

## **‘C-dilemma’ of working mothers: solution factors for balancing dilemmas of child care and career**

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### **Abstract:**

Traditionally men are considered as the primary wage earner, whereas women are engaged in household chores and child care. Female participation in the workforce has had a dramatic turn all over the world. At the same time, women have to play the same traditional role they played before. So, the load is doubled on the women now. While managing duties outside the home and inside the home women of all classes are facing dilemmas regarding whether she will continue her career or focus on her child care. In this study, these dilemmas of women are addressed as the "C-dilemma". This study based on secondary data analysis will try to find out the reasons and solutions for balancing dilemmas regarding career and child care. Supervision of children by both parents and family members, ensuring the availability of good daycare facilities, and dividing household responsibilities between spouses can reduce working mothers' dilemmas regarding child care. On the other hand, supporting as co-workers, employee-friendly policies about leave, promotion, recognition, time management skills, efficiency, self-motivation, etc. can provide solutions for reducing dilemmas related with career. Recommendations of the study conclude that it is not only the working mother's responsibility to take care of the children along, partner and family members should equally participate to encourage the mother because the recognition or achievement of the working mother not only glorifies the mother but also bring prosperity and happiness to her family and children.

**Keywords:** C-dilemma, working mothers, child care, career, responsibilities.

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### **I. Introduction:**

Women from all classes are now entering the job market by proving their merits and skills. Career provides them self-confidence, recognition and economic independence. Despite men's growing involvement in family life, women continue to do the bulk of the caregiving at home. As a result, it's important to rethink how the working women approach problems at home and in the workplace (Fatima,2017). Together, financial independence and increased income provide a very important upgrade for families from poor socioeconomic backgrounds. Financial freedom creates a sense of empowerment, while increased income raises the family's standard of life (Jayita & Murali,2009). Attained from historical data, projections and forecast of world bank collection of development indicators stated that the rate of female labour force is 30.4% in September 2021. Women are becoming more empowered at work at the same time facing dilemmas because of role overload, role discrimination, gender stereotypes, societal expectations etc. Career development impose more pressure on working mothers child care development. Because of social insecurity, financial crisis and unhelpful mindset of family members working mothers are facing dilemmas related with child care. After joining the workforce for two generations, still women are facing the same dilemma regarding child care and career.

### **Objectives:**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To define the dilemmas that working mother carries while trying to balance between her career and child care as 'C-dilemma'.
2. To find out the sources of dilemmas regarding child care.
3. To search out the sources of dilemmas regarding career development.
4. To discuss the solution factors for reducing 'C-dilemma' of working mothers.

## **II. Methodology:**

For achieving the thorough perception about the working women's dilemma related to career and child care and solution factors to reduce the dilemma secondary data and previous literatures related with the topic were carefully attained from different online journals and articles (Dizaho & Abdullah,2016).

## **III. Review of Literature:**

### **Reasons of the increasing number of working mothers:**

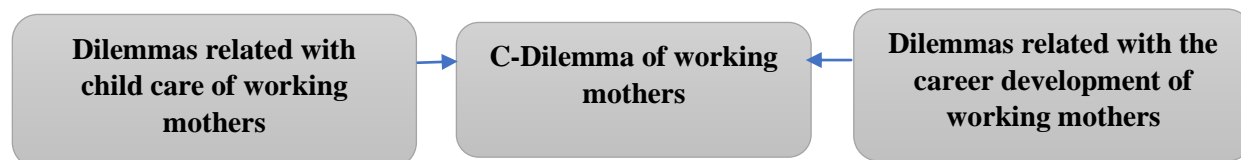
Due to encouragement to be educated and social recognition and high living cost women's shift from home to office is increasing (Samanta at el.,2020).

Before the last two decades it was considered that women will only do the household chores and take care of the Children and family members. There has been a drastic change in the nature of women's employment in urban and rural as a whole (Samanta at el.,2020). A new generation of women now attained skills, education and expertise to enter the job sector along with male fellows (Tripathi & Sandeep,2012). The definition of a working mother could be a combination of career and child care. A qualified woman who achieves economic independence with her career and is also able to manage her responsibilities toward family, children and home is a working mother (Jayita &Murali,2009). Working mothers who occupy professional careers still have the demand of playing the domestic role as well. While trying to balance between profession and personal life, women are facing dilemma (Anwar & Suhariadi,2017). In this study we will address this kind of dilemma as 'C-dilemma'.

### **C-Dilemma defined:**

Dilemma in general means a critical situation when one has to choose between two or three best alternatives. So, it can be said that "c-dilemma" indicates a crucial decision for working mothers "should I stay or quit the job due to an unsolvable problem related to child care?"

C-Dilemma can be defined as the overlapping dilemma of working women related with her career and child care. C-dilemma is a common dilemma of sandwich generation women, who faces insecurity about career growth while having the expectation of taking care of the children as primary care giver.



For working mothers, fulfilling their tasks in the professional and family spheres is necessary for both life happiness and complete functioning. Furthermore, Van Aarde and Mostert contend that family and work are not two distinct spheres but rather two spheres that are intertwined. According to the research done by Aryee et al., juggling the demands of job and family is one of the things that might help working women find happiness in their lives. An acceptable resolution to the demands of responsibilities in both the family and work domains emerges as a sign that the balance between work and family is achieved in each function.

For working mothers, the cultural position of women is actually quite discriminatory. Working women who are successful in their careers outside the house are unable to concentrate on their own objectives because they are tangled in both the domestic and professional spheres, or what is commonly known as a double load. Working mothers frequently have feelings of guilt because they internalize conventional roles that create dichotomies between the duties of men and women and make it difficult for them to balance or even fully devote their time and attention to their families (Anwar at el., 2017).

Many working women begin their families while they are employed, and some others might discover that they must return to work sooner than they had anticipated after giving birth. A successful job that gives her economic security and a successful motherhood that successfully raises a child make the working mother an institution in and of herself. It's critical to recognize how hard both of these duties are, and how difficult it will be to fulfil each without sacrificing the other (Jayita & Murali,2009).

Working women frequently experience significant levels of stress, which can affect their connections at home. She is under pressure to care for her house while also rushing to get to work on time, drop off her child at school, and meet all of the child' deadlines for food and clothing (Jayita & Murali,2009).

Working mothers alter their schedules and make sacrifices to accommodate the demands of their children and other family members. That is the conundrum they confront when attempting to balance the roles of mother and professional woman. As working mothers, they encounter several challenges since they must devote their full attention to their children (Zambrana at el., 1979). Working women' life happiness is influenced

by various factors, including parental role fulfilment, parental involvement, and readiness for parenting role dispute (Kim, 2011).

Whether a mother works because she wants to or because she has to, she still has an obligation to act professionally and ethically. Thus, they will lead to greater sympathy for working women on the part of employers, partners, and extended families. In a nutshell, compassionate and cooperative employers are a direct result of employing good workers. Plus, a reasonable and cooperative boss would be able to get the most out of his staff without any abuse of the perks they're granted (Jayita & Murali,2009).

#### **Dilemmas related with child care of working mothers:**

Every professional woman has a common dilemma between career development and child care development responsibilities (Samanta et al.,2020).

Mothers' employment position helps children through enhancing family finances, better regulated work behaviour and better organization of home routines. According to research of Chase-Lansdale et al., 2003; Alvarez, 1985, children whose mothers worked due to financial necessity or were facing role conflict benefited greatly from their mothers' higher levels of education.

During unanticipated sickness of the child, the mother is considered as the main care giver. So, she has to take leave to look after the sick child (Jayita & Murali,2009). Caring for children is considered as the basic job of a woman whether a woman works or not.

When mothers enter the workforce, pre-schoolers lose as much as two hours a day of quality time with her. In order to raise the family's standard of living, the mother must spend less time caring for her child. Accordingly, it's possible that these two cancel each other out. Mothers could try to make up for this by spending less time on their own interests, education, and social life while the child aren't around (Chase-Lansdale et al., 2003).

Maternal employment has been linked to a rise in the prevalence of childhood obesity, likely because less time is spent with the child as a result of the mother's work schedule, and therefore less time is spent cooking and preparing nutritious meals (Hawkins et al., 2008). Long working hours of mothers, rather than financial constraints, were cited as a possible barrier to children's access to healthful diets and physical exercise by the Millennium Cohort Study Child Health Group.

Ravnol stated that women have to join work after their children gets enough big to join the preschool as working along with taking care of small children is very stressful (2011). It was found that while mother gets busy with career and spend less quality time with her children, the children becomes emotionally weak, less social and introvert (Safari,1998).

A trust bonding atmosphere between mother and child ensures sharing personal life events and problems with mother. The cognitive, affective, psychological, social and emotional growth of a children has been formed within the first five years of the children (Almani et al.,2012).

#### ***i) Dilemma related with cognitive development of children:***

Cognitive development of children of working mother is more relatable with the bonding of mother and children (Papalia & Martorell,2014; Stevens, 1971). Cognitive skills are the base of the children's future achievement (Bernal,2008; Heckman et al., 2006).

In a research to examine the potential impacts of maternal employment on child development in the early years of life (0–3 years), Stephiana, O., et al. (2019) discovered that the average mother's working hours decreased with increasing cognitive score. She came to the conclusion that a mother's presence at home and attention to the family throughout a child's formative years can enhance the quality of the child's development and growth.

#### ***ii) Dilemma related with Scio-psychological development of children:***

The emotional and social growth of a kid is also hampered by poor quality caregiving services. When a staff of caregivers who are undertrained and overworked provides care for children, it may also hinder the development of the child's physical and mental health (Metilda SJ. et al., 2015).

Child's psychological and social growth is impacted by daycare services of inadequate quality. Children may adopt a negative attitude if women complain about their jobs at home. They can think that their family's misery is caused by her employment. Despite keeping their children's best interests in mind, mothers may neglect to give them a secure emotional connection (Metilda, S.J. et al., 2015).

A study found that if a mother is working long hours and not spending much time with her child, it can have a negative impact on the development of the child as a whole. This is because a child forms a strong bond with his or her mother, and if that bond is strained, the child is more likely to develop negative behaviors and associate with negative people. In addition, the youngster may become defiant and aggressive in attitude, picking fights with family members over trivial matters (Almani et al., 2012).

iii) **Dilemma related with communication development of children:**

A child's literacy environment and language development are greatly influenced by the parents' and the children's positive relationships with one another and by the parents' and children's improved verbal response. The first three years of a child's life are crucial, as this is the time when their brain is developing and learning skills at an accelerated rate. It will be more difficult for the child to reach the milestones if this important time for language development is missed (Evans, 2008; Neuman, 2008).

Many studies have shown that initial communication and learning are profoundly influenced by the quality of interactions between children and their parents or primary caregivers. One of the biggest indicators of children's early language development is the volume and kind of language used by parents in conversation with their children (Hart, 1995 & Evans, 1999 and Weizman, 2001).

Parents are considered as the primary teacher of a children. Parents are communicating with the child regularly. But now a days when parents are getting busy with their career meanwhile children are communicating more with the care giver. By staying with the secondary care giver children learns local language. Sometimes to avoid children's tantrums care givers keep the children engaged by giving mobile phone or tv. Thus, parents are facing speech delay problem of the children, which in terms create more difficulties for the working parents. They don't have time to take the children for speech therapy due to busy work schedule.

iv) **Dilemma related with behavioural development of children:**

The growth of a child is profoundly influenced by the care he or she receives, both in terms of quality and quantity (Love, 2003) Although they provide for their children in every other way, working women seldom get to spend quality time with their child playing and having fun. Many working mothers sacrifice time with their child but make up for it by doing their absolute best while they are with them (Tong, 2003). Because of fulfilling all the needs of the children sometimes they become more arrogant. This is very common behaviour of the working parents' children. So, giving everything the children wants is creating more problems, sometimes the children commit suicide when the parents deny to give anything. Spending time with the children brings more pleasure to the children's mind, they feel more valued and cared. Additionally, parents are in charge of fostering their child's individuality (Ajayi, 2000). Stress from the mother's employment, long hours, and sleep deprivation may result in low quality time spent with the child (Gordon, 2007).

When a mother is separated from her child for an extended period of time, it can cause emotional pain for both parties involved. A mother's feelings of guilt and child deprivation are exacerbated by the distance she feels from her child. According to mothers, a kid's connection to its mother grows stronger under ideal settings but suffers greatly when the mother and child are separated for an extended period of time during the first few years of life (Almani et al.,2012).

Attachment is a facet of a child's relationship with his or her parents that aims to provide the youngster with a feeling of safety and security. However, insecure connection with mothers increases the risk of children experiencing behavioural issues later in life, including anxiety, despair, anger, and violence (www.healthunits.com). According to Benoit's (2004) research, having a deep relationship to one's mother as a child helps to establish a firm foundation for a lifetime of love and support.

**Dilemmas related with the career development of working mothers:**

Women's career growth is far more complicated, and thus adds additional strain to their non-work-related elements of life. Working women' careers and family relationships are inextricably linked. The fact that family definitely influences a mother's profession throughout her career, as demonstrated by studies by O'Neil, Hopkins, and Bilimionial, suggests a career interruption propensity when compared to males, particularly with relation to having children. Compared to women without children, women with older children, and males, mothers with younger children are more likely to have a work interruption. Most of them opt to quit their employment since they cannot work full time. Some of the women opt to abandon their careers, while others encounter setbacks or professional stagnation (Anwar et al., 2017).

Women with lower-level employment exhibit substantially more unfavourable parenting behaviours. Low-paying occupations could not be economically or materially advantageous to the family unit, given that a growth in money is a truly beneficial feature that, over time, improves the family's mental health (Raver, 2003). Both the emotional environment of the families and the mothers' mental health play a significant role in determining the impact of mothers' job on the family (Jayita & Murali,2009).

Due to child care responsibilities at home or sickness of care giver or child, sometimes the working mothers get late attendance at work. Mothers can't focus on their work because of the insecurity of leaving her child to unknown person at day care. When a working mother gets opportunity to attend training session or workshop home or abroad instead of being happy, mother becomes more worried. She thinks about the child care arrangement in absence of her at home. Who will take care her child? Whether care will be taken properly

like her? These dilemmas offset her concentration from work and the working mothers fail to input her 100% dedication towards her career performance.

#### **IV. Recommendations:**

##### **Solution factors for balancing dilemmas related with the career development of working mothers:**

As full-time mothers have less time to spend with their children, working mothers now a days prefer flexible career, work from home opportunity. Most of the working mothers at some point of their career want to quit the job due to having dilemma about raising child along with hectic work schedule or timing.

A mother who works and lives in a nuclear family or who is a single parent may require more time off than a mother who lives in a joint family. The mother's return to work is often facilitated by the presence of a nursery within the workplace. Working less hours or from home might also be stress-relieving options. Women who work part-time have more flexibility to pursue their own interests, make ends meet, and protect themselves from accusations of abandoning their children (Wilson, 2006).

Women are frequently engaged in positions or workplaces where they must work longer hours for little compensation, which has a detrimental effect on their mental and physical health. In the end, they are unable to better fulfil the roles of a mother and homemaker. Conflicting viewpoints and a family's unbalanced harmony are the outcomes of this (Samanta et al., 2020).

One of the main reasons a competent mother might want to work is to advance her career. Women who go back to work after having a baby face an internal conflict between their desire to advance in their careers and their want to nurture and care for their new-born children. When her parents, other relatives, or a babysitter take care of her child, a working mother can't help but feel guilty. When both parents are active in raising their children, the mother feels less guilt and greater joy in having a career. In addition to contributing financially, both parents should be able to take on childcare duties and reap the enormous rewards that come with them while still being able to take pleasure in each other's company as a married couple (Jayita & Murali, 2009).

The study found that factors such as work-life balance, doing stimulating work, having a respected boss, being paid fairly, and having a clear career choice had a direct impact on the job stress of women. Examining the disparity between the sexes, the results indicate that women's job stress is more closely associated with management assistance and equal opportunity. Pay equity, equal opportunity, job advancement, and fair performance evaluations are just a few of the major concerns that placed working women under undue dilemma (Parul & Sandeep, 2012).

A working mother can achieve highest career goal if she is determined about her goal as well as confident about raising her child properly. Most of the time working mothers feel hopeless when she faces any dilemma related with child care arrangement. Some mothers had to quit their job for not having any care giver to take care of her child in absence of mother.

Supportive work environment can reduce dilemma related with the career development of working mothers. Management should always find out the reasons of female employees declining performance. If the reason is related with the child care facility, office should take necessary steps to ensure female employee wellbeing. Availability of safe, hygienic and secure child care can reduce mental dilemma of working mothers.

Famous female role models should encourage the working mothers to overcome the 'c- dilemma' by organizing motivational workshops. Working mothers who are already successful in their field understand the dilemma of the working mothers more than their male fellows. So, female role models should facilitate the flexible work policies in the workplace along with trust worthy day care or pre-school facilities for the working mothers.

##### **Solution factors for balancing dilemmas related with the child care of working mothers:**

Dilemmas related with the career development of working mothers are interconnected with dilemma related with the child care of working mothers. If the mother sent the child to day care, day care expense is still very high. So, the day care expense costs most of the mother's salary. Mother guilt is always there in the mind of the working mothers regarding child care arrangement. One of the many reasons is good day care facility is not easily available at fair price for all classes of mothers. If the mother has day care facility at work, she feels more motivated to perform well because it reduces her dilemma related with child care.

The new-born stage of a child's life is the most vulnerable, hence mothers should exercise greater caution at this time. The child should not be seen as a stressor or a burden. They should take part in fundamental responsibilities like providing a shower, feeding meals, helping with motor development activities, etc. rather than just relying on babysitters or nannies. When dealing with them, keep electrical devices like computers, TVs, and mobile phones out of reach. In front of their children, parents shouldn't talk about their jobs or careers (Samanta et al., 2020).

In turn, these mentalities and ideals are passed down from generation to generation. That's why so many households now view the working mother not as an exception but as the norm. To ensure that both parents

in a working couple share equally in the care of their children, regardless of which parent brings in more money, gender sensitivity must be fostered on both the individual and societal levels (Jayita & Murali,2009).

Lack of time and guilt over what is viewed as parental negligence continue to be the main difficulties of being a working mother. There are several perks, such as enhanced family life, financial gains, and personal advantages. Significant personal and professional changes are required to make this possible, allowing the woman to successfully balance her twin roles as a mother and a professional (Jayita & Murali,2009).

Working mothers set aside time for their families and can make their homes happier and more positive environments for their children. A working mother who uses excellent time management may divide her time between her different responsibilities and recognize her own value and significance (Jayita & Murali,2009).

Changing the mindset of people regarding the thought that raising the child is solely mother's responsibility is another solution. As family is a social and combined unit, both parents should have responsibility towards their children. If the partners make a schedule to spend time with the child in absence of another this will reduce dilemma of working mothers to some extent. Working mothers' support systems, which include paid help, families, and partners, should understand, support, and respect their decision to be independent and secure for the future, and that this independence, confidence, and security will only benefit the family, children, and society to which they belong (Vibhuti et al.,2016).

Most households in which mothers work have little to no system of supervision or monitoring in place. In that circumstance mothers should watch and oversee the youngsters by phone. They should phone the youngsters after every hour to let children realize that their mothers are with them. Such move of mothers will impart in youngsters the sensation of monitoring (Almani et al., 2012). Now a days most of the working mothers give mobile phone to the children so that they can contact them in case of any demand. Which has both positive and negative impact on the children. Proper supervision of the parents is needed when the children is using mobile phone. Most modern parents now install cctv camera at home to observe the children in absence of them. Which is a good solution for monitoring the children specially if the children leave alone at home with helping hands during his or her parents working hours.

## **V. Conclusion And Future Research:**

Family and one's occupation are the two pillars upon which one's life rests. The appropriate articulation of the interdependent aspects of a society, including the balancing of job and family responsibilities, is essential to the society's smooth operation. These areas, which are often seen as separate, are actually highly intertwined (Huang, Hammer, Neal, & Perrin, 2004, Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003, Ford et al., 2007). So, there is no way to choose any option between career and child care. Successful career provides the mother mental peace, social recognition and economic security. On the other hand, mothers are earning for the betterment of her family and child. Co-operative life partner and helpful family members can omit the dilemma of working mother related with career and child care to many extend. The recommendations of this study will help to rise awareness for reducing dilemmas related with career and child care. Dilemmas of working mothers are always there and there will be, unless or until the working mothers build self confidence in their mind that they can overcome any hurdle for their career and child care. There are many scopes of research for reducing dilemma of working mothers as day by day challenges are increasing due to recession, social insecurity etc. Research should be done on the working mothers whose mothers are also a working mother, how they manage to raise their child. Comparison between two generation of working mothers should be needed to find out, how their career satisfaction, job nature and child care arrangement is changing with time.

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