited organizational support, and technological constraints. These studies emphasize that without supportive policies and equitable domestic arrangements, hybrid work can intensify stress and burnout among women, despite its potential benefits (**Recent studies, 2020–2025**).

Data Analysis and Discussion



- The study is based on responses from 39 working women in Karad city. The majority of respondents belong to the **41–50 age group** and are **married**, indicating that most participants are actively managing both family and work responsibilities.
- In terms of emotional roles, most women contribute significantly to **family harmony through emotional support and conflict resolution**, highlighting their role as emotional anchors in the household. Economically, although many women are **partial or minimal contributors**, their income still improves the family's **standard of living and financial stability**.
- A key finding is that women have strong **decision-making power**, with a large majority reporting that their decisions positively impact family happiness. This shows that working women play a crucial role in shaping household outcomes.
- Women also actively contribute to **cultural continuity and intergenerational value transmission**, mainly through traditions and role modeling. In terms of health, they take responsibility for both **family care and promoting healthy practices**.
- However, the study reveals significant **work-life balance challenges**, as most women prioritize family over work and face issues like household responsibilities and lack of support. Despite these challenges, **financial independence is a major source of personal happiness**, while family responsibilities remain the biggest stress factor.

Findings of the Study

- **Emotional contribution:** Women act as emotional anchors, providing support and resolving conflicts, which enhances family harmony.

- **Economic role:** Even partial income contributions improve household living standards and financial stability.
- **Decision-making power:** A majority of women reported that their decisions positively influence family happiness, showing their strong agency in household outcomes.
- **Cultural continuity:** Women play a vital role in transmitting traditions and values across generations.
- **Health responsibilities:** They manage family health care and promote healthy practices.
- **Work-life balance challenges:** Most women prioritize family over work, facing stress due to household duties and limited support.
- **Personal happiness:** Financial independence is a major source of satisfaction, though family responsibilities remain the biggest stress factor.

Conclusion:

Working women emerge as central agents of well-being, balancing multiple roles that extend beyond financial support to emotional, cultural, and health-related contributions. Their strong decision-making power enhances family happiness, while their role in intergenerational transmission ensures cultural continuity. Despite challenges in achieving work-life balance, their financial independence and emotional resilience strengthen both households and society. The study concludes that empowering women through supportive structures and policies is essential to maximize their potential as drivers of family harmony, social progress, and collective happiness.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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