Abstract

Promoting mainstreaming of gender and gender equality has increasingly gained attention over workplaces, both in public and private sector. Integration of gender sensitive policies and framework play a crucial role in balancing of work environment. Measures adopted to increase ratio of educated and independent women play an important role in empowering women to act as decision maker especially in matters of their own and family health and well-being especially in today’s world which is changing at a startling pace. These changes have created economic opportunities for women who want to do something for their own and for their family. A recent United Nations report concluded that economic development is closely related to the advancement of women. In nations where women have advanced, economic growth has usually been steady. By contrast, in countries where women have been restricted, the economy has been stagnant. According to the 1995 UN survey, “two changes have occurred over the past 10 years in the enabling environment for women in the economy. One is the establishment of legal equality for women. The other is granting women equal access to education and training.” Women constitute almost half the total population of the world and out of which two-thirds of world’s adult illiterates are women. According to food and agricultural organization, the most disadvantaged section of society is the women. They are the ‘silent majority’ of the world’s poor. They face peculiar social, cultural, educational, political and allied problems. Women in India constitute about 50 percent of the total population. It is, therefore, important that when considering the economic development of this segment of the population, due attention is given to their socio-economic empowerment. India envisions a future in which Indian women are independent and self-reliant (Agarwal 2003). Government of Karnataka state has taken a step to make this dream a success by recruitment at the post of bus conductors. Karnataka state transport was the first to appoint women conductors in 1948. Maharashtra is the second state to do so. Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) has been instrumental in providing access and connectivity across the entire state of Maharashtra. The observations of the researcher show that women conductors are facing a number of problems. They are simply not clear about their career path. The problems faced by
women conductors, their health, safety etc. indicate that the area needs to be researched and solutions be found.

It is an open truth that working women have to face a lot many challenges and problems during their work life and family life just by virtue of their being women. A gender bias creates an obstacle at the every stage in their working environment. The age old belief of male superiority over women in Indian society creates several hurdles for women at their place of work. The inbuilt conviction has developed in males and in females themselves that the women are capable of less work than men or less efficient than men. Since last few decades the new generation of female has started the transformation of the traditional patriarchal social structure across the globe. This social shift which had been set in motion at the end of 20th century in India tends to bring new surprises in view. This development has exposed women to previously male-dominated professions. In this view, the challenges and problems of women who work in male dominated occupations in transport industry are being explored. The study focuses on the human resource management of bus conductors in transport organization.

Apart from this challenge, problems relating to motivational factors and causes for entry to bus conductors job are analyzed. Finally the argument will come across with job satisfaction of women who work as bus conductors in transport industry are being analyzed. The nature of work of every occupation has its own entity. Similarly the bus conductor work has required more physical and interactive skills than the intellectual knowledge. The nature of bus conductor is entirely different from other occupations since it is service sector for public. They have to work in different shifts every day and interact with commuters of multi personalities and bare misbehaviour of commuters. Being a woman it is a challenging task for them and hence it is the present study is important so as to make the women conductor feel at ease while working in the male dominated world. This study attempted to examine the Human Resource Management of women conductors. Research on Human Resource Management practices and their outcomes such as women employee satisfaction, their recruitment and selection, training and development needs, welfare facilities, commitment and retention have rarely been conducted in the transport industry specifically for the female gender in India and abroad.
Data were collected on employees’ perceptions about Human Resource Management practices and their outcomes through structured questionnaire. Sample consisted of 295 women conductors who are working indifferent depots in five districts of western Maharashtra. Non-Parametric tests like Chi-square, Pearson correlation coefficient and descriptive statistics were used for various analyses of this study.

- The findings of the research revealed that Human Resource Management practices are significant predictors of employee satisfaction, commitment and retention. It was revealed that the five important factors are entitlement for the HRA, DA, CA etc., safety of working environment, knowing the promotion rules, night shift allowance and retirement benefits. The highest loading is of night shift allowance which is 0.850, followed by safety of environment which is 0.846. The third highest loading is of entitlement for allowances like HRA, MA, CA etc. (0.836), with next as knowing promotion rules with loading 0.806. The fifth priority loading of 0.751 of retirement benefit. It was confirmed that there is a significant relationship between working efficiency and healthiness of working environment. It was also proved by the study that the socioeconomic status and the level of satisfaction of women conductors is significantly related. The major findings of the study are:

- Work done by women conductors is of standing nature which is problematic in peak hours among the women conductors. Standing for long hours have led to muscular and other health-related problems.

- Handling the passengers in the bus is one of challenge and various problems have been faced by the women conductors which lead to mental stress and psychological problems for them.

- Over work load, work stress, dual role, lack of leave facilities, low salary, shift hours, partial HR policies and health hazards have led to job dissatisfaction among the women conductors.

- Calculation of number of duty hours is also seen as unfair by the women conductors.

- Partial ways of allotting duties have created workplace problems for women bus conductors.
Recently women in India are emerging as a major player in the workforce while playing diverse role in society. Due to a vast expansion of labour market, a number of women are entering even to the masculine jobs. India’s traditional society has started gradually accepting the new changes where women working in masculine jobs are also getting accepted. The recent developments in work force indicate new paradigms in structure of the society. Apart from this the government should also take necessary steps to implement the social legislations so as to empower working women and improve the facilities to make them women friendly. It is expected that the findings and the suggestions of the present study will be helpful for the concerned persons and authorities in increasing satisfaction level of the employees in their work environment.

With the amount of work the researcher has done in the present field, it can be said that today women participation in all fields is increasing at a considerable rate, efforts are being taken at the economy as well as global level to enhance woman’s involvement in the public sector. Still women are facing problems worldwide. Women conductors are no exception, a lot needs to be done to improve their status and to provide them a secure working environment.