

A Sociological Study on the Role Conflict among Women Lawyers in Mumbai and Thane Districts

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Abstract: *The objective of this study is to examine the role conflicts experienced by female lawyers. Female lawyers are obligated to undertake several roles related to confiscation. This research elucidates the challenges encountered by women as a result of role conflict. The current study is an endeavor in this particular direction. This analysis addresses several significant concerns and integrates empirical evidence with theoretical perspectives to examine the current situation or status of women lawyers within society. The study encompasses all facets of the subject and examines the intricacy of challenges faced by female lawyers. This study utilizes empirical data obtained from interviews conducted with 230 female lawyers in the specific areas of Mumbai and Thane districts.*

Keywords: role conflict, women lawyers, legal profession

I. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary times, women have begun to engage in employment across all industries. Working women are obligated to carry out numerous jobs and assume multiple roles, which can clash with one another. Today's women are assuming two distinct roles: one is to carry out the responsibilities of being a wife, mother, or daughter, while the other is to function as a subordinate in the workplace. A challenging scenario emerges when the various positions begin to conflict with each other. The tensions that emerge when a woman assumes numerous roles are contingent upon both the societal framework in which she resides and her biological functions. Amidst numerous conflicting roles, the constraints of time and energy pose a significant obstacle to resolving these conflicts.

When examining gender-related issues, it is crucial to comprehend the type and extent of tensions experienced by women in the workplace as they navigate their domestic and professional responsibilities. Role conflict occurs when an individual experiences tension and strain due to the various dimensions of a role they have assumed. There is a perceived tension among lawyers over the alignment between their ideal job expectations and their actual articulation of their function. There are three distinct approaches to analyzing these conflicts: Organizational conflict, Professional conflict, and Familial conflict. Given that all the lawyers in the sample are involved in private practice, the likelihood of organizational conflicts occurring is quite low. However, it is important to note that all lawyers operate within the established boundaries outlined in the code of conduct for lawyers as mandated by the Bar Council. Bureaucratic governmental institutions sometimes require professionals to adhere to prescribed regulations, perhaps leading to the development of a bureaucratic role-image. The professional dispute may arise.

The aforementioned issues arise due to the lawyer's failure to satisfy professional standards and their lack of proficiency in carrying out their responsibilities. It can also be perceived as being associated with the job satisfaction of professionals, which may be rooted in the ability to apply their knowledge to specific circumstances or contribute to the growing body of knowledge.

The familial conflict holds significant importance in the lives of women who are employed. A significant portion of the examination of work-family conflict is predicated upon the gender composition of professionals. Women's self-perception is mostly shaped by their familial responsibilities, whereas men are more influenced by their professional obligations. When it comes to career and familial responsibilities, it is the woman who must navigate the middle ground. Without making such adjustments, women experience significant conflict. This is due to the significant disparities in societal role definitions and expectations associated with these categories. This study aims to examine the

presence and extent of professional and familial role conflict among female lawyers operating at different levels in Mumbai and Thane districts.

The notion of role conflict

Role conflict refers to the subjective experience of grappling with many roles. Conflicts in roles can develop from several factors, but primarily stem from the aspiration for success in life and the problems that exert pressure on one's aspirations and demands, leading to conflicts between them. The influence of personality and interpersonal relationships has a significant part in shaping the outcomes of role conflict. Role conflicts can manifest in various ways. Firstly, there is a divergence of expectations that cannot be satisfied by rejecting any of the available options. Secondly, when doing one's duties, demands from those who send them are incompatible. Lastly, multiple roles frequently intersect.

Significance of the Research

The primary objective of this study is to examine the prevailing role conflict experienced by female lawyers. Women lawyers, like other women in the workforce, experience role conflict when carrying out their professional duties. The matter of women's employment is intricately connected to the role of women within the family unit and the disproportionately heavy burden of domestic responsibilities, which serves as an impediment to their participation in the workforce. Women lawyers face a new and tough position due to the process of adapting to new employment and the needs of clients. The dual roles assumed by women in the workforce give rise to paradoxes, resulting in the emergence of role conflict. Consequently, the stress element arises, leading to frequent experiences of guilty conscience and a sense of being torn between her personal life, professional environment, and society. This finally gives rise to numerous issues. The present study encompasses a comprehensive examination of multiple facets pertaining to conflict and issues arising from the execution of dual roles.

Objectives of study

The objectives of this study are-

- To analyze the socio-economic situation of female lawyers.
- To ascertain the precise challenges faced by female lawyers in the legal field.
- To evaluate the origins of role conflict within the female legal profession.
- To ascertain the ramifications of role conflict among the female legal profession.

II. METHODOLOGY

The research employs the Simple Random Sampling method to determine the appropriate sample size. The present study utilizes a scientifically designed questionnaire as the primary instrument for empirical data collecting. This questionnaire is presented to a sample of 230 female lawyers practicing in Mumbai and Thane districts. The data in the present study is represented using statistical procedures and tables.

III. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Women who are employed and encounter challenges in balancing several roles experience repercussions in both their marital relationships and academic pursuits. The issue of striking a balance between familial responsibilities and professional obligations is a matter of significant concern for contemporary women, impacting both genders equally.

Table 1 Different Levels of Role Conflict of the Respondents

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	57	24.90
Moderate	114	49.81
High	59	25.27
Total	230	100.00

According to the data shown in Table 1, it can be observed that 24.90% of women lawyers experience a low degree of role conflict, while 49.81% experience a moderate level of role conflict. The remaining 25.27% of women lawyers report a high level of role conflict. The majority of women lawyers experience moderate role conflict.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of women lawyers Role Conflict and Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
21-25	16	7.95
26-30	24	10.43
31-35	63	27.39
36-40	38	16.52
41-50	42	18.26
51-55	47	20.43
Total	230	100.00

According to Table 2, it can be observed that 7.95 percent of the participants were into the age range of 21 to 25 years. The population of female lawyers within the age range of 26 to 30 years is recorded as 10.43. The role conflict level for women lawyers aged 21 to 25 is 7.95. The majority of role conflicts among women lawyers occur between the ages of 31 and 35. The percentage of years is 20.43.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of women lawyers' Role Conflict and Category

Category	Frequency	Percentage
SC	53	23.04
ST	86	37.39
OBC	36	15.65
GM	55	23.91
Total	230	100.00

The aforementioned data suggests that 23.04 percent of women lawyers fall under the SC category. In the ST category, the majority of women lawyers are 37.39. The proportion of women in the OBC category is 15.65 percent. The percentage of women lawyers in the GM category is 23.91%.

Table 4: Challenges Encountered by Women Legal professionals

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Physical strains	12	6.70
Mental strains	23	12.85
Financial problems	185	80.45
Extra	10	4.34
Total	230	100.00

According to Table 4, a significant majority of female advocates (80.45%) reported experiencing financial difficulties while working as lawyers. A smaller proportion of 23 female advocates (12.85%) reported experiencing mental strain, whereas 12 women advocates (6.70%) identified physical strain as the primary challenge encountered in their legal practice. Lawyers generally have limited revenues due to customers' preference for senior lawyers based on their legal experience. Additionally, working as a young lawyer in a competitive setting is likely to result in mental and physical stress.

The major findings

First and foremost, a significant proportion of the participants in both settings belong to the younger age demographic. The majority of participants in the study reside in metropolitan areas and belong to nuclear family structures. During our analysis of the overall characteristics of female lawyers working in court settings, we saw that the majority of them were between the ages of 23 and 32. Additionally, 70% of these female lawyers were unmarried. The majority of the respondents resided in urban areas, held only an LL.B degree rather than other qualifications such as M.A. or

LL.M, primarily came from nuclear families, identified as Hindus, particularly from the Brahmin and Khatri castes, and reported a total family income exceeding Rs. 60,000 per month. Approximately 50% of the respondents reported an income of around Rs. 5,000 per month.

An examination of the challenges encountered by female lawyers in the legal profession revealed that they encountered obstacles in securing employment, encountered intense rivalry from their male counterparts, were required to work during unconventional hours, and encountered difficulties in visiting correctional facilities. These challenges are more pronounced when women enter the legal profession, since many women lawyers have reported that they have successfully established a sense of equality with their male counterparts. Furthermore, the judges' attitude was determined to be Motivating. Over time, the clients have developed faith in them and are now entrusting their situations to them.

Gender Bias: According to the survey, 50% of the female lawyers believe that there is a slight yet widespread gender bias in the legal profession. Nearly 50% of respondents concur that female lawyers are not regarded as equals by their male counterparts. The majority of these lawyers might be classified as either young practitioners or established legal professionals. Conversely, approximately 50% of them deny the presence of any type of prejudice.

Adverse sentiments were conveyed regarding extended work hours, insufficient time for family, and the challenge of maintaining a harmonious equilibrium between professional and personal spheres.

A significant proportion of female advocates, including 70 percent, encountered financial difficulties, while a minority of 20 percent experienced mental strain during their legal profession. Additionally, 10 percent of women advocates encountered various other challenges.

The survey additionally reveals that junior lawyers encountered significant challenges in establishing themselves within the legal profession due to its highly competitive nature.

The survey additionally reveals that once entering the legal profession, female lawyers have challenges in securing employment, intense competition, the issue of working during non-traditional hours, and the need to visit correctional facilities and lock-ups. The majority of female lawyers in both settings have had comparable challenges in securing employment, balancing their professional and domestic responsibilities, and facing time constraints for case preparation.

Ultimately, there is a growing trend of women joining the legal field, albeit they are not occupying the same hierarchical positions as their male counterparts. Arguments suggesting that the inclusion of women in the legal profession will have an impact should analyze the work environments where gender bias persists through various subtle means, primarily as a result of ingrained patriarchal culture rather than intentional actions.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study indicate that female lawyers encounter financial challenges as a result of their limited income and the highly competitive nature of the legal profession. This issue necessitates attention from both governmental bodies and legal societies.

It is imperative to offer financial assistance to deserving young women lawyers who are unable to do so.

In the absence of familial support, individuals may struggle to satisfy their maintenance expenses.

Government-provided financial aid, such as stipends and scholarships, as well as support from experienced lawyers, would greatly facilitate the pursuit of legal practice by women advocates. Additionally, lawyer's associations could provide assistance to junior women lawyers, enabling them to enhance their skills and increase their income within the legal profession.

V. CONCLUSION

It might be argued that women encounter a dual role on a global scale. This dual function gives rise to problems between work and family. There exist multiple demands placed upon her by both her family and her professional sphere. The two expectations necessitate the presence of two distinct women within a single individual. In order to effectively carry out her responsibilities, she must adhere to a rigorous schedule that enhances her physical and mental capacity to handle urgent circumstances promptly. In job-family disputes, the family's role takes precedence over the

job's role. Nevertheless, there are certain women who prioritize their employment in order to uphold their great dedication to their work and sustain their economic circumstances.

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