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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT: A REVIEW OF CONCEPT, FORMATION AND MUTUALITY DEBATE <i>DR. K G SANKARANARAYANAN & PARESH R. LINGADKAR</i>	1
2.	A STUDY ON DEALERS, DISTRIBUTORS, AND ENGINEERS PERCEPTION TOWARDS PIPE INDUSTRY IN NORTH GUJARAT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE OF ASTRAL POLY TECHNIK LTD. <i>KALPESH B. PRAJAPATI & MAHESH K. PATEL</i>	4
3.	FOR COMING EFFECT OF IRAQ'S ACCESSION TO THE (WTO) IN THE MANAGING OF TAX & CUSTOMS REVENUES <i>HUSAM YASEEN MOHSIN & KEZHONG ZHANG</i>	9
4.	UNDERSTANDING THROUGH LITERATURE REVIEW THE BEHAVIOURS ASSOCIATED WITH SAFE DRIVING ON THE ROADS <i>RICHARD VINCENT D'SOUZA & K JANARDHANAM</i>	15
5.	THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION MODEL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICE OF INDONESIAN POLICE: SOCIETY CONFLICT RESOLUTION BY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION CASE STUDY IN POLRESTA SURAKARTA/SURAKARTA POLICE <i>RUDI HARTONO, DR. SRI SUWITRI, NYOMAN SERIKAT P. JAYA & HARDI WARSONO</i>	22
6.	WORK LIFE BALANCE OF ENTREPRENEURS: A GENDER ANALYSIS <i>DR. KASAMSETTY SAILATHA & DR. M. SHIVALINGE GOWDA</i>	27
7.	DETERMINANTS OF SESAME TRADERS' WILLINGNESS TO SUSTAIN THEIR TRADING THROUGH ETHIOPIAN COMMODITY EXCHANGE (ECX) IN ETHIOPIA <i>ASMELEASH ADDIS CHEKOL, DR. TEFATSION SAHLU DESTA & RAHWA GEBRE TEFSAHUNEY</i>	32
8.	FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF NIGERIA'S CONTRIBUTORY PENSION SCHEME IN NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA, LAGOS <i>DR. CLEMENT IKENNA OKEKE</i>	42
9.	FACTORS THAT AFFECT LOAN REPAYMENT PERFORMANCE OF SMALLHOLDER FARMER BORROWERS FROM MICROFINANCE INSTITUTIONS IN ETHIOPIA: A SURVEY STUDY OF AMHARA CREDIT AND SAVING INSTITUTION (ACSI) – FOGERA WEREDA, AMHARA <i>ASNAKE WORKU WUBIE, DR. TEFATSION SAHLU DESTA & RAHWA GEBRE TEFSAHUNEY</i>	50
10.	IMPACT OF EXPORT EARNING INSTABILITY ON ECONOMIC GROWTH <i>DR. FIROZ ALAM</i>	58
11.	QUANDARIES OF INDIAN WOMEN DUE TO MISCONCEPTION REGARDING EMPOWERMENT CONCEPT <i>AMISHA SHAH</i>	62
12.	MICRO-FINANCING: ITS IMPACT ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL PEOPLE: A STUDY ON THE SHGS LINKED WITH REGIONAL RURAL BANKS IN LAKHIMPUR DISTRICT OF ASSAM <i>SRI. DIGANTA KUMAR DAS</i>	65
13.	A STUDY OF PERCEPTION OF INDIVIDUAL INVESTORS TOWARDS MUTUAL FUNDS-WITH REFERENCE TO GUJARAT STATE <i>DR. CHETNA CHAPADIA (MAKWANA)</i>	70
14.	ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN THROUGH KUDUMBASHREE WITH REFERENCE TO PUNNALA GRAM PANCHAYATH OF PUNALLOOR, KOLLAM DISTRICT, KERALA STATE <i>LIGI JOLLY</i>	75
15.	NEED OF ENVIRONMENT CONSERVATION FOR THE SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS <i>GHANSHYAM KUMAR PANDEY & SEEMA KUMARI</i>	79
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	83

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WORK LIFE BALANCE OF ENTREPRENEURS: A GENDER ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

All over the world, entrepreneurship has been traditionally recognized as male prerogative. However, because of change in socio-cultural environment, increasing importance for girl child education, government policies and schemes of NGOs towards women entrepreneurship have started recognizing inherent talents and business skills of women and hence the number of women is increased in joining the rank list of entrepreneurship. However, in the existing family and societal setups, women entrepreneurs are overburdened and find it ever more difficult to balance their entrepreneurial roles and family roles. In modern society, we talk and debate more about the gender equalities and frame special policies to improve the status of women in the society. Therefore, the major objective of the present study is to compare the work-life balance issues and social issues faced by the male and female entrepreneurs. To fulfill the objectives, the researcher conducted the survey in Mysore by adopting the snapshot survey and served the structured questionnaire to 233 respondents comprising of 111 male and 122 female entrepreneurs and the researcher also adopted the face-to-face interview techniques wherever required. To analyze the data culled out, the simple statistics were used like mean and standard deviation and Person correlation was used to know the relativity of the problem faced by both the male and female entrepreneurs. The study revealed that problems like dual role, social harassment, work stress, etc. are more with female entrepreneurs compare to male entrepreneurs.

KEYWORDS

work life balance, entrepreneurs.

INTRODUCTION

As the early history of entrepreneurship in India is intimately associated with the country's culture, customs and traditions, entrepreneurship often evolved along with societal etiquette (Rizvi & Gupta, 2009). However, at present, the success of the individual as an entrepreneur depends largely on his or her imagination, vision, innovativeness and risk-taking ability and need not be intertwined with age-old cultural and societal etiquette. Current entrepreneurship is thus centered on creative thinking and the development of new ideas. However, whether this is the case for women entrepreneurs in India has not been fully explored (Reddy, 1991; Nayyar, Sharma, Kishtawaria, Rana, & Vyas, 2007). At this juncture, it is worth mentioning that entrepreneurs are different from small-business owners. Garland J. W., Hoy, Boulton and Garland J. A. C. (1984), and Stewart, Watson, Carland J. C. and Carland J. W. (1998) have made it very clear that small business owners are primarily concerned with securing an income to meet their immediate needs, rather than engaging in innovation. On the other hand, entrepreneurs exhibit higher achievement motivation and greater risk-taking ability and typically provide employment to others. In view of these reports and statements, the lingering question is what issues are confronted by women entrepreneurs in India, where entrepreneurship has mainly been considered a male prerogative.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN INDIA

With the changing socio-cultural environment and increasing educational opportunities, women became aware of their potential to develop entrepreneurial skills. These socio-cultural changes, along with the eagerness of a spectrum of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to associate with women entrepreneurs, have played a key role in the emergence of female entrepreneurship over the past few decades. Even though gender equality and equal opportunity are constitutional rights in India, different standards of behaviour for men and women still exist, including in the work environment. In rural areas, female participation in employment outside the home is in fact viewed as slightly inappropriate, subtly wrong and definitely dangerous to chastity and womanly virtue (Dube & Palriwala, 1990). Because of these societal standards and beliefs, female entrepreneurship in India is a comparatively nascent phenomenon. Dileepkumar (2006) and Khanka (1998) have reported that Indian women have started becoming entrepreneurs in sizeable numbers only recently, partly due to the formation of various self-help groups (SHGs), support from NGOs, higher levels of education and economic liberalisation. However, despite all of this support for women, female entrepreneurs are still far from on par with men in India. In contrast, the situation in developed nations has also established special cells to assist female entrepreneurs. Along with the changing paradigms, Indian society has witnessed some highly successful women entrepreneurs, such as Shehnaz Hussain (a world-renowned Indian herbal beautician who owns a chain of beauty parlors), Ekta Kapoor (a celebrated Indian film and television productions) and Kiran Mazumdar (a leading Indian businesswoman and founder of the biotechnology firm Biocon). However, the majority of female entrepreneurs, especially in the middle and lower middle classes as well as in rural areas, still find it difficult to simultaneously meet their entrepreneurial and familial demands so as to attain a proper work-life balance (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2009a). According to Nelasco (2008), even though the leadership potential of women is very high,

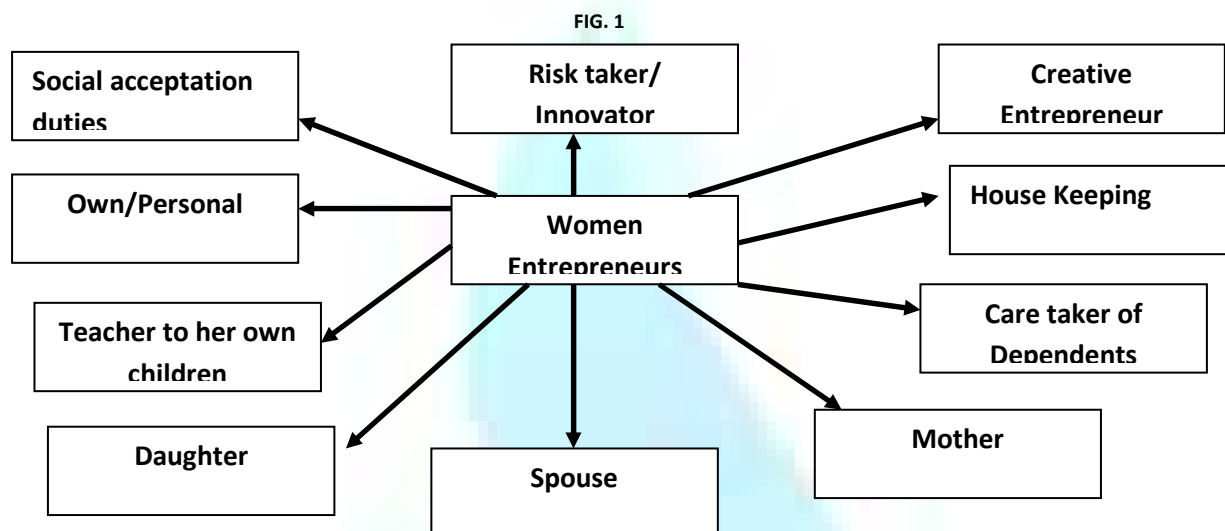
STATUS OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN INDIA

In India, growing industrialisation and urbanisation and revolutionary developments in the information technology (IT) sector have played key roles in changing the career patterns and professional roles of women. The government has also emphasised the need for special entrepreneurial training programmes for women to enable them to start their own ventures. Some of the agencies involved in this effort are the Federation of Ladies Organisation (FLO), the Technology Development Board (TDB) of Department of Science and Technology, the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDI) and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). To encourage women entrepreneurship in India, selected financial institutions have also established special cells to assist female entrepreneurs. Along with the changing paradigms, Indian society has witnessed some highly successful women entrepreneurs, such as Shehnaz Hussain (a world-renowned Indian herbal beautician who owns a chain of beauty parlors), Ekta Kapoor (a celebrated Indian film and television productions) and Kiran Mazumdar (a leading Indian businesswoman and founder of the biotechnology firm Biocon). However, the majority of female entrepreneurs, especially in the middle and lower middle classes as well as in rural areas, still find it difficult to simultaneously meet their entrepreneurial and familial demands so as to attain a proper work-life balance (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2009a). According to Nelasco (2008), even though the leadership potential of women is very high,

this potential is hidden by social, economic and political constraints. Therefore, women who venture into entrepreneurial activity must be extraordinarily motivated and determined enough to carry forward a creative idea on their own. By doing so, they also contribute to the wealth of the country. These limitations are the probable reason why India's number of successful women entrepreneurs still lags behind that of developed countries (Kourilsky & Walstad, 1998; Godwyn, 2009; Rizvi & Gupta, 2009). However, in comparison to such neighbouring countries as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan (Goheer, 2002; Ayyadurai, 2006; Hossain, 2007), female entrepreneurship is in an advanced state in India.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE (WLB) ISSUES OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS

After overcoming many inherent disadvantages related to the deeply embedded traditional mindset and stringent etiquette, today we find Indian women engaged in different types of traditional (e.g., garment-making, beauty care, fashion design) as well as non-traditional (e.g., founding financial institutions, educational institutions, entertainment companies) entrepreneurial activities. In addition to their challenging entrepreneurial work, many of these women must also perform several roles in their families (see Figure 1). These roles include being a spouse, caretaker and parent; managing daily household chores; and providing services to the community and society. Women also must take care of their own health and other personal activities, which are often neglected because of role overload as well as time limitations. All of these situations lead to the absence of WLB and manifestation of many WLB issues.



In contrast, a study by CIBC (2004) revealed that women entrepreneurs in such developed countries as Canada are able to better balance their family life with work than those employed by someone else. The demands originating from the work and personal life of women are quite often mutually exclusive, rendering it very difficult to strike a balance between the role demands. Presently, even though the topic of WLB issues among female entrepreneurs commands urgent attention, studies pertaining to the WLB of entrepreneurial women in India are extremely scarce (Mathew & Panchanatham, 2009a). In this context, the current work is a step towards analysing the WLB issues confronted by the women entrepreneurs of South India. To accomplish this aim, the paper incorporates an extensive literature review to identify gaps in the field of research into female entrepreneurship, followed by a discussion of our study's major objectives; methodology, involving various statistical analyses and the development of a psychometric instrument to measure WLB issues, findings, managerial implications and limitations. The paper concludes with ideas for future studies and a brief conclusion.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A close and critical analysis reveals that women entrepreneurs have been making a significant impact in all segments of the economy in such developed nations as Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Australia and the United States. Additionally, a good number of studies regarding the entrepreneurial initiatives of women have been reported worldwide (Key, Gunterberg, Holz, & Wolter, 2003; CIBC, 2004; Jahanshashi, Pitamber, & Nawaser, 2010). However, the situation prevailing in developing and underdeveloped nations is not as conducive to female entrepreneurship. Amha and Ademassie (2004) believe that more than half of all women entrepreneurs in Ethiopia face gender-related challenges to establishing, operating and expanding their entrepreneurial activities. In Turkey, female entrepreneurship has been limited by factors including patriarchal beliefs, traditional gender roles, a lack of education and a lack of experience in the labour force (OECD, 2004). Even in the case of South Africa, the opportunity for entrepreneurial activity is reportedly higher for men than for women (Hendricks, 2005). Meanwhile, in Bangladesh, even though women entrepreneurs constitute less than 10% of the total, a new female entrepreneurial class has arisen, taking on the challenge to work in a male-dominated, competitive and complex economic and business environment (Hossain, 2007).

A comprehensive survey of the literature shows that specific studies pertaining to the WLB issues of women entrepreneurs are very few. The only available reports on the issue, which are mainly from developed nations, indicate that women entrepreneurs of these nations enjoy a comparatively good WLB (Key et al., 2003; CIBC, 2004; Carter & Eleanor, 2006; Godwyn, 2009). On the other hand, no serious efforts have been made to analyse the WLB issues faced by women entrepreneurs of developing and underdeveloped countries where societal etiquette, male dominance and deep-rooted discriminatory socio-cultural values and traditions (UNIDO, 2001) persist. The limited studies available from India on women entrepreneurship (Khanka, 1998; Mann & Phukan, 1998; Anitha & Laksmisha, 1999) either concentrate on the reasons for female emancipation or highlight the contributions of the few successful women entrepreneurs. Meanwhile, Dileepkumar (2006) has elaborated on some of the issues faced by entrepreneurial women, such as a shortage of finances, male dominance, limited mobility, a lack of education, required motherly duties and a lack of achievement motivation. According to Rizvi and Gupta (2009), government-sponsored development activities have benefited only a small section of women, namely the urban middle class. This may be primarily due to their higher level of education, access to information and family support. Previously, the female workforce in India was mainly employed in non-managerial, subordinate or low-profile positions. Now, they occupy almost all categories of positions in the workplace. These changes in work culture have added to women's duties and responsibilities to their family as well as to society (Mathew & Panchanatham 2009a; 2009b). Despite this newfound work culture, and even though more and more women are joining the workforce, women in entrepreneurial roles are limited. The probable reasons for this phenomenon are the conflicts between competing work demands and personal and family needs. According to Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005), pressures from the job and family domains are often incompatible, giving rise to imbalance. Therefore, the concept of WLB, along with its implications, is a core issue that must be investigated as more women become entrepreneurs in Indian society. The gender analysis of entrepreneurship is incomplete without an empirical analysis of duality of roles by women entrepreneurs. There is a conclusive proof that women entrepreneurs are heavily characterized by duality of roles. Acknowledging the effects of role conflict is not meant to reinforce the notion that women invariably adopt wife/partner/family commitments. For some women, careers/business or family are viewed as distinct alternatives and they make a choice between the two. For others however, there are attempts to combine both, which for many women leads to conflict since the larger part of child – care and house – keeping still fall to women. Women in business generally see themselves as fulfilling a number of different roles in their lives, for example, partner/wife, businesswomen, mother, housekeeper/manger, joint breadwinner, sole breadwinner, and so on.

Conflict experienced does not seem to depend on whether women are married or not, or whether they have children or not: more conflict is experienced by women with children still living at home, than those without children or those with children who are no longer living at home (Simpson and Pearson: 1989). The hopes that entrepreneurship may be a means of overcoming gender subordination (Goffee and Scase: 1985) seems misplaced. Women may certainly escape some of the confines of the formal labour market but these are replaced with a range of problems, which are gender related. The evidence does not suggest that conjugal roles are being renegotiated-women are still performing the 'double shift.' Women returning to work after some break for child-rearing frequently suffer downward mobility, or find the demands of formal employment too inflexible to accommodate their domestic role (Brotherton et al.: 1987a). Occupational segregation, under-representation in upper level management positions, and expectations about family roles may restrict women to certain industrial sector, as well as affect motivations and goals for their business (Aldrich: 1989). The degree to which these structural dimensions affect women entrepreneurs depends greatly on the county context. In particular, the perceived acceptability of women's participation in entrepreneurship varies from country to country, relative to the expectations and cultural norms for women in that society. For example, in South America belief in "male machismo" and expectations that women's primary responsibilities are childcare and domestic duties creates a barrier to venture creation and subsequent venture performance (Sekarun and Leong: 1992). Divergence between women and men comes in the form of problems that women experience which men do not. Gender poses an additional dimension with which women have to contend with not being taken seriously as a women (Brotherton et al.: 1987a; Carter and Cannon: 1988; Hisrich: 1986; Hisrich and O'Brien: 1981; Simpson and Pearson: 1989; and Stevenson: 1983) intimidation, lack of confidence (Stevenson: 1983); role conflict (competing demands of 'family' and business: Simpson and Pearson: 1989; Stevenson: 1983); lack of support (Simpson and Pearson: 1989; and Stevenson: 1983). In the context of women's experience in education, employment and in terms of role expectations, the additional set of problems seems predictable. Not being taken seriously may take many forms – from less than positive attitudes of family to downright negative and hostile attitudes from financial institutions (Carter and Cannon: 1988). Whatever from it takes, women receive little support. These experiences tend to undermine women's confidence and credibility and it requires extra effort from women to overcome them. Earning credibility is something women seem to have to work hard at (as in the formal labour market) – whether it be with colleagues, customers or employees. There are clear arguments for precisely this sort of study to be undertaken, concentrating on strategies that may help survival and ultimately success, as well as those which may help women and men overcome the varied range of problems faced in business ownership. Concern with the strategies women use to overcome problems they face has received more recent attention by the construction of case studies of women business owners/managers (Carter and Cannon: 1988). The problems are varied: They have to work hard to earn credibility with business colleagues, customers and employees; they are often undercapitalized; they frequently experience hostile and negative attitudes from sources of finance; they often experience role conflict and had to cope with less than supportive family attitudes. The restrictions of educational and employment experiences have already been documented. How consistent is this pattern of 'limitation' in relation to society's preparation of women for entrepreneurship? Child – rearing practices continue to transmit the dominant ideology (Grabruker: 1989; and Hunt: 1983). We are still raising little girls to be little girls and little boys to be little boys. Post-school and 'pre-labour' experiences are consistent too. In this regard, Cockburn (1987) observes: "there is not one factor tending gender – conformity in the youth training scheme but many, and that they are interrelated and unlikely to be corrected by superficial measures... the sexual discrimination that occurs is passive rather than active and in many cases it is unconscious. There is however clearly some conscious and active sex -specific selection going on in recruitment." According to Dinis (1999), when women intend to create their own employment they cumulate the structural difficulties of very small enterprises with specific disadvantages of their feminine condition. In general, women can not devote as much time and energy to the business as men because women maintain the weight of domestic activities. In regions with specific problems-rural areas, ill – favoured urban zones, less developed regions or in industrial reconversion the inequalities are still more marked. The isolation, the under-qualification, the cumulation of social and economic difficulties are propitious to reinforce marginalization. Some theoretical works suggest that women are confronted with situational and dispositional obstacles which prevent them from starting and/or growing their businesses (Liou and Aldrich: 1995; Fisher et al.: 1993). Brush (1997) found females encounter the following four obstacles: being taken seriously; child and dependent care; growth and expansion capital; and entrepreneurial education and training. This study also found that women entrepreneurs have three opportunities: technology; management style; and employee policies. Harper (1996) refers to the lack of exposition to information as an important barrier of women to create and expand their business. This is probably due to the accumulation of domestic and agricultural, tasks which rural women are involved I rural areas (Dollinger: 1985). Furthermore, Harper (1996) points out that lack of time is not an important factor and poverty per se, is not a "pushing" factor to entrepreneurship. Awareness has to be crated and change has to be perceived as something possible.

RESEARCH GAP

In the nation like India, we talk, debate, and frame policies about the gender equalities. At this point of time we need to check whether we are following the policies and strategies which we framed. According to the review of literature presented above most of the researchers analyzed the work life balance and issues in managing the dual role i.e. as entrepreneur and as a caretaker but no researcher tried to know why the entrepreneurship is not a problem for men and why only dual role problems and social life arises for female entrepreneurs. Based on this, there is a gap in the research on comparative analysis of male and female entrepreneurs on work life balance and dual role problems. Therefore the researcher tried to fill this gap by conducting the research based on the following objective.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand and compare the dual role or family life problems of both male and female entrepreneurs and
2. To analyze and compare the social life problems of male and female entrepreneurs.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

To fulfill the above objectives, the researcher conducted the survey in Mysore by adopting he snapshot survey and served the structured questionnaire to 233 respondents comprising of 111 male and 122 female entrepreneurs and the researcher also adopted the face-to-face interview techniques wherever required. To analyze the data culled out, the simple statistics were used like mean and standard deviation and Person correlation was used to know the relativity of the problem faced by both the male and female entrepreneurs.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

(1) DUAL ROLE OR FAMILY LIFE PROBLEMS

Table – 1 presents the perception of respondents on family life problems, which include six variables. It was found that the female respondents perceived that they were facing higher family life problems in running their enterprise than male respondents with the overall mean values of 3.18 and 2.78 respectively. The perception of female respondents on these problems was found to be densely distributed with higher intensity of these problems when compared to lower intensity with thin distribution in case of male respondents. It was also evidenced that the female respondents perceived higher problems in managing dual role by assigning the mean value of 3.78 as against male respondents assigning the mean value of 2.93 only for the same problem and the perception of female respondents on these problems was found to be densely distributed with higher intensity of these problems when compared to lower intensity with thin distribution in case of male respondents. Whereas, male respondents perceived that they had highest problem with unrewarding experience with the mean value of 3.37. The second weightage was given by female respondents to the problems of household work and unrewarding experience by assigning the mean values of 3.39 each, but the male respondents assigned lower values to these variables.

TABLE – 1: DUAL ROLE OR FAMILY LIFE PROBLEMS

Sl. No	Variable	Male		Female	
		MV	SD	MV	SD
(1)	Managing dual role (as a married women/men and as a entrepreneur)	2.93	1.90	3.78	1.26
(2)	Recognition from relatives/friends	2.33	1.10	2.42	1.04
(3)	Disturbance in family life	2.79	1.34	3.01	1.19
(4)	Cooperation from family members	2.65	1.26	3.08	1.29
(5)	Household work	2.61	1.50	3.39	1.31
(6)	Unrewarding experience	3.37	1.28	3.39	1.29
	Total	2.78	1.39	3.18	1.23

r = 0.658

Source: Field Survey.

The female respondents perceived and gave next weightage to problem of cooperation from family members assigning the mean value of 3.08, whereas male respondents assigned mean valued of 2.65 only for the problem. There was a moderate correlation of perception on family problems with the value of 0.658. To conclude, female respondents had higher family life problems in running their businesses than the male respondents and the perception priorities on these problems were found to be moderately related.

(2) SOCIAL LIFE PROBLEMS

Table – 2 highlights the perception of respondents on social life problems in running their businesses, which include six variables. The perception of female respondents on social life problems was found to be higher with the overall mean value of 2.71, as against the male respondents assigning the overall mean value of 2.41. The perception of female respondents on these problems was found to be densely distributed with the standard deviation of 1.05 than the thin distribution in case of male respondents with the standard deviation of 1.15. The female respondents perceived that they had higher human relation problems than male respondents and the respective mean values stood at 3.78 and 2.40. The male respondents perceived that they had higher frustration level than female respondents with the mean values of 2.77 and 2.62 respectively. The perception of male respondents on this variable was found to be densely distributed with the standard deviation of 0.98 than thin distribution in case of female respondents at the standard deviation of 1.08. The female respondents gave second rank to the problem of recognition from neighbors and the mean value stood at 2.55, whereas male respondents assigned the mean value of 2.07 for same problem. The male respondents assigned second rank to 'social status' with the mean value of 2.57 whereas, the female respondents assigned the mean value of 2.48 for the same problem and the standard deviation was highly concentrated in female respondents at 0.97 than male respondents at 1.22. It was evidenced that the female respondents perceived that they were facing higher 'social harassment' than male respondents and the mean values stood at 2.52 and 2.33 respectively. Both male and female respondents gave least importance to 'socialization with public' with the mean values of 2.35 and 2.33 respectively. The perception of female respondents on this problem was found to be densely distributed with the standard deviation of 0.94 as against thin distribution in case of male respondents with the standard deviation of 1.12. The relative intensity of these social life problem was found to be substantially different between male and female respondents and there was not relationship in the perceptions. Hence there was no correlation between male and female respondents in prioritizing social problems and the value stood at 0.026. To sum up, the female respondents perceived that they were facing higher social life problems in managing their enterprises than male respondents and the weightages given by both the groups for the six variables did not have any association and the correlation coefficient stood at 0.026.

TABLE – 2: SOCIAL LIFE PROBLEMS

Sl. No	Variable	Male		Female	
		MV	SD	MV	SD
(1)	Social status	2.57	1.22	2.48	0.97
(2)	Recognition from neighbors	2.07	1.06	2.55	1.03
(3)	Socialization with public	2.35	1.12	2.33	0.94
(4)	Problems of human relation	2.40	1.27	3.78	1.10
(5)	Social harassment	2.33	1.29	2.52	1.20
(6)	Frustration level	2.77	0.98	2.62	1.08
	Total	2.41	1.15	2.71	1.05

r = 0.026

Source: Field Survey.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, though we talk, debate and frame policies on gender equalities, from the above discussion it is clear that women are facing more family life problems and social life problems than men. This is because still we need to go long way to accept the changes happening around the women. As everyone knows if a woman wants to become independent, she needs the support of family and the society. Until and unless the mindset of the family members and the society changes towards the women entrepreneurs' ability, she should continue her life along with the problems like dual role, social harassment, work stress, etc. whatever is her position. The women entrepreneurs have high entrepreneurial endowment levels along with high degree of problems, if we make use of her endowment levels in a right way the economic condition of family, society and the nation will improve.

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