SYNOPSIS

AN ECONOMIC STUDY OF WOMEN WORK PARTICIPATION
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ISLAMIC WOMEN IN
MADURAI REGION, TAMILNADU

Introduction

Women who constitute half of the world’s population are not fully harnessed as a human resource. Any society cannot go ahead if 50 per cent of the population does not participate in its developmental activities. Indira Gandhi, the former Prime Minister of India observed that neglect of women would be criminal since humanity had been deprived of half of the energy and creative talents. Right through history, in all religions and cultures women have been assigned a secondary status.

The world wars proved to be a turning point in the history of mankind. The participation of women in the work force started increasing since then. This trend is observed in developing nations.

In tune with the world wide trend, Indian women are marching towards self-development. In India, women played a secondary role for centuries together. During the colonial rule, women lived a miserable and horrible life in diverse situations.
Mahatma Gandhi, Father of Indian Nation helped women to find a new dignity in public life, a new place in the national mainstream, a new confidence and a consciousness that they could act against oppression.

The socio-economic changes that were set in motion in India after independence provided women with better educational and employment opportunities. Besides, a series of laws such as the Special Marriage Act 1954, the Hindu marriage Act 1955, Equal Remuneration Act 1976 passed by the government of India helped to improve the lot of women. Today educated Indian women have made a landmark in the non-conventional fields like consultancy, marketing, advertising, garment exporting, interior decoration, beauty parlours, road and building construction. Women have started coming forward in considerable number in certain spheres of higher category jobs like civil service, judiciary, foreign service, medicine and architecture. In organised sectors like banking, insurance, communication and air transport women's share in employment has recently doubled over the decade and government's intervention played an important role in this regard.

**Statement of the Problem**

Women who constitute half of the world’s population are not fully harnessed as a human resource. Any society cannot go ahead if 50 per cent of the population does not participate in its developmental activities. Right through
history, in all religious and cultures, women have been assigned a secondary status. The world wars proved to be turning points in the history of mankind. The participation of women in the work force started increasing since them. This trend is observed in developing nations. In tune with the worldwide trend, Indian women are marching towards self-development.

The socio-economic changes that were set in motion in India after Independence provided women with better education and greater employment opportunities. Today educated Indian women have made a landmark in both conventional and non-conventional fields. In the case of Islamic women, the religion prevents them from getting equal access to education and work participation. It is well known that the work participation of Islamic women is very low more due to the force of religion per se than the patriarchal structures and patterns as well as low mobility and lack of opportunity. It is worth noticing that the work participation rate of Islamic women tends to increase in recent times. The position of Muslim woman has changed not only in the sphere of marriage and family but also in the spheres of education, employment and political life. Women’s employment particularly in the case of Islamic women has an important role in women’s empowerment. Hence, the present study is an attempt to analyse the nature of women workforce, particularly that of Islamic women in Madurai of Tamil Nadu region with the following specific objectives.
Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study area:

1. To study the socio-economic background of Islamic women and relationship with the familiar characteristics.
2. To examine the variation in income of the women working in public and private sectors.
3. To assess the contribution of the respondent’s income towards family income and quality of work life.
4. To analyse the extent to which work participation of women empowers them in socio-economic and decision making.
5. To analyse and compare the work-family conflict of women employees in public and private sectors.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no variation in income among the women workers in public and private, central and state, and industry and service sectors.
2. There is no difference in the perception of quality of work life and job satisfaction between women workers in public and private sectors.
3. There is no difference in women’s empowerment between public and private sector women employees.
Methodology

Designing a suitable methodology and selection of analytical tools are important for a meaningful analysis of any research problem. In this section, an attempt has been made to describe the methodology which includes sampling procedure, period of study, and collection of data and tools of analysis.

Sampling Procedure

The present study is confined to women working in organized sectors both public and private. In Madurai region the information regarding the list of offices of both public and private sectors was obtained from various sources. Out of 14,642 female workers in Madurai region, a total of 300 sample women working in various offices of both public and private sectors were randomly selected by using random numbers for the purpose of primary data collection. 300 sample women employees were post-stratified into two categories namely public and private sectors. Out of 300 sample women, 163 (54.33 per cent) came under public sector and the remaining 137 (45.67 per cent) came under private sector.

Period of Study

The field survey was carried out from October 2007 to March 2008 for the collection of primary data. The data collection pertains to the financial year 2007-2008.
Collection of Data

The data required for this study have been obtained from primary and secondary sources. First-hand data were collected from the field directly through structured comprehensive interview schedule.

Primary data have been collected through personal interview method with a pre-tested schedule which consists of information about the socio-economic characteristics, family characteristics, quality of work life, job satisfaction and the like.

Secondary data related to study have been taken from the District Collector’s Office, Madurai, Madurai Municipality, District Employment Office, Employees of State Insurance and different categories of government organizations. The researcher collected information from the Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum and also from a few magazines and journals.

Tools of Analysis

In order to examine the relationship between variables, Chi-square test was carried out.
ANOVA was used to test the variation in income among the women workers in public and private sector, Central and State and Industry and Service.

In order to assess the contribution of women employees in family income, a log linear multiple regression model was estimated for public and private sector separately.

To quantify the work-family conflict, quality of work, job satisfaction and empowerment scaling technique has been adopted for the present study.

Two-way ANOVA was carried out to examine whether there was any significant variation in quality of work life and job satisfaction.

Step-wise regression model was computed to assess the contribution of independent variables to quality of work life and empowerment.

The correlation coefficient technique has been used to analyse among the variables of work-family conflict.

One way ANOVA was carried out to examine the variation in empowerment of different sectors.

In order to find out the level of empowerment, arithmetic mean and standard deviation were computed.
To examine the relationship between the level of empowerment and socio-economic factors, Chi-square test was employed.

**Chapter Scheme**

The study is organized in seven chapters.

Chapter I introduces the subject, status of women in Islam, women in ancient civilization, Muslim women in India, Muslim women and work participation, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypotheses, limitations and chapter scheme.

Chapter II reviews the earlier studies relating to women working in organized sector. And further the theoretical perspectives of women labour participation are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter III describes methodology adopted and the profile of the study area.

Chapter IV analyses the characteristics of the sample women employees, the relationship between the characteristics of women employees and their familial characteristics and women workers’ contribution towards family income.

Chapter V explains the work-family conflict, quality of work life and job satisfaction. Further it examines the inter-correlation among work-family conflict
variables and assesses the contribution of independent variables to work-family conflict.

Chapter VI deals with work participation of women and empowerment of women through decision making. The factors which influence the empowerment of women are also analysed.

Chapter VII presents the summary of findings along with conclusion and suggestions based on the study.