

## **PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN AT WORKPLACE - A STUDY ON WORKING WOMEN AT SHOPPING MALLS IN LUCKNOW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Aim:** In this research paper titled '*Problems and challenges for women at workplace - a study on working women at shopping malls in Lucknow*', the researcher attempts to examine problem and challenges for women at workplace in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The aim of the research paper is to analyse the problems and challenges faced by working women at shopping malls in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

**Background:** There is a lack in equality that exists between men and women employees at workplace in the nation and it is revealed that women face lot of challenges and problems at workplace. One reason is just their virtue of being women and face challenges especially sexual harassment.

**Methodology:** A cross sectional survey is conducted wherein the researcher developed a questionnaire based on the variables (factors) identified from the review of previous literature. Data is collected from female respondents working in shopping malls in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The collection of data from the respondents is based on the feasibility of the researcher to collect data and the availability of participants.

**Findings:** There exists a statistical significance between variables considered in the research which include type of education, type of job, type of family, sexual harassment scenarios and so on.

**Recommendations:** Strong regulations should be kept in place for the improvement of women employees and for the betterment of the nation's economy.

**Keywords:** Sexual harassment; Women Employment;

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Indian Society is an amalgamation of both masculine and feminine masses which are equally potential and contribute significantly for the welfare of the nation. Women, who are deemed to

be the forerunners of the society, play a crucial role in increasing the economic status of the nation<sup>1</sup>. Without the contribution of women, there is no nurturing of economic wealth in India. These inferences are in parlance with the statement of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, who quotes that “*No nation can rise to the height of glory unless your women are side by side with you*”. The roles of women have changed from respectful housewives, mothers, and sisters to renowned doctors, teachers, military personnel and so on<sup>2</sup>. However, the labour market of India reveals striking features- low female labour force participation, differences in the participation rate of females across different states in India, and considerable share of women employed in the informal sector<sup>3</sup>. Female labor force participation (FLFP) rates are found to remain low and have even been set in a declining range in the recent years<sup>4</sup>. While there is a lack in equality that exists between men and women employees at workplace in the nation, it is revealing that women face lot of challenges and problems at workplace. One reason is just their virtue of being women. According to <sup>5</sup>, a gender biased attitude exists in the society which considers women to be fit in specific jobs while certain work roles are generally assigned to men. Women find easy to get jobs as doctors, nurses, teachers and personal secretaries; however, preference is given to male candidates when it comes to other jobs that are from the past considered to be given to males: jobs in production line<sup>6</sup>.

Apart from the concepts of Gender-bias, another problem that is evident for women in the Indian society when it comes to workplace is sexual harassment. Workplace sexual harassment is defined as a type of gender discrimination that drastically affects the right to equality for women and their right to life and work which are regulated as defined in the Constitution of India (Articles 14, 15, and 21)<sup>7</sup>. Sexual harassment at workplace not only develops insecurity in women but also hinders them from displaying their abilities at work, thereby impeding the social and economic development of a nation. Apart from the economic and social development of the nation, workplace harassment is detrimental to the physical and emotional well-being of women employees. Despite women employees possessing equal qualifications with respect to men, they are paid less for the work they do. Women at times are deprived from their maternity leaves and

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2015/wp1555.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mittal\\_Darji/publication/308747968\\_THE\\_CHALLENGES\\_FACED\\_BY\\_INDIAN\\_WORKING\\_WOMEN\\_TO\\_BALANCE\\_PROFESSIONAL\\_AND\\_SOCIAL\\_LIFE\\_IN\\_21\\_ST\\_CENTURY/links/57ee276308ae8da3ce482cde/THE-CHALLENGES-FACED-BY-INDIAN-WORKING-WOMEN-TO-BALANCE-PROFESSIONAL-AND-SOCIAL-LIFE-IN-21-ST-CENTURY.pdf?origin=publication\\_detail](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mittal_Darji/publication/308747968_THE_CHALLENGES_FACED_BY_INDIAN_WORKING_WOMEN_TO_BALANCE_PROFESSIONAL_AND_SOCIAL_LIFE_IN_21_ST_CENTURY/links/57ee276308ae8da3ce482cde/THE-CHALLENGES-FACED-BY-INDIAN-WORKING-WOMEN-TO-BALANCE-PROFESSIONAL-AND-SOCIAL-LIFE-IN-21-ST-CENTURY.pdf?origin=publication_detail)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2015/wp1555.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/cid/files/publications/faculty-working-papers/women\\_work\\_india\\_cidwp339.pdf](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/sites/default/files/centers/cid/files/publications/faculty-working-papers/women_work_india_cidwp339.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nevillewadia.com/images/Cronicle2015/Azadeh-Barati15.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.nevillewadia.com/images/Cronicle2015/Azadeh-Barati15.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/india/session\\_13\\_-\\_may\\_2012/a\\_hrc\\_wg.6\\_13\\_ind\\_1\\_india\\_annexii.pdf](https://www.upr-info.org/sites/default/files/document/india/session_13_-_may_2012/a_hrc_wg.6_13_ind_1_india_annexii.pdf)

are often relieved off from their duties when they conceive. At times, women are barred from receiving promotions despite their capabilities and proofs that they work hard. Top positions in Indian organisations are generally occupied by men; however, India houses considerable women who are equally qualified and capable to take managerial responsibilities<sup>8</sup>.

Violence against women is constantly growing these days. With the ever-changing society, many new forms of the violence have also evolved which is evident from women facing many problems and adjust themselves in the society, family and workplace. In this male dominant society, women have always been victims of exploitation, insult, humiliation, and ill-treatment. The reality is that the nation still lurks in the essence of patriarchal thinking which denies the equal existence of women in the society<sup>9</sup>.

Existing literature revealed that there are important determinants to the participation of women in work; these factors include religion, marital status, education, type of family, and type of job. These factors are identified to restrict or mediate the behaviour of women at workplace<sup>10</sup>. In India, there exists thousands of castes intertwined in five major religions- Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Sikhism<sup>11</sup>. Differences in women's involvement in work are associated with the history, geographic location, and religious norms that prevail in the nation<sup>12</sup>. According to Klingorová (2015)<sup>13</sup>, the status of women in a nation is a result of the religious texts and their interpretation which acts either as a support or a hindrance to women at work.

Researches in the direction of analysing the challenges and problems witnessed by women at workplace in India have revealed factors that include Marital status, Religion, Education, type of family, type of job, workplace ethics, and sexual harassment. However, a study that consolidates all these factors together is lacking. Based on the aforementioned factors influencing women at workplace and the problems and challenges they witness at work, it is imperative to conduct a study that examines these issues. In this regard, in this research paper, the researcher attempts to examine problem and challenges for women at workplace in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The aim of the research paper is to analyse the problems and challenges faced by working women at shopping malls in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.ijrmf.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/201703051.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a1a1/956fe39a514e5128ec48b29fab7f45b1848e.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.mse.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Working-Paper-176.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> [http://econ.msu.edu/seminars/docs/Alvi\\_JMP\\_Nov%202016.pdf](http://econ.msu.edu/seminars/docs/Alvi_JMP_Nov%202016.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279526649\\_Religion\\_and\\_gender\\_inequality\\_The\\_status\\_of\\_women\\_in\\_the\\_societies\\_of\\_world\\_religions/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/279526649_Religion_and_gender_inequality_The_status_of_women_in_the_societies_of_world_religions/download)

<sup>13</sup> KLINGOROVÁ, K., HAVLÍČEK, T. (2015): Religion and gender inequality: The status of women in the societies of world religions. *Moravian Geographical Reports*, 23(2): 2–11. DOI: 10.1515/mgr-2015-0006.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

This paper employs a descriptive methodology wherein the researcher attempts to understand the problems and challenges witnessed by Women at shopping malls in the select region (Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh) in India. To conduct the research, a cross sectional survey is conducted wherein the researcher developed a questionnaire based on the variables (factors) identified from the review of previous literature. Data is collected from female respondents working in shopping malls in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India. The collection of data from the respondents is based on the feasibility of the researcher to collect data and the availability of participants.

For the collection of data, the researcher used purposive sampling since the researcher specifically require collection of data from female workers working in shopping malls in the selection region in India. However, to avoid any bias in the selection of participants, from the overall sample space (Overall women employees working in Shopping malls in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India), simple random sampling is also performed to select participants for the research.

Hence, the researcher employed a sample size of 30 female participants. For this research, the following hypotheses are developed and are tested using the data collected from a self-administered questionnaire.

- H1:** Women at work face sexual harassment in the region of Lucknow, India.
- H2:** There exists a relationship between religion and salary according to work performance of women in workplace.
- H3:** There exists a relationship between education and salary according to work performance of women in workplace.
- H4:** There exists a relationship between type of job and employee motivation of women in workplace.
- H5:** There exists a relationship between type of family and employee motivation of women in workplace.
- H6:** There exists a relationship between positive environment at work place and work-life balance of women employees

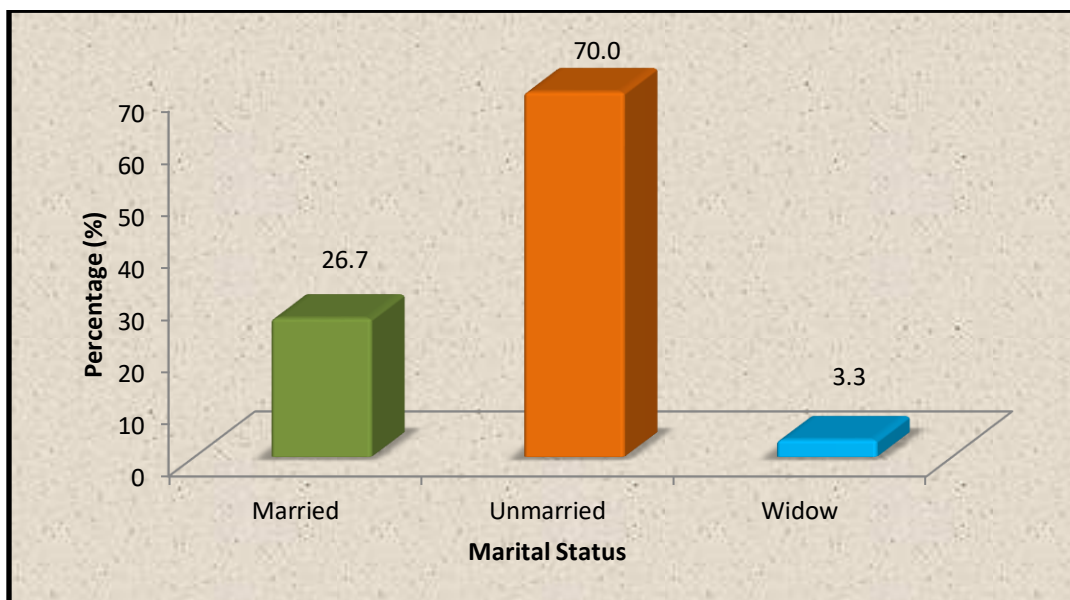
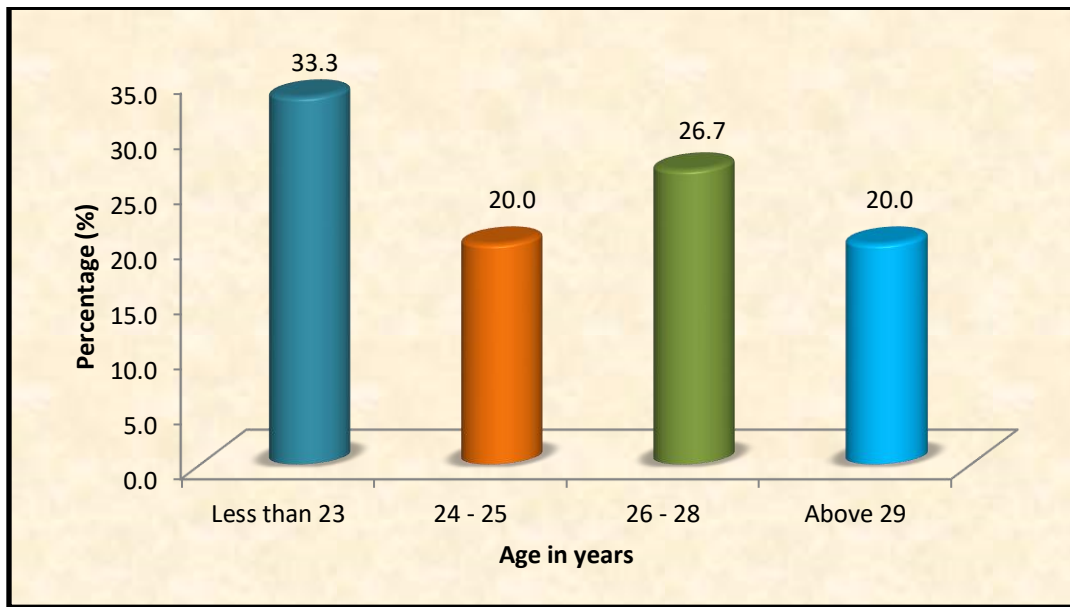
Data analysis is performed using SPSS statistical analysis tool. Descriptive statistics and Ch-Square analysis are performed with the collected data to test the hypotheses set for this research paper.

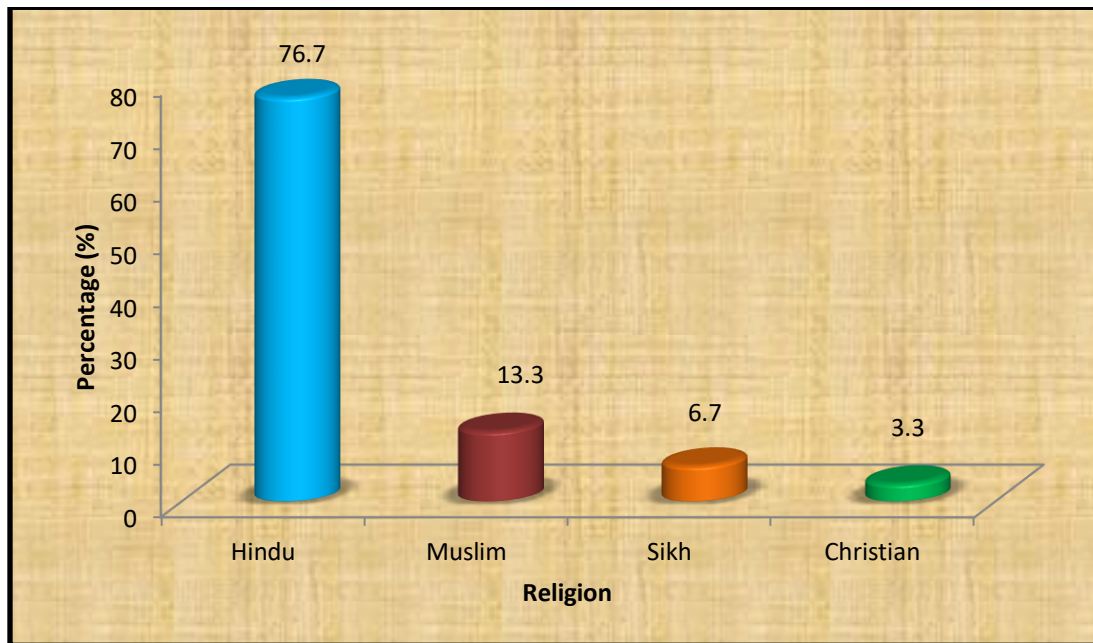
### 3.0 RESULTS/ FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The analysis of data revealed the following results: The study has collected data from 30 participants out of which a majority of 33.3 per cent participants belongs to the age group less than 23 years followed by, 26.7 per cent of the women belonging to the age group 26-28 years and 20 per cent of the participants belong to the age group between 24-25 years and above 29 years (Table 1). A maximum of 70 per cent of the participants are unmarried followed by 6.7 per cent of the participants who were married and 3.3 per cent of the participants who were widow. A majority of 76.7 per cent of the participants are Hindus followed by 13.3 per cent of the participants being Muslims, 6.7 per cent of the participants being Sikhs and 3.3 per cent of the participants being Christians (Figure 1).

**Table 1: Frequency of age, marital status and religion of the respondents**

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
Less than 23	10	33.3
24 - 25	6	20.0
26 - 28	8	26.7
Above 29	6	20.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	8	26.7
Unmarried	21	70.0
Widow	1	3.3
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	23	76.7
Muslim	4	13.3
Sikh	2	6.7
Christian	1	3.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>



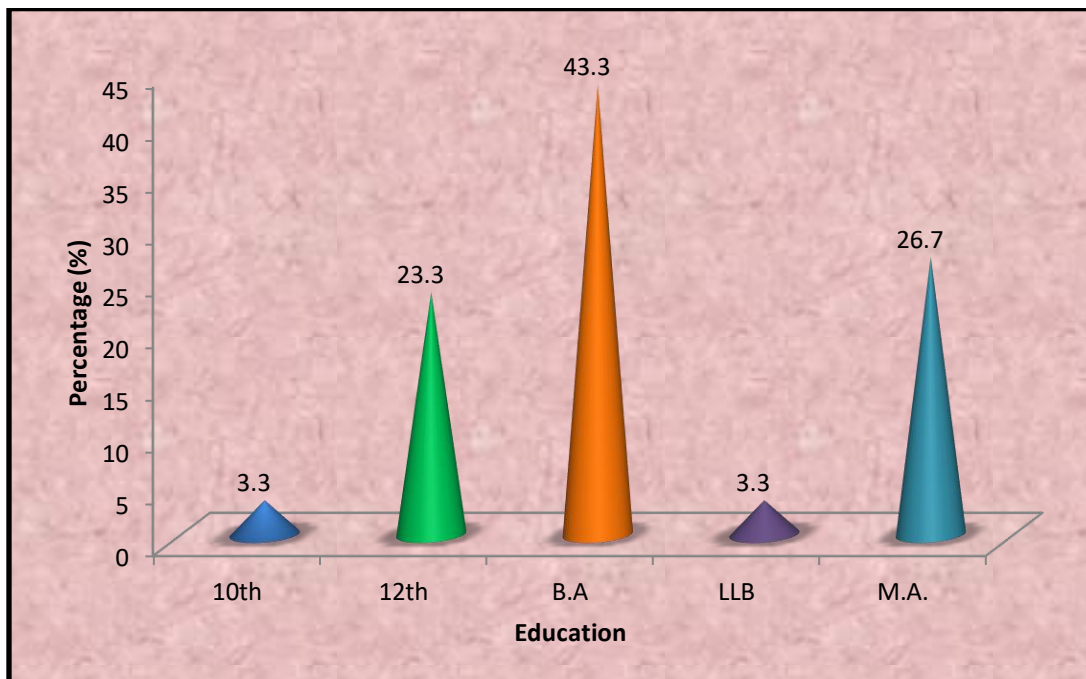


**Figure 1: Demographic profile of respondents- Age, Marital Status, Religion (From top to bottom)**

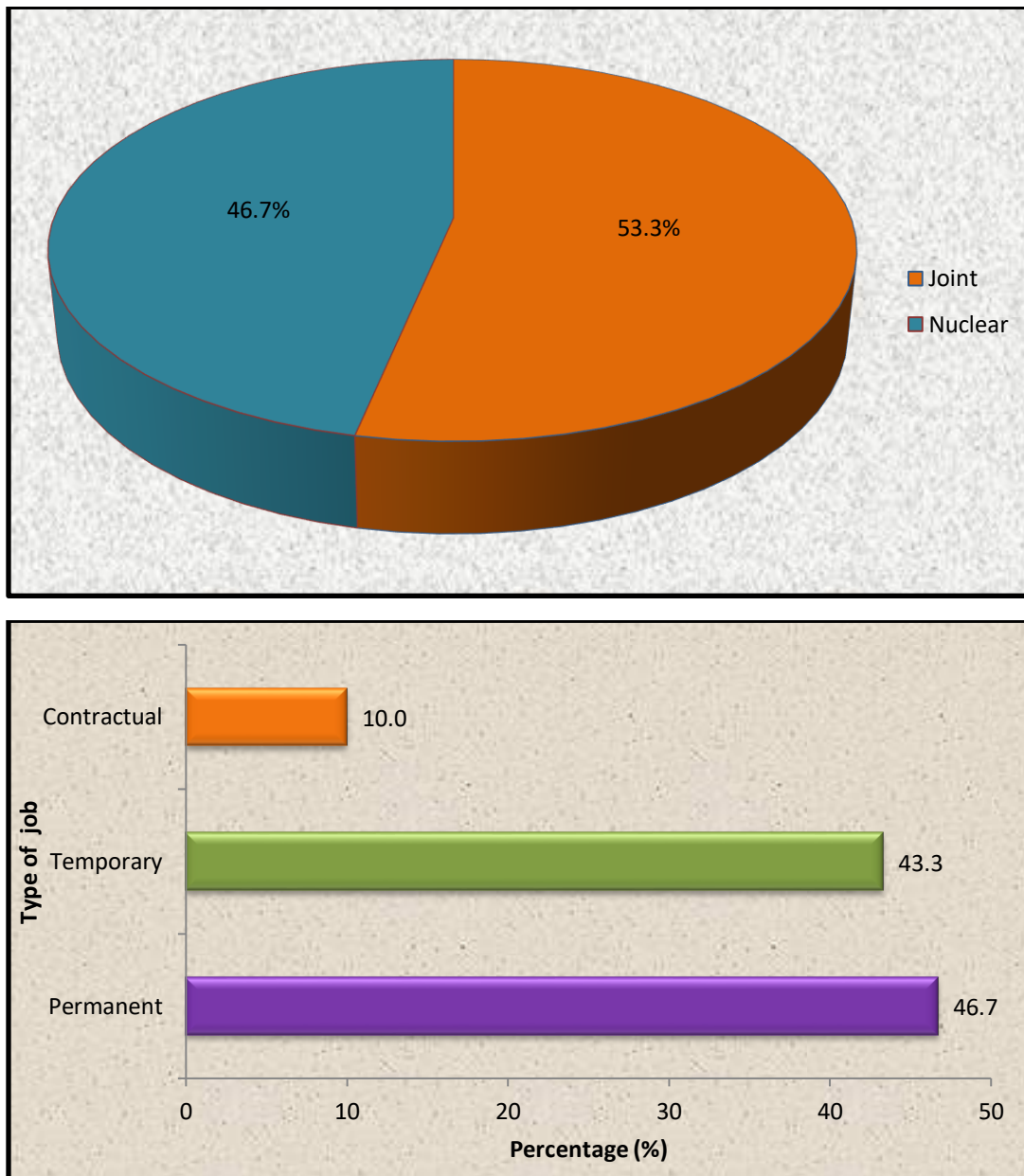
From the collected data, it is revealed that Majority 43.3 per cent of the participants have completed their bachelors' degree in Arts followed by, 26.7 per cent of the participants completed masters degree in arts, 23.3 per cent of the participants completed 12th standard and each 3.3 per cent of the participants completed 10th and Bachelor of Legislative Law (LLB) (Table 2). Furthermore, a maximum of 53.3 per cent of the participants belong to joint family while 46.7 per cent of the participants belong to nuclear family. Furthermore, a majority of 46.7 per cent of the participants have permanent job followed by 43.3 per cent of the participants having temporary jobs and 10 per cent having contractual job (Figure 2).

**Table 2: Frequency of education, type of family and job of the respondents**

	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Education</b>		
10th	1	3.3
12th	7	23.3
B.A	13	43.3
LLB	1	3.3
M.A.	8	26.7
<b>Type of family</b>		
Joint	16	53.3
Nuclear	14	46.7
<b>Type of job</b>		
Permanent	14	46.7
Temporary	13	43.3
Contractual	3	10.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>







**Figure 2: Demographic profile of respondents- Education, type of family, and type of job (From top to bottom)**

Women participants recorded the frequency of workplace ethics. It was revealed that 73 percent of the participants revealed ‘Positive environment at workplace’ in their workplace. Only 43 percent of the participants revealed ‘Employer help the female employees for maintain their work and personal life balance’. Around 86.7 per cent of the participants revealed ‘Women workers are getting salary according their work performance’. Around 40 per cent of the participants

revealed ‘Women workers are getting unwanted behavior’ at workplace. Around 53 per cent of the participants revealed ‘Women workers don’t have knowledge about women safety right for women’. 20 per cent of the participants revealed that they have ‘Knowledge about Sexual Harassment Bill 2013’. 76 per cent of the respondents revealed that they have ‘comfort to talk their colleague’. Only 36.7 per cent of the respondents revealed ‘Women workers have security provision’ at workplace. 56.7 per cent of the respondents revealed ‘Women workers have faced gender discrimination at workplace’. No respondent stated that there is a ‘Presence of sexual harassment committee’. 73 per cent of the respondents revealed that there is a ‘Provision of first aid facility’ and 86.7 per cent of the respondents stated that ‘Women workers are motivated and rewarded for their work at workplace’ (Table 3).

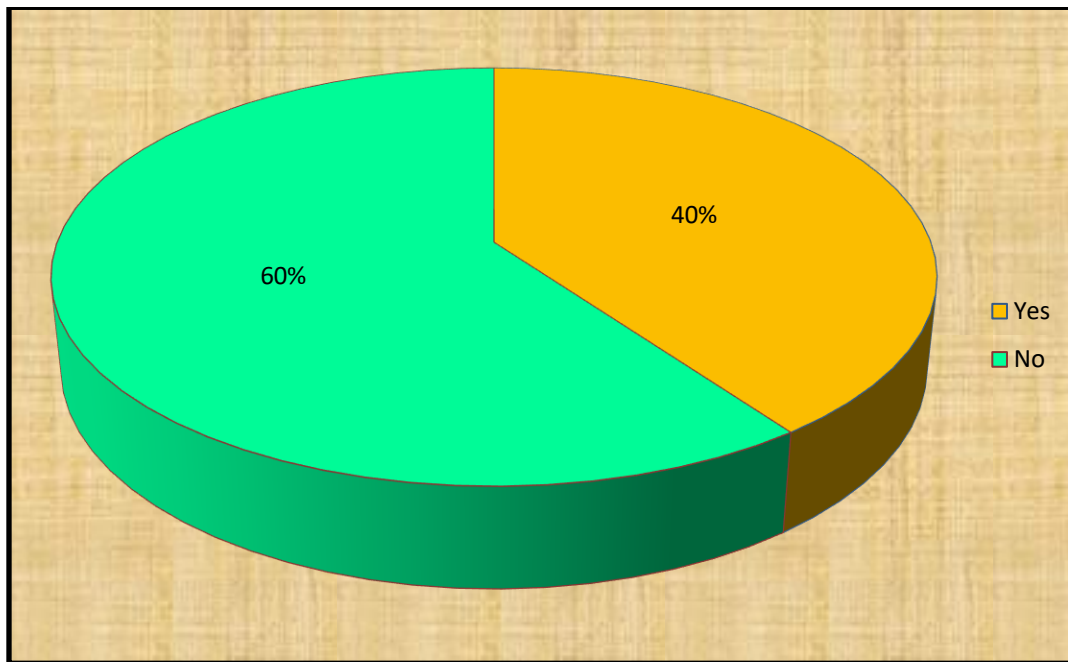
**Table 3: Frequency on Workplace Ethics**

	Yes	No
	n(%)	
Positive Environment at Work Place	22 (73.3)	8 (26.7)
Employer help the female employees for maintain their work and personal life balance	13 (43.3)	17 (56.7)
Women workers are getting salary according their work performance	26 (86.7)	4 (13.3)
Women workers are getting unwanted behavior	12 (40.0)	18 (60.0)
Women workers doesn’t have knowledge about women safety right for women	16 (53.3)	14 (46.7)
Knowledge_about_Sexual_Harassment_Bill_2013	6 (20.0)	24 (80.0)
Women workers are comfort to talk their colleague	23 (76.7)	7 (23.3)
Women workers have security provision	11 (36.7)	19 (63.3)
Women workers have faced gender discrimination at workplace	17 (56.7)	13 (43.3)
Presence of sexual harassment committee	-	30 (100.0)
Provision of first aid facility	22 (73.3)	8 (26.7)
Women workers have motivates and rewarded their work at workplace	26 (86.7)	4 (13.3)

Source: Author (2019)

When examined the frequency of women facing sexual harassment at workplace, it was revealed that 40 per cent of the sample population faced sexual harassment. They face different types of sexual harassment such as physical contact, showing pornography, demand or request for sexual favour, unwelcome physical, verbal, non-verbal conduct of sexual nature, and making sexually colored remarks (**Figure 3**). Hence, the following hypothesis is approved:

**H1:** Women at work face sexual harassment in the region of Lucknow, India. - **Approved**



**Figure 3: Frequency of women facing sexual harassment at workplace**

The association between religion and the salary getting of women employees in the (Table 4). Most of the (76.7%) women employees were Hindus. Further, 84.6% of the Hindu employees have stated that they were getting salary according to work performance. From the Chi- Square values and p-value (0.002), it was revealed that there exists a statistical significance between the considered factors. Hence, the following hypothesis is approved:

**H2:** There exists a relationship between religion and salary according to work performance of women in workplace.

**Table 4: Association between religion and Women workers are getting salary according their work performance**

Religion	Women workers are getting salary according their work performance		Total	p value
	Yes	No		
	n(%)			
Hindu	22 (84.6)	1 (25.0)	23 (76.7)	0.002**
Muslim	1 (3.8)	3 (75.0)	4 (13.3)	
Sikh	2 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.7)	
Christian	1 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.3)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 (100.0)</b>	<b>4 (100.0)</b>	<b>30 (100.0)</b>	

Chi-Square-15.232, \*\* $p < 0.01$

When examining the association between education and the salary getting status of women employees, it was revealed that there an association between education and women workers are getting salary according to their job performance (Table 5). Hence, the following hypothesis is approved:

**H3:** There exists a relationship between education and salary according to work performance of women in workplace.- **Approved**

**Table 5: Association between education and Women workers are getting salary according their work performance**

Education	Income		Total	p value
	Yes	No		
	n(%)			
10 <sup>th</sup> Standard	1 (3.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.3)	0.004**
12 <sup>th</sup> Standard	4 (15.4)	3 (75.0)	7 (23.3)	
B.A	13 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (43.3)	
LLB	0 (0.0)	1 (25.0)	1 (3.3)	
M.A	8 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	8 (26.7)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 (100.0)</b>	<b>4 (100.0)</b>	<b>30 (100.0)</b>	

Chi-Square-15.165, \*\* $p < 0.01$

When examining the association between type of job and employer motivation and rewards for women at workplace, it was revealed that there is association between type of job and employer motivates and rewarded their work at workplace (Table 6). Hence, the following hypothesis is approved.

**H4:** There exists a relationship between type of job and employee motivation of women in workplace. - **Approved**

**Table 6: Association between type of job and employer motivates and rewarded their work at workplace**

Type of job	Motivates and rewarded their work at workplace		Total	p value
	Yes	No		
	n(%)			
Permanent	13 (50.0)	1 (25.0)	<b>14 (46.7)</b>	<b>0.017*</b>
Temporary	12 (46.2)	1 (25.0)	<b>13 (43.3)</b>	
Contractual	1 (3.8)	2 (50.0)	<b>3 (10.0)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 (100.0)</b>	<b>4 (100.0)</b>	<b>30 (100.0)</b>	

Chi-Square-8.207, \* $p < 0.05$

Association between type of job and employer motivates and rewarded their work at workplace is presented in (Table 7). When investigative the association between type of job and employer motivation and rewards for women at workplace, it was revealed that there exists a statistical significance between the variables.

**Table 7: Association between type of job and employer motivates and rewarded their work at workplace**

Salary gets according their work	Motivates and rewarded their work at workplace		Total	p value
	Yes	No		
	n(%)			
Yes	24 (92.3)	2 (50.0)	<b>26 (86.7)</b>	<b>0.020*</b>
No	2 (7.7)	2 (50.0)	<b>4 (13.3)</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>26 (100.0)</b>	<b>4 (100.0)</b>	<b>30 (100.0)</b>	

Chi-Square-5.370, \* $p < 0.05$

When examining the association between type of family and employer motivation and rewards for women at workplace, it was revealed that there exists a statistical significance between the variables (Table 8). Hence, the following objective is approved:

**H5:** There exists a relationship between type of family and employee motivation of women in workplace.- **Approved**

**Table 8: Association between type of family and employer motivates and rewarded their work at workplace**

Type of Family	Knowledge about Sexual Harassments Bill 2013		Total	p value
	Yes	No		
	n(%)			
Joint	1 (16.7)	15 (62.5)	16 (53.3)	0.044*
Nuclear	5 (83.3)	9 (37.5)	14 (46.7)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>6 (100.0)</b>	<b>24 (100.0)</b>	<b>30 (100.0)</b>	

Chi-Square-4.051, \*p<0.05

When examining the association between Positive Environment at Work Place and Employer help the female employees for maintain their work and personal life balance, it was revealed that there exists a statistical significance between the variables (Table 9). Hence, the following hypothesis is approved:

**H6:** There exists a relationship between positive environment at work place and work-life balance of women employees - **Approved**

**Table 9: Association between Positive Environment at Work Place and Employer help the female employees for maintain their work and personal life balance**

Positive Environment at Work Place	Employer help the female employees for maintain their work and personal life balance		Total	p value
	Yes	No		
	n(%)			
Yes	13 (59.1)	0 (0.0)	13 (43.3)	0.004*
No	9 (40.9)	8 (100.0)	17 (56.7)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>22 (100.0)</b>	<b>8 (100.0)</b>	<b>30 (100.0)</b>	

Chi-Square-8.342, \*p<0.05

#### 4.0 DISCUSSION

This research is a novel attempt to analyse the perceptions of women employees in the region of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh India towards the challenges and problems they face in their workplace. It is quite interesting to note that female participation in jobs is high in Uttar Pradesh and is contributing significantly to the nation's economy. In addition, it is revealed that the rate of participation of women employees belonging to rural backdrop is high when compared to the

rate of urban women<sup>14</sup>. Hence, it is imperative that a city belonging to this state would serve as the basis for the collection of data and hence the researcher collected data from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.

An analysis of the demographic profile revealed that the participation of women belonging to less than 23 years of age is high in shopping malls. There is a high potential for women in the sales field<sup>15</sup>; however, women belonging to the age group less than 25 years and are unmarried are found to be more actively participating as employees in shopping malls as per the findings of this research. It is hence imperative that women should look into other venues when it comes to obtaining jobs that will provide better income.

When examining the status of the participants with respect to the sexual harassment episodes they face at work, it is revealed that a considerable number of participants (40 per cent) have witnessed harassment at work (Figure 3). Though the numbers are not the majority in this research, it is to be noted that this trend is detrimental to the physical and psychological wellbeing of women employees which in turn affects national economy if such instances group together in the future. In India, women employees are now ready to speak out the experiences they had in their workplace and are even encouraged to speak up against the harassment they witnessed. There are several instances where reputed Indian Organisations lost their prominence in the market due to lack of proper rules to deal with workplace sexual harassment<sup>16</sup>.

In this research, the researcher examined several factors influencing women's motivation and performance at work and found statistical significance among the variables considered in this research. This means that women employees have proven to this society as efficient counterparts to male employees but the lack of recognition and the male patriarchal society have hindered them from achieving their goals. The researcher hence recommends proper support and recognition to be given to the women employees who will be incremental for their growth as well as the growth of the nation.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

In this research paper, the researcher identified that there exists problems and challenges for women at workplace, the predominant problem being sexual harassment. Though there exists positive environment for women to work in the organizations as per the shopping mall industry, problems associated with sexual harassment is a threat to the well-being of the employees, the organizations involved and the nation. Hence, it is recommended to organizations to keep strong

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<sup>14</sup> [https://www.indiastat.com/SOCIO\\_PDF/87/fulltext.pdf](https://www.indiastat.com/SOCIO_PDF/87/fulltext.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.catalyst.org/system/files/knowning\\_the\\_territory-\\_women\\_in\\_sales.lr\\_.pdf](https://www.catalyst.org/system/files/knowning_the_territory-_women_in_sales.lr_.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/events/labor\\_law/2018/AnnualConference/papers/Sexual%20Harassment%20at%20the%20Workplace.pdf](https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/events/labor_law/2018/AnnualConference/papers/Sexual%20Harassment%20at%20the%20Workplace.pdf)



policies that support the welfare of female employees. Furthermore, organizations should ensure to provide a safe working environment for their female employees and policies to be made stringent to ensure that women are motivated to work and continue their career, even after the birth of a child. The employer or other responsible person should set an Internal Complaints Committee at workplace to resolve the problems of their female employees. Half of the members of internal complain committee should be women. The committee should be headed by a senior position woman who should redress grievance of the survivors without fear. Female Employees should be aware that they can go to whom to complain regarding harassment at workplace. The government should ensure such committee is in place in all organizations in the nation.

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