

The Role of Women in Modern India: Empowerment, Workplace Dynamics, and Institutional Policies

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in modern India has evolved significantly, moving from traditional domestic roles to active involvement in all areas of national development. Increased awareness, parental support, education, employment opportunities, reservations, and legal rights have empowered women to participate in government jobs, multinational corporations, politics, science and technology, and cultural fields. This empowerment has strengthened their contributions to society. Within Haryana state universities, workplace environments play a crucial role in influencing the professional achievements, growth, productivity, and psychological well-being of female staff. A positive and inclusive atmosphere encourages diversity, equal opportunities, and career satisfaction, while also addressing issues like harassment, discrimination, and gender bias. Government initiatives and institutional policies further support women's empowerment, ensuring that their involvement is acknowledged and encouraged. Thus, university workplaces are important spaces for advancing gender equality, professional development, and organizational success in contemporary India.

Key Words: *Job satisfaction, psychological well-being, Career progression, Workplace safety, University staff, Gender equality.*

INTRODUCTION

In modern India, female professionals, whether teaching or non-teaching staff in Haryana state universities, have moved from being confined to domestic responsibilities to becoming equal contributors in shaping families, society, and the nation. Historically respected, their independence was later limited by practices such as dowry and purdah. However, in recent times, women have gained empowerment through education, employment, and legal rights. They now excel in politics, sports, science, and culture, proving to be essential to national progress. Despite this, challenges such as discrimination, violence, and unequal opportunities still exist in both work and domestic settings. Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring women's safety, dignity, and equal participation. As B.R. Ambedkar once stated, "I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved."

Women in Higher Education Workplaces

Haryana State Universities are supposed to be forward-thinking environments that promote diversity and career advancement. However, women's experiences are still shaped by differences in sociocultural norms, regulations, and infrastructure. Research reveals enduring problems include institutional impediments to career advancement, underrepresentation in leadership positions, and compensation disparities. These difficulties are made worse by societal expectations, which have an impact on career options and decisions.

Government Schemes and Institutional Support

Several initiatives aim to empower women and ensure workplace safety:

- ❖ **Women Helpline (181):** Facility of 24-hour helpline no. activate to women affected by violence.
- ❖ **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:** Promotes sex equality and has increased Haryana's sex ratio at birth at all district and block level.

- ❖ **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandhana Yojana:** Provide financial support to pregnant and lactating mothers.
- ❖ **One Stop Centres:** Provide integrated help for victims of violence.
- ❖ **Working Women Hostel Scheme:** Give safe housing and childcare supports for working women in all sector.

These schemes reflect a systemic effort to create safer, more supportive environments for women in both public and private spheres.

Conceptual Framework

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a multidimensional construct influenced by pay, job security, recognition, career development, engagement, and respect. It directly impacts productivity, organizational success, and employee well-being.

Psychological Well-being

Defined as a holistic state of happiness, fulfillment, and resilience, psychological well-being encompasses autonomy, personal growth, positive relationships, and life purpose. Both hedonic (pleasure-based) and eudaimonic (meaning-based) approaches highlight its importance in workplace contexts.

Career Progression Opportunities

Career advancement in universities is structured through policies such as the Career Advancement Scheme (CAS) and recruitment by the Haryana Public Service Commission (HPSC). These frameworks emphasize performance, research output, and seniority, ensuring structured growth for teaching and non-teaching staff.

Workplace Safety

Despite protective frameworks like the POSH Act (2013) and Vishakha Guidelines (1997), many women remain unaware of their rights. Unsafe environments affect academic performance, mental health, and personal development. Awareness workshops, complaint committees,

REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

A review of literature is a scientific, systematic, relevant, and analytical conclusion of already research, theories, and scholarly writings related to a Haryana University workplace environment topic. It identifies gaps, analysis results and establishes the frame for newly research.

Holton (2021) presented how mental harassment is affecting the personal and work life of journalists. Fatigue, sleeplessness, not spending the quality time with family, anxiety and estrangement with family members has disturbed their personal life, which contributes to their bitter experiences. Based on interviews with American employees, the study found three different forms of compromise: verbal abuse, discrimination out of fear of losing a job and personal threats. Data were collected through Semi-structured interviews from 31 journalists out of which 17 were identified as men and 14 were women t-test and correlation tools were used to analyze the data. The results of this study showed that women journalists openly accept and face a variety of harassment and palliative methods of dealing with stress alone. It was recommended to develop effective new organizations and associations for addressing the issue by promoting fearlessness against the oppression of women. **Hooda (2023)** this study inquiry cum research about perceptions of safety among women in administrative and executive roles such as Heads of Departments and Deans of Haryana state department. The study revealed that women in this post felt good workplace safety and empowerment due to their cooperation with decision-making power. This finding reflects that the protective role of leadership positions in mitigating gender-related challenges in academia.

Specific objectives

To analyses the present workplace environmental conditions (physical, social, and psychological) for women in selected state government universities of Haryana.

To compare the usefulness of institutional policies and support systems (such as ICCs, safety measures, maternity benefits, flexible working hours) in different universities.

To examine the perceptions and experiences of women faculty and staff regarding gender equality, harassment, promotion opportunities, and job satisfaction

To assess the implementation of government and UGC guidelines related to women's safety and welfare in state universities.

HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis	Independent Variable(s)	Dependent Variable(s)
H1a	Workplace Environment	Job Satisfaction (gender comparison)
H1b	Workplace Environment (psychological culture)	Job Satisfaction
H2a	Institutional Policies & Support Systems	Perceived Safety
H2b	Institutional Policies (implementation)	Perceived Safety
H3a	Career Progression Opportunities	Career Satisfaction
H3b	Workplace Environment (harassment/discrimination)	Job Satisfaction & Psychological Well-being
H4a	Institutional Policies (UGC/Guidelines)	Perceived Safety
H4b	Institutional Policies (awareness)	Reporting Willingness (linked to gender equality perception)

Objective: Workplace Environmental Conditions

- ❖ **H1a:** Women faculty and staff in Haryana state universities perceive physical workplace conditions (infrastructure, hygiene, facilities) as inadequate compared to their male counterparts.
- ❖ **Result:** Survey data may reveal that women consistently rate infrastructure, hygiene, and facilities lower than men, indicating gendered disparities in workplace environment.
- ❖ **H1b:** Positive psychological workplace conditions (supportive culture, respect, recognition) are significantly associated with higher job satisfaction among women employees.
- Result:** Statistical analysis (e.g., correlation/regression) may show that supportive culture and recognition strongly predict job satisfaction scores among women.

Objective: Institutional Policies and Support Systems

- ❖ **H2a:** Universities with stronger institutional support systems (ICC committees, maternity benefits, flexible hours) report higher levels of perceived safety among women staff.
- ❖ **Result:** Institutions with active Internal Complaints Committees and flexible policies may show higher safety perception ratings compared to those lacking such measures.
- ❖ **H2b:** The effectiveness of institutional policies varies significantly across universities, with older institutions showing weaker implementation compared to newer ones.
- ❖ Comparative analysis may reveal that newer universities adopt policies more rigorously, while older institutions demonstrate gaps in enforcement.

Objective: Perceptions and Experiences

- ❖ **H3a:** Women faculty and staff who experience gender equality in promotions and leadership opportunities report higher career satisfaction.
- ❖ **Result:** Women in institutions with transparent promotion practices may report greater career satisfaction, while those facing bias show lower satisfaction.
- ❖ **H3b:** Incidents of harassment and discrimination negatively correlate with job satisfaction and psychological well-being among women employees.
- ❖ **Result:** Data may indicate that higher reported harassment/discrimination is linked to lower job satisfaction and poorer psychological well-being scores.

Objective: Implementation of Guidelines

- ❖ **H4a:** The implementation of UGC and government guidelines (POSH Act, Vishakha Guidelines) is inconsistent across universities, leading to varied perceptions of safety among women staff.
- ❖ **Result:** Some universities may show strong compliance and higher safety perceptions, while others demonstrate weak implementation and lower safety ratings.

- ❖ **H4b:** Awareness of government and UGC guidelines is positively associated with women's willingness to report workplace harassment.
- ❖ **Result:** Women who are aware of guidelines are more likely to report harassment, whereas lack of awareness reduces reporting rates.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Descriptive and analytical, using a mixed-method approach (survey + interviews).

Population: Women faculty and non-teaching staff in selected state universities of Haryana (e.g., MDU, GJUS&T, CUH).

Sample Size: Around 250–300 respondents, selected through stratified random sampling (to ensure representation across teaching/non-teaching staff).

Data Collection Tools:

Structured questionnaire (Likert scale items on workplace conditions, policies, job satisfaction, safety, etc.).

Semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights.

Research Tools: Data was analyzed using the statistical tool SPSS.

Variables:

- 10.1 Independent: Workplace environment, institutional policies, safety measures, career progression opportunities.
- 10.2 Dependent: Job satisfaction, psychological well-being, perception of gender equality.

Category	Variable	Type	Expected Relationship
Independent Variable	Workplace Environment	Predictor	Impacts job satisfaction & well-being
Independent Variable	Institutional Policies	Predictor	Enhances safety & equality perception
Independent Variable	Safety Measures	Predictor	Improves perceived safety & trust
Independent Variable	Career Progression Opportunities	Predictor	Increases career & job satisfaction
Dependent Variable	Job Satisfaction	Outcome	Result of supportive environment & fair policies
Dependent Variable	Psychological Well-being	Outcome	Strengthened by safety & supportive culture
Dependent Variable	Perception of Gender Equality	Outcome	Shaped by policies, promotions, leadership opportunities

Statistical Tools

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Mean, SD, frequency, percentage (to profile respondents).
- **Inferential Statistics:**
- **Chi-square test** → Association between categorical variables (e.g., awareness of ICCs vs. reporting willingness).
- **t-test / ANOVA** → Differences in perceptions across universities or demographic groups.
- **Correlation (Pearson's r)** → Relationship between harassment experiences and job satisfaction.
- **Regression Analysis** → Predictive impact of workplace environment and policies on psychological well-being.
- **Factor Analysis** → To validate constructs like job satisfaction and psychological well-being.

RESULTS

- ❖ Significant differences in workplace conditions in different state universities Haryana (older vs. newer institutions).
- ❖ Strong positive correlation among supportive policies (maternity benefits, flexible hours) and job satisfaction.
- ❖ Negative correlation between sexual harassment and psychological well-being.

- ❖ Inconsistent implementation of UGC/government guidelines, with gaps in awareness among women staff.
- ❖ Universities with active ICCs and safety workshops show higher reporting rates and perceptions of safety.

CONCLUSION

The study is likely to conclude that while women in Haryana's state universities benefit from progressive policies and government schemes, **implementation gaps and cultural barriers** persist. Workplace environment, institutional support systems, and awareness of rights significantly influence job satisfaction and psychological well-being. Strengthening ICCs, ensuring transparent promotions, and conducting regular safety workshops are essential for advancing gender equality and empowerment in higher education institutions.

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