

CHAPTER VII

CHAPTER VII

NATURE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO THE WOMEN EMPLOYEES

7.1. Introduction

The two most important domains of an individual's life are work and family, and their interface has been an important area of research worldwide (Sturges and Guest, 2004). In a country like India, where the role of women as a homemaker and caretaker are deeply entrenched, work-family life balance becomes a challenge both for the women and their employers. During the past few decades, the Indian society has witnessed an increase in female workforce participation (Valk and Srinivasan, 2011). Social support positively affects work-life balance (Malik *et al.*, 2010). Social support is the degree of consideration, information, and task assistance available to an individual from his or her personal network (Iverson *et al.*, 1998).

Social support can be of two types, emotional and instrumental social support. The former refers to emotional support at times of stress, while the latter includes getting information, guidance, resources, and assistance from others (Lindorff, 2005). Emotional support refers to the expression of feelings to enhance others' affect or behavior (Erickson, 1993). Emotional support contributes to the positive effect that helps the individual in the work domain (Wayne *et al.*, 2006). With respect to personal social support or family social support, the instrumental support denotes the behavior and attitudes of family members that help in the day to day household activities, like doing the household chores or responsibilities of the employees (King, 1997). The instrumental social support allows the employees to focus their time and energy for work and thus, in turn, positively influencing the employee's job performance. The instrumental social support is beneficial in reducing

stress in men, while the emotional social support is more beneficial for females (Lindorff, 2005). Social support may interact with gender roles. The type of social support has an impact on the working population differently due to the gender differences. Most studies have found social support to be more beneficial for females than males (Barbee *et al.*, 1993).

On the basis of the source of source support, it can be divided into two type-social support outside work and workplace social support. Social support outside at work which is also known as personal social support can come from various people, such as parents, spouse, siblings, grandparents, etc. Social support has a positive effect on the work-life balance. For married women who require greater work-life balance, the social support from husband holds a special significance. Social support in the organizational context can come from co-workers: supervisor or the organization. The workplace social support is also a critical element of work-life balance (Voydanoff, 2002). There is a positive relation between organizational and supervisor understanding of family duties and work-life balance. Workplace support via an organizational approach involves the implementation of family-friendly policies, which are associated with satisfaction with the work-family balance (Ezra and Deckman, 1996). Although support from co-workers and significant others outside of the organization is important, studies have highlighted that a supportive relationship with the supervisor is more closely linked to lower levels of work strain as compared to support from other sources (Fenlason and Beehr, 1994; Lim, 1996). Based on the Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger *et al.*, 1986), many researchers assume that the supervisor is a representative of the organization. Perceived organizational support is the extent to which employees believe that aid is available from the organization that facilitates them in performing at work and to handle stressful events (Rhoades and Eisenberger, 2002). Organizations offer a broad range of work-family

benefits and programmes to their employees, such as job sharing, telecommuting, job-protected parental leave, flexible timings, resource and referral services, unpaid family leave, dependent care assistance, shorter standard work weeks, improvement in job conditions, on-site childcare, support groups for working parents, sports facilities, day-care facilities, and canteen facilities (Lobel and Kossek, 1996 ; Rajadhyaksha and Smita, 2004). Research shows that flexible work arrangements allow individuals to integrate work and family responsibilities in time and space and are instrumental in achieving a healthy work and family balance (Bond *et al.*, 1998; Galinsky *et al.*, 1993).

7.2. Social Support Available to the Women Employees Outside the Workplace

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) is the most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of social support. The scale assesses self-reported amounts of social support which was developed by Zimet *et al.* (1988). The MSPSS is a 12- item questionnaire containing three subscales measuring perceived social support from family, friends and significant others. The items are divided into factor groups relating to the source of the social support, family, friends, and significant others. The items are scored on a 7-point Likert- type scale, ranging from 1 (very strongly disagree) to 7 (very strongly agree) for each item. Each subscale consists of four items and has a score range of 4 to 28. High scores reflect high levels of perceived social support. The reliability and validity of the MSPSS have excellent internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha value of 0.90 for the total score and 0.90 to 0.95 for the subscales. The scale has a good test-retest reliability as well. The MSPSS has good factorial and concurrent validity (Zimet *et al.*, 1988).

Table 7.1 presents the mean score of the MSPSS for the women employees. The Cronbach's alpha value for the family support is 0.80, for friend social support is 0.79, for

social support from significant others is 0.74 and for the total scale is 0.81. Therefore, all the three subscales and the total scale are highly reliable. The support from the family constitutes the primary source of support for the women employees followed by that of the friends and significant others.

Table 7.1: The MSPSS for women employees

MSPSS	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's alpha
Family	5.2 (1.6)	0.80
Friends	4.1 (1.80)	0.79
Significant others	3.2 (1.7)	0.74
Total social support	4.2 (1.16)	0.81

The means scores of the three subscales of the MSPSS and the total MSPSS by the background characteristics are presented in Table 7.2. The family social support decreased with the increase in the age of the women employees. The family social support was higher among the women belonging to Hindu religion, and belonging to joint families. The presence of grandparents/in-laws and other family members in the joint families might add to the family social support as compared to the nuclear families where only parents/spouse are present. The married women employees had a lower family social support as compared to the unmarried women. The married women cannot get the same kind of support from their in-laws and spouse as they got from the parents. As expected the women who were staying with their parents had higher social support as compared to the women who stayed with their spouse, in-laws or friends. With the increase in the years of employment, the family social support also decreased among the employees. The social support from friends was higher among women who were from nuclear family, unmarried, staying with parents and friends. The support from significant others was high for women in the younger age groups, from joint families, unmarried women and among those staying with their parents. The total social support was high among women in the younger age groups,

from joint families, unmarried, staying with their parents, having no dependents to take care and those with lower years of work experience in the call centres.

Table 7.2: Social support available to women employees outside work by background characteristics

Background characteristic	Mean score			
	Family social support	Friend social support	Significant other social support	Total social support
Age (years)				
18-20	5.7	4.7	4.3	4.9
21-25	5.4	4.1	3.0	4.2
26-30	4.7	3.4	2.7	3.6
Above 30	4.4	4.6	3.3	4.1
Religion				
Hindu	5.3	4.0	3.3	4.2
Muslim	5.4	4.3	3.0	4.2
Christian	5.0	3.9	2.7	3.9
Others	4.7	4.1	3.9	4.2
Family type				
Joint	5.3	3.9	3.3	4.2
Nuclear	5.0	4.2	3.2	4.1
Education				
High school	5.2	4.0	3.4	4.2
Graduate and above	5.1	4.1	3.1	4.1
Marital status				
Married	4.4	3.3	2.8	3.5
Unmarried	5.7	4.6	3.5	4.6
Staying with				
Parents	5.6	4.7	3.8	4.7
Husband	5.3	3.5	2.4	3.7
Husband and in-laws	3.6	3.0	2.9	3.1
Friends/colleagues	5.4	4.5	3.0	4.3
Others ¹	5.7	4.0	3.5	4.4
Dependent at home				
Yes	4.4	3.3	3.3	3.5
No	5.4	4.3	4.3	4.4
Work experience (years)				
Less than 2	5.8	4.4	3.9	4.7
2-5	5.0	3.9	2.9	4.0
More than 5	4.6	4.0	2.9	3.8
Total	5.2	4.1	3.2	4.2

Note: ¹ includes staying with siblings, grandparents, relatives.

The linear regression analysis for the three dimensions of the social support and the total support scale is presented in Table 7.3. For the family social support, marital status and staying with husband and in-laws were significant predictors of the family social support available to the women employees. The unmarried women were more likely to receive family social support as compared to the married women. Women staying with their husband and in-laws were less likely to receive family social support as compared to the women who were staying with their parents. There was a negative relation between age and years of employment with the family social support, but the relationship was not statistically significant. Marital status, living arrangement and years of employment were the statistically significant predictors of the social support that the employees received from their friends. The unmarried women were more likely to receive social support from friends as compared to the married women employees. The unmarried women have a better social life as compared to the married women employees. The unmarried women have more time to remain in touch with their friends as compared to the married employees. Therefore, the unmarried women have higher social support from their friends. The women staying with their husband and in-laws were significantly less likely to receive social support from friends as compared to the women who were staying with their parents.

Marital status and staying with husband emerged as the significant predictor of the social support received from significant others. Unmarried women were more likely to receive social support from significant others as compared to the married women employees. Women staying with their husband were less likely to receive social support from significant others as compared to the women staying with their parents.

Table 7.3: Linear regression analysis for social support outside work for women employees by background characteristics

Background characteristic	Family social support	Friend social support	Significant other social support	Total social support
	B	β	B	β
Constant	4.3***	3.5***	5.0***	4.6***
Age (years)	-0.01	0.03	-0.04	-0.08
Religion				
Hindu®				
Muslim	0.37	0.45	-0.19	0.208
Christian	-0.12	-0.01	-0.27	-0.14
Others	-0.45	0.19	0.59	0.11
Family type				
Joint®				
Nuclear	-0.14	0.08	0.05	-0.09
Education				
High School®				
Graduate and above	0.09	0.26	0.31	0.13
Marital status				
Married®				
Unmarried	0.94***	0.56**	0.55**	0.47***
Staying with Parents®				
Husband	0.46	-0.85*	-1.06**	-0.48**
Husband and in-laws	-1.3***	-1.12**	-0.59	-1.0*
Friends/colleagues	-0.012*	0.25	-0.67	-0.35
Others ¹	0.18	-0.67	-0.017	-0.22
Dependent at home	0.11	-0.26	-0.80	-0.12
Work experience (years)	-0.08	-0.12*	-0.05	-0.15**
R²	0.37	0.32	0.28	0.43
F	5.7***	2.9***	6.9***	6.4***

Note: ¹ includes staying with siblings, grandparents, relatives. p values ***<0.01, **<0.05, *<0.10

For the total social support, the marital status of the employees, living arrangement and years of employment were significant predictors of the social support received. The unmarried women were more likely to receive the support from all the three sources as compared to the married women employees. The unmarried women mostly stayed with their parents and hence are expected to receive higher social support as compared to the married women employees. Women employees staying with their husband and in-laws were significantly less likely to receive social support as compared to the women staying

with their parents. The years of employment had a significant negative relation with the social support that the women received. With the increase in the years of employment the social support that the women received also decreased (Table 7.3).

Table 7.4 and 7.5 shows the linear regression analysis done to ascertain the predictors of social support among the unmarried and the married women employees respectively.

Table 7.4: Linear regression analysis for social support available to unmarried women employees outside work by background characteristics

Background characteristic	Family social support	Friend social support	Significant other social support	Total social support
	B	β	β	B
Constant	4.1***	5.4***	7.7***	6.9***
Age (years)	0.95*	-0.04*	-0.19***	-0.50*
Religion				
Hindu®				
Muslim	-0.10	0.93**	-0.35	0.16
Christian	0.07	0.67	0.22	0.20
Others	-0.75	0.29	0.85	0.13
Type of family				
Joint®				
Nuclear	0.28	-0.06	0.23	0.15
High school				
Education				
High school®				
Graduate and above	-0.25	0.54*	0.19	0.16
Staying with Parents®				
Friends/colleagues	-0.03	0.084**	-0.25	-0.11**
Others ¹	0.46	-1.10***	-0.07	-0.24**
Dependents at home	-1.70	-1.39	0.72	-0.79
Work experience (years)	-0.19***	-1.39	-0.85	-0.94
R ²	0.27	0.24	0.22	0.36
F	1.9**	2.12**	2.5**	2.13**

Note: ¹includes staying with siblings, grandparents, relatives. ®reference category, p values ***<0.01, **<0.05, *<0.10

Among the unmarried women employees for the family social support age and years of employment were the significant predictors. There was a significant positive relationship between age of the employees and the social support from family. There was a significant

negative relationship between the years of employment and family social support. There was an inverse relationship between age of the employees and the duration of the employment with friend's social support. The age of the women was negatively related to the social support from significant others. There was a negative relationship between the age of the unmarried women employees and the total social support that they received. Women staying with their friends and others were significantly less likely to receive social support as compared the women staying with their parents (Table 7.4).

Table 7.5 shows the predictors of social support among the married women employees. For the married women, the type of family and living arrangements were the significant predictors of the family social support. Women belonging to the nuclear family were less likely to receive family social support as compared to women from joint families. Women staying with their husband and husband and in-laws were less likely to receive family social support compared to women staying with their parents. Living arrangement was a significant predictor of social support from friends among the married women. Women staying with their husband and husband and in-laws were less likely to receive social support from friends as compared to the women who were staying with their parents. The women staying with husband, husband, and in-laws and others were more likely to receive social support from significant others as compared to the women staying with their parents. Women staying in nuclear families were less likely to receive the total social support as compared to the women from joint families. Women staying with husband and husband and in-laws were less likely to receive the total social support as compared to the women who were staying with their parents.

Table 7.5: Linear regression analysis for social support available to women employees outside work by background characteristics

Background characteristic	Family social support	Friend social support	Significant other social support	Total social support
	β	β	B	β
Constant	7.1***	5.3**	5.9**	2.9***
Age (years)	-0.08	0.09	0.09	0.03
Religion				
Hindu®				
Muslim	0.69	0.01	-0.08	0.21
Christian	-0.12	-0.35	-0.54	-0.32
Others	-0.14	0.12	0.07	0.02
Type of family				
Joint®				
Nuclear	-1.30***	0.21	-0.65	-0.62**
Education				
High school®				
Graduate and above	0.37	0.14	-0.01	0.17
Staying with Parents®				
Husband	-1.03**	-0.56**	0.79*	-0.52*
Husband and in-laws	-1.73***	-0.60**	0.62**	-0.50**
Others ¹	0.67	1.15	1.37**	1.18
Dependent at home				
Work experience (years)	0.34	-0.22	-0.30	-0.04
R²	0.33	0.28	0.31	0.37
F	7.2***	3.8**	3.3**	4.3**

Note: ¹ includes staying with siblings, grandparents, relatives. p values ***<0.01, **<0.05, *<0.10.

7.3. Social Support Available to the Women Employees at Work

Apart from the social support from family, friends and others the social support from the people at work is also important. Social support at work is measured by two variables, coworker/colleague social support and supervisor social support. Co-worker social support consists of items that assess how one felt his or her colleagues provided help or support at work. Supervisor social support was measured regarding perceptions of how one's administrators provided help or support at work. Both co-worker social support and supervisor social support consist of four items each with a score range from one to four.

Higher scores indicate higher social support and vice versa. The items for the co-worker social support and the supervisor's social support are presented in Table 7.6 and 7.7, respectively. Both the scales were highly reliable as per the Cronbach's alpha values.

Table 7.6: Co-worker support at work available for the women employees

Co-worker social support items	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's alpha
How much does colleagues go out of the way to do things that would make life easier	2.1 (1.2)	
How easy it is to talk to colleagues	2.6 (1.1)	
How much can you rely on colleague when things get tough at work	2.2 (1.2)	0.71
How willing are colleagues to listen to personal problems	2.44 (1.1)	
Colleague social support scale total	9.4 (3.1)	

Table 7.7: Supervisor support at work available for the women employees

Supervisor social support items	Mean (SD)	Cronbach's alpha
How much supervisors go out of the way to do things that would make life easier	1.5 (0.9)	
How easy it is to talk to supervisors	2.2 (1.2)	
How much can you rely on supervisors when things get tough at work	1.8 (1.1)	0.81
How willing is your supervisor to listen to personal problem	1.6 (1.0)	
Supervisor social support scale total	7.1 (3.7)	

The social support received at work is related to the job performance and various aspects of job satisfaction and the psychological health of the women employees. Table 7.8 shows the correlation between the social support at work and different aspects of work, work-family life balance and psychological health of the women employees. The job-related well-being is measured with the help of job-related anxiety and contentment (JRAC) and job-related depression and enthusiasm (JRDE). Both JRAC and JRDE contain six items each, measured on a five-point response scale. Higher values of JRAC represents greater

contentment (i.e., lower anxiety) while higher values of JRDE represents greater enthusiasm (i.e., lower depression). Job satisfaction (JS) consists of 15 items measured on a seven point scale with the higher scores representing higher job satisfaction and vice versa. There is a statistically significant positive relationship between the co-worker social support and job-related well-being as measured by JRAC and JRDE and the job satisfaction. With the increase in the social support from the co-worker, the job-related well-being and the job satisfaction among the women employees also increases. There was a negative relationship between co-worker social support and WFC and FWC, but it was not statistically significant.

There is a statistically significant negative relation between co-worker social support and the WLB among the women employees. Higher scores on WLB indicates lower work-life balance and vice versa. It implies that as the colleague social support increase the work-life balance among the women employees also improves. With the increase in the social support from colleagues, the psychological distress among the women employees also decreases. There is a statistically significant negative relationship between the co-worker social support and the psychological distress. With the increase in the co-worker's social support, the psychological distress among the employees decreased. The social support received from supervisors at the call centres has a statistically significant positive relation with job-related well-being and job satisfaction. With the increase in the supervisor's social support, the JRAC and JRDE also increases. The increase in the supervisor social support is also associated with an increase in the job satisfaction among the women employees.

There is a significant negative relation between supervisor's social support and the conflict between work and family. With the increase in the supervisor's social support, the WFC

among the women decreases. There is a negative relation between supervisor's social support and FWC and work-life balance among the women, but it was not statistically significant. There was a significant positive relation between supervisor's social support and physiological health of the women employees. Therefore, both the components of social support at work are correlated with the job-related well-being, balance between work and family life and psychological health of the women employees.

Table 7.8: Correlation between social support at work and other work-related factors and psychological health

Social support at work	JRAC	JRDE	JS	WFC	FWC	WLB	GHQ
Co-worker social support	0.25***	0.26***	0.23***	-0.05	-0.23	-0.22***	-0.29***
Supervisor social support	0.30***	0.20***	0.17**	-0.20***	-0.08	-0.04	-0.14**

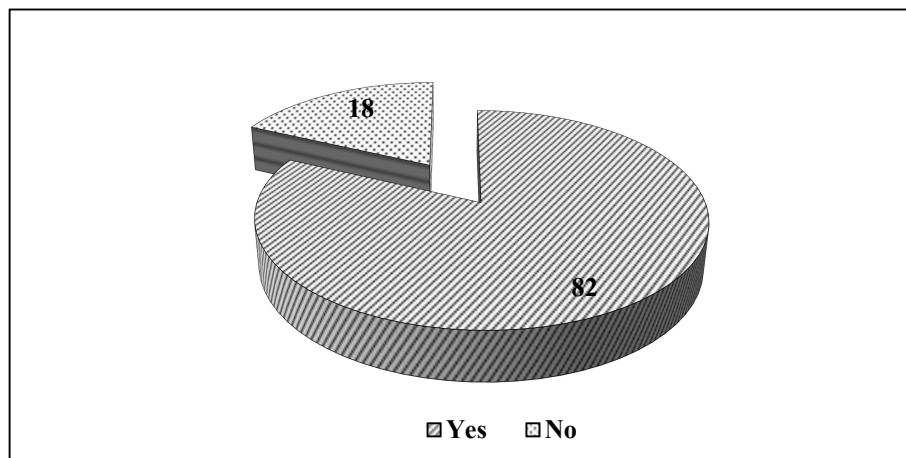
Note: JRAC- job-related anxiety and contentment, JRDE-job-related depression and excitement, JS- job satisfaction, WFC- work-family conflict, FWC- family work conflict, WLB - work life balance, GHQ - General health questionnaire -12. p values ***<0.01, **<0.05, *<0.10.

7.4. Social Support Available for the Women Call Centre Employees

Social support is essential for women irrespective of the occupation they are employed. Social support helps the women in maintaining a proper rhythm between their work and family life. The role of social support becomes indispensable as the women along with working have to take care of her domestic responsibilities, especially if she is married. The role of social support is especially important for women in India because even if a woman is working and earning money, she had certain obligations and domestic responsibilities that she has to follow. On the contrary, a similar role play is not expected from the male members of the family (Banerjee, 2014). Like the other jobs, the call centre employment also requires social supports for the women to continue in this unconventional job. The

women call centre employees require social support right from joining the night based job to continuing in the job. The women employees in order to continue working in the call centre while balancing their work and family life require social support. The women employees were enquired about their perception if they would be able to continue in the call centres in the absence of any kind of social support (Figure 7.1). More than four-fifths of the employees believed that it would be difficult for them to continue in the employment without proper social support which clearly reflects the need for social support among the women employees.

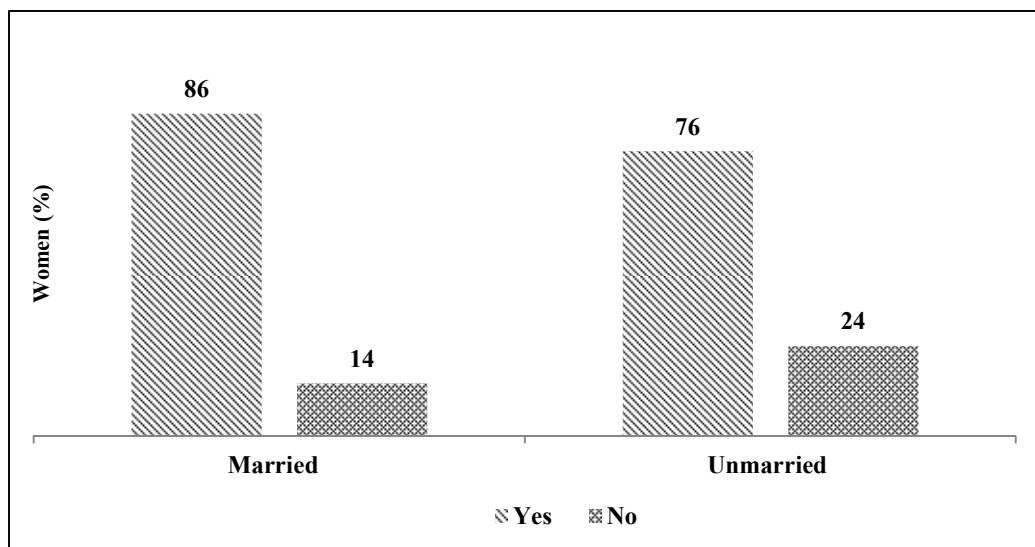
Figure 7.1: Existence in the night based job possible without social support



The married women were more in need of social support for managing their work home conflict as compared to the unmarried women as they had greater responsibilities as compared to the married women. The absence of social support would result in work and family life imbalances among the women employees, especially the married ones. The women employees were asked if social support was essential for continuing in the call centres. The requirement of social support among the women employees by their marital status is presented in Figure 7.2. A greater number of married women (86 percent) accepted their need for social support as compared to unmarried women (76 percent). As

the married women had a larger share of responsibilities to meet the expectation of social support was more among them as compared to the unmarried women.

Figure 7.2: Social support crucial for continuing in the job

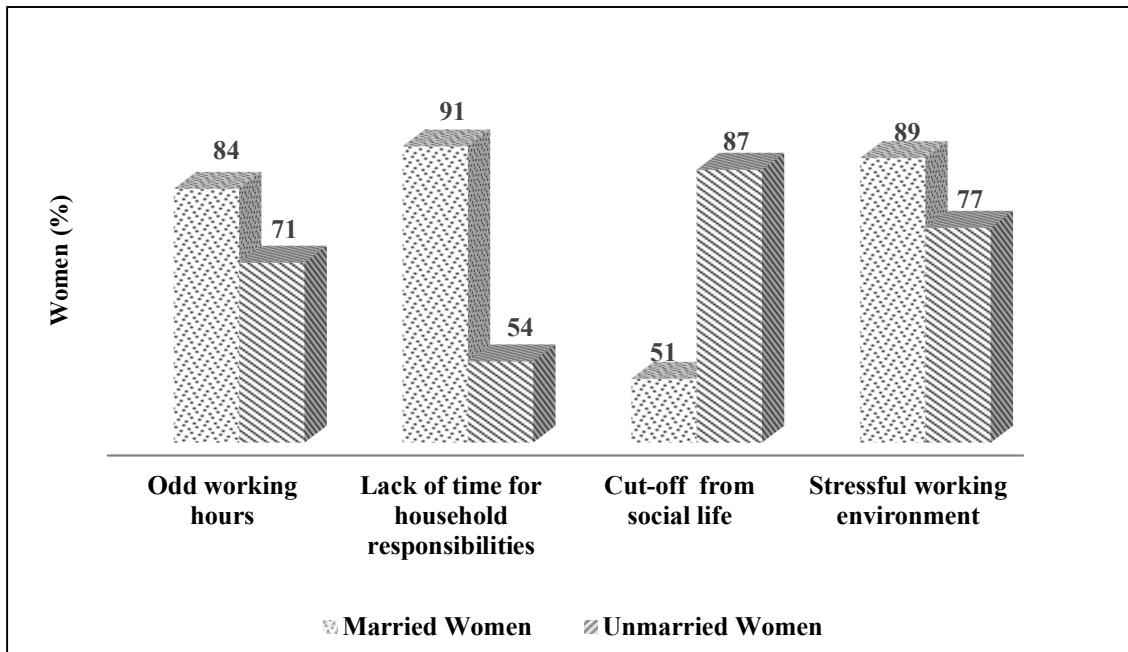


7.4.1. Requirement of social support in call centres employment

The women were enquired about reasons for which they felt that social support was essential for them to continue in the call centres. Figure 7.3 shows the reasons for the requirement of social support disaggregated by the marital status of the employees. Among the married women, the primary reasons for the need of social support were the lack of time for managing household responsibilities, the stressful work environment and the working hours. While for the unmarried women being cut off from social life followed by the work pressure and working hours were the main reasons. Eighty-four percent of the married women considered the odd working hours as a reason for social support compared to 71 percent unmarried women. Ninety-one percent of the married women found support important as they did not have time to take care of their domestic responsibilities compared to only 54 percent unmarried women. Half of the married women felt that they needed social support as they were cut-off from their social life, while an overwhelming 87

percent of the unmarried women felt the same. The stressful work environment in the call centre was also a reason for the requirement of social support by the women employees both married (89 percent) and unmarried employees (77 percent).

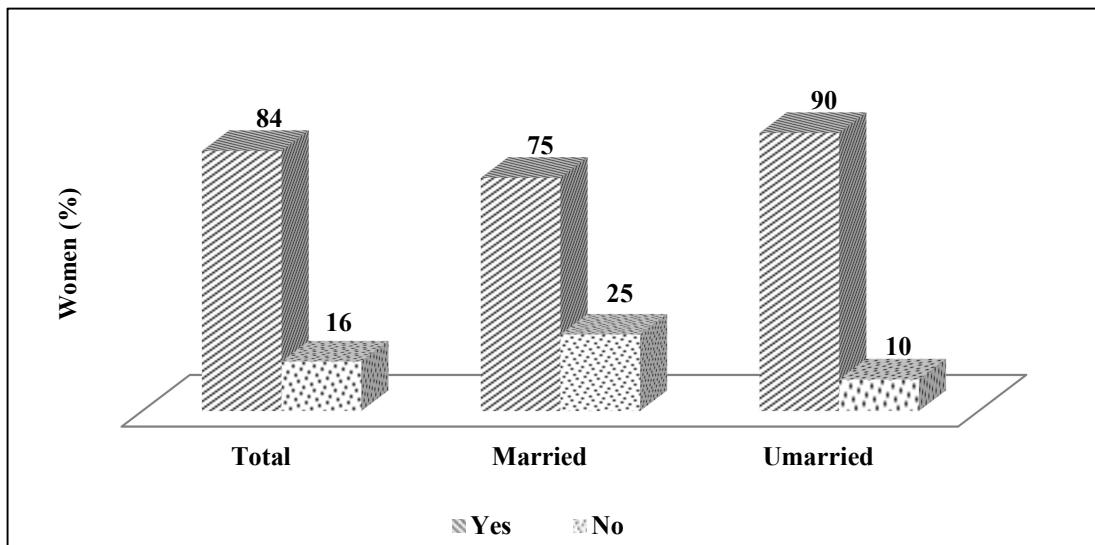
Figure 7.3: Reasons for need of social support by marital status of women employees



The women employees were further enquired if they had any social support. Figure 7.4 shows the presence of social support among the women employees. Encouragingly more than four-fifths of the women had social support for them, while only 16 percent of the women had no social support. Looking at the presence of social support by the marital status of the employees clearly, brings out that more unmarried women received social support as compared to the married women employees. Ninety percent of the married women employees had social support compared to only 75 percent of the married women employees. The married women who do not have supporting in-laws or spouse find it difficult to have social support in their life. Along with it the married women sample also included women who were separated, divorced or widowed and there it was difficult for

them to get proper social support. Among the married women who were staying without their parents also might find it difficult to have proper social support. The figure clearly highlights the lack of proper social support, especially among the married women employees.

Figure 7.4: Presence of social support of women employees by women employees

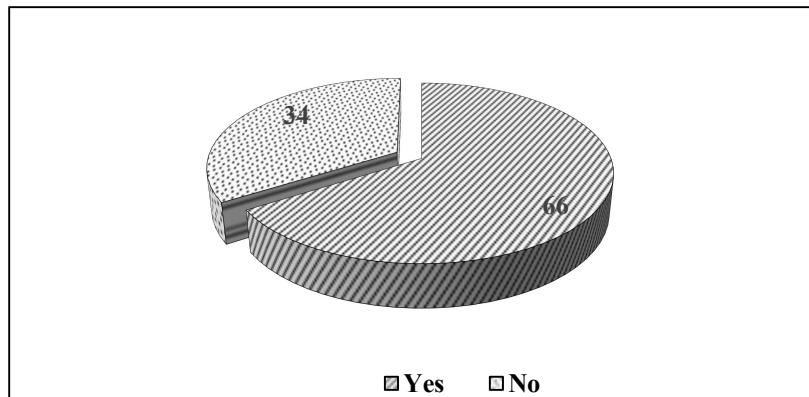


7.4.2. Support for joining the call centres

India being a patriarchal society and having strict rules regarding women mobility especially at night, women call centre employees are setting up new benchmarks with respect to women entry into the nightscape. Figure 7.5 shows the parents/family support to the women for joining the call centres. It was expected that the parents/family of the women employees would not have supported the idea letting the women work at night due to safety reasons as well as the fear of social stigma that is attached to the night work for women in India. In contradiction to the expectation, two-thirds of the women got the parental/family support to join the call centre. It's encouraging that in spite of the stigma and taboos attached to the night work for women and the social repercussions of the job on the women and her family most of the families supported the women's decision to work at

the call centres, though there were 34 percent women employees, who did not get parental/family support for joining the call centre.

Figure 7.5: Parents/family support for joining call centre



The women employees were enquired about the family members that supported their decision to join the call centre. The family members who supported the decision of the women employees to join the call centre is shown in Figure 7.6. Encouragingly among the family member, the major support for joining the nigh based job was provided by mother follwed by the fathers. Fifty-six percent of the women were backed by their mothers and 53 percent were supported by their fathers. Support from parents, especially mothers, for the night based job is very encouraging as it reflects that they wanted their daughter to move ahead of the social stigma, taboos and the barriers that govern women's mobility at night in India. Support from the fathers for the night based job is equally important as it is step in moving ahed of the patriarchal control on women mobility in India. Other family members (6 percent) and relatives (5 percent) were also the sources of support to join the call centres. Husbands also emerged as a significant strength for joining the night based job (33 percent). The share of the mother-in-law (8 percent) and father in law (5 percent) was quite less in this respect.

Figure 7.6: Family members that supported the decision to join call centre

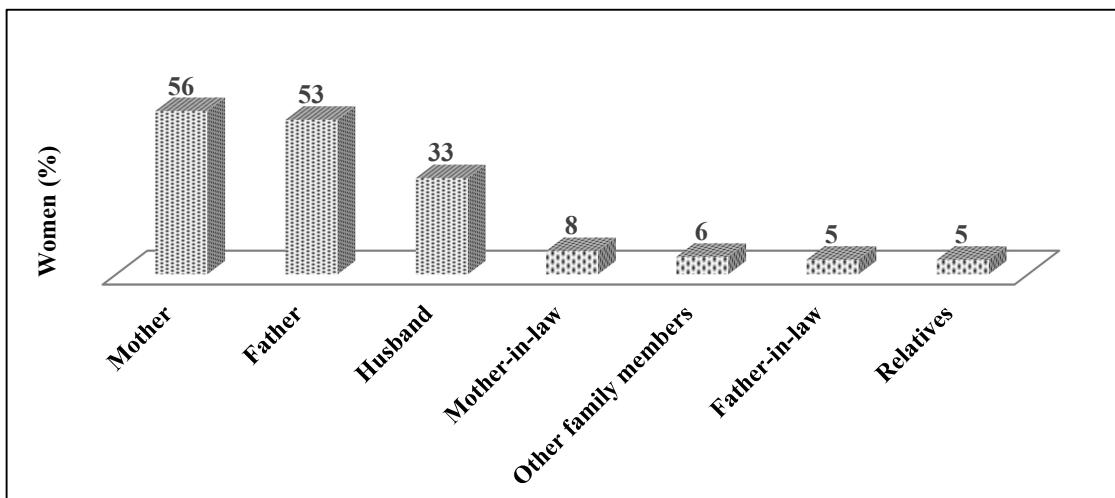


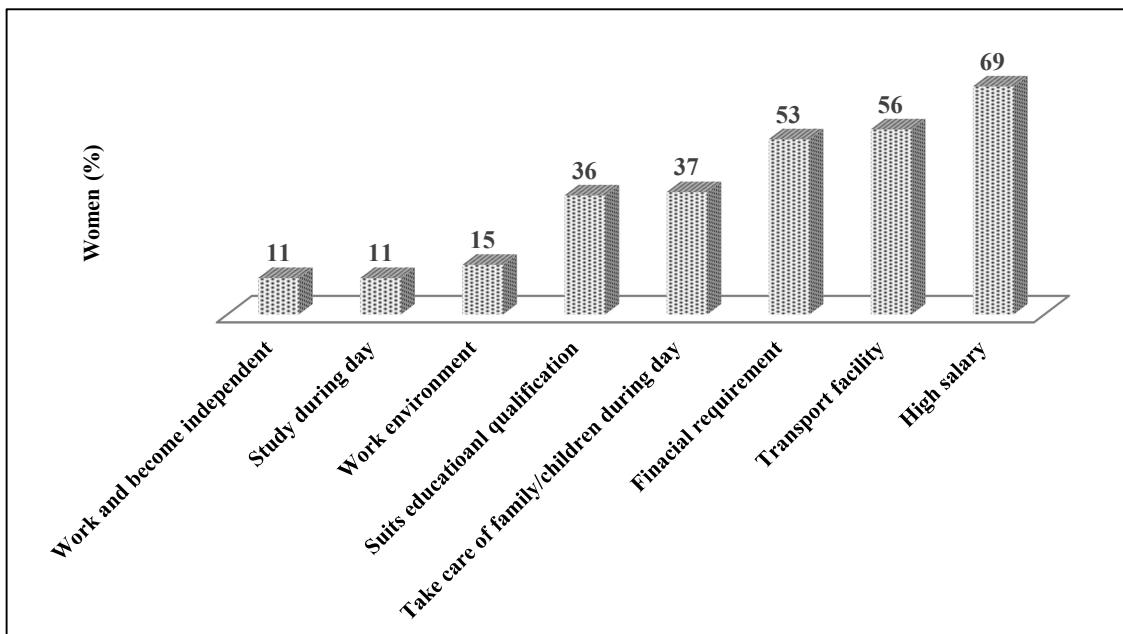
Table 7.9 looks at the support from family members for joining the call centres by marital status of the employees. Among the married women, the major support was provided by husband (73 percent), followed by the father (40 percent), mother (28 percent), mother-in-law (17 percent), father in law (10 percent), other family members (7 percent) and relatives (5 percent). Among the unmarried women, the major support was through the mother (80 percent) and the father (64 percent). Family members apart from parents also provided support to 8 percent, unmarried women. Six percent unmarried women were also encouraged by their relatives in their decision to join the call centres.

Table 7.9: Support of family members in joining call centre by marital status

Family members	Married	Unmarried
Husband	73.3	-
Father	40.0	64.4
Mother	28.3	79.5
Mother-in-law	16.7	-
Father-in-law	10.0	-
Other family members	6.7	7.5
Relatives	5.0	5.5
Total	118	85

The reasons for which the parents/family members allowed the women to work in the night shifts are presented in Figure 7.7. The main reason for which the family members allowed the women to be employed in the call centre was the high salary that the job offered (69 percent). The transport facility that the call centres provided helped in making the night work safe for the women. Fifty-six percent of the women's parents/family allowed them to join call centre because of the transport facility provided. Financial necessity also compelled 56 percent of the women's parents/family to enable them to work at night (56 percent). Other important reasons were to take care of family/children during the day (37 percent), low educational qualification required (36 percent), work environment (15 percent), study during the day (23 percent) and to work and become independent (11 percent).

Figure 7.7: Reasons for parents/family member allowed joining call centre



The reason for allowing the women to work at night is shown by the marital status of the employees (Table 7.10). For the married women, the main reasons for which they were

allowed to work at night were the high pay package (82 percent), followed by financial requirements (76 percent), transport facility (71 percent) and the time to take care of family/child during the day. The reasons for the married women were the low educational qualification required (48 percent) and the good work environment (15 percent). For the unmarried women, the major reasons were high salary (79 percent), transport facility (69 percent), study during the day (49 percent) financial requirement (44 percent) and the low educational qualification required (39 percent). The other reasons were to work and become independent (29 percent) and good work environment (27 percent).

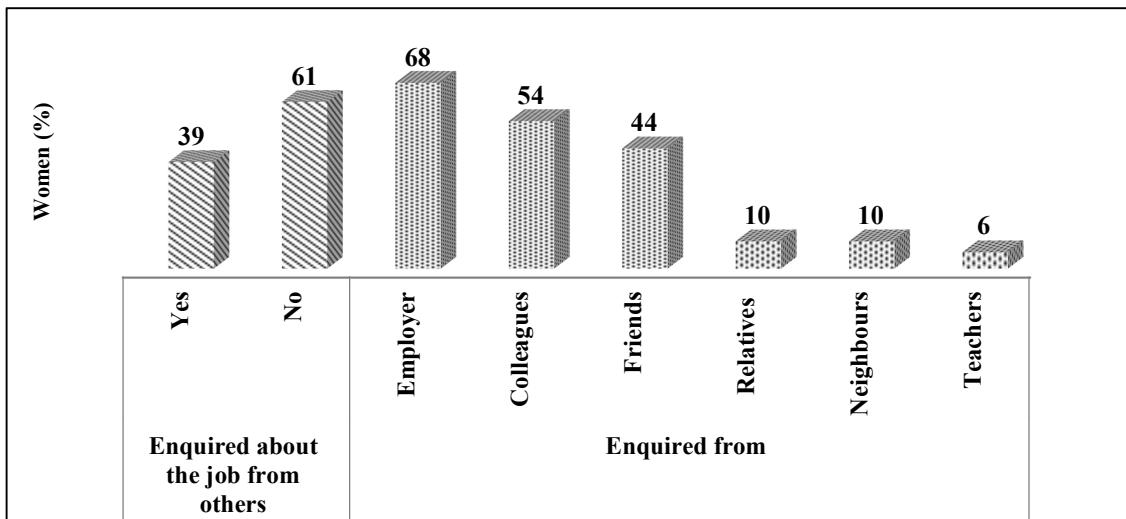
Table 7.10: Reasons for parents/family member to allow for call centre employment by marital status

Family members	Married	Unmarried
Study during day	0.8	49.3
Work and become independent	8.0	29.2
Good work environment	15.2	27.0
Low educational qualification required	48.0	39.0
Take care of family/children during day	64.0	0.8
Transport facility	71.0	69.0
Financial requirement	76.3	44.1
High salary	82.0	79.0
Number of women	85	118

Being a night based job and with a different work culture altogether from the standard work culture, the employment of women invites scrutiny by the parents. It was something common for the parents/family to get to know about the type of work was done and the work environment. It was interesting that only 39 percent of the employee's family had inquired about the job from others. Among the parents who had enquired about the job, 68 percent had enquired from the employer, and 54 percent had enquired about the job from colleagues. Apart from enquiring with the people from the call centres, the family

members had also enquired regarding the job from friends (44 percent), relatives (10 percent), and neighbors (10 percent) and teacher as well (6 percent) (Figure 7.8).

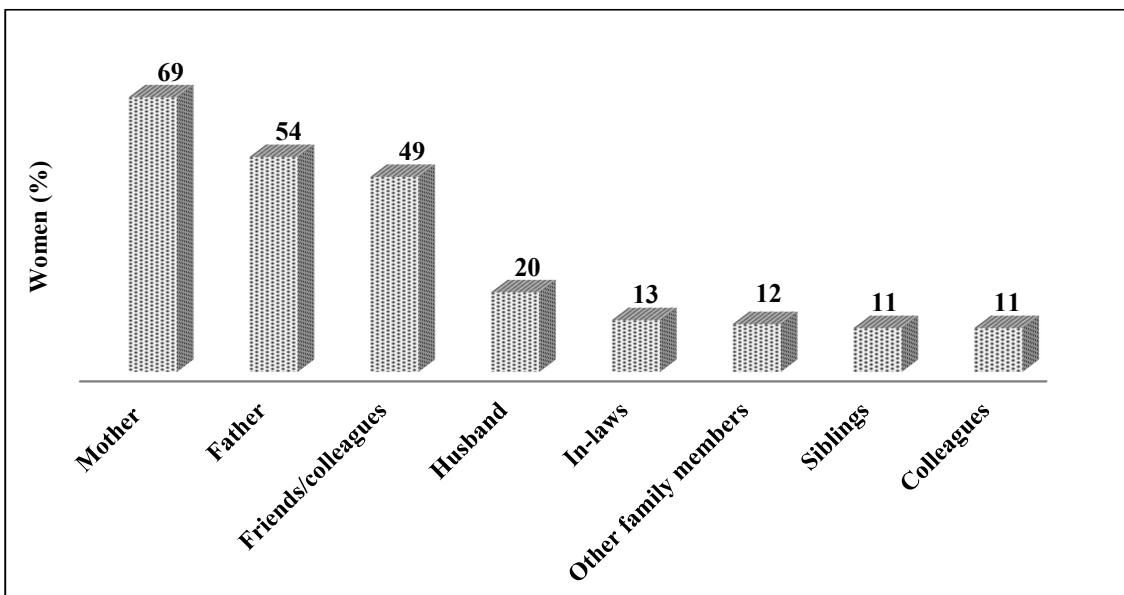
Figure 7.8: Enquire about the call centre job by family members



7.4.3. Source of social support

There were varied sources from which the women received social support. Figure 7.9 shows the primary source of support for the call centre employees. The primary source of support for the women came from their mother (69 percent) and father (54 percent). The next most important source of social support to the women were their friends (49 percent). Since the women hardly got the time to spend with their family and they faced a lot of social alienation, they are hardly left with any social life. Friends being of the same age and generation are in a better position to solve their problems and hence provide social support. The other support available to the women employees were from their husbands (20 percent), in-laws (13 percent), other family members (12 percent), siblings (11 percent) and colleagues (26 percent). Encouragingly, apart from family members, friends and colleagues were also an important source of social support to the women.

Figure 7.9: Source of social support to the women employees



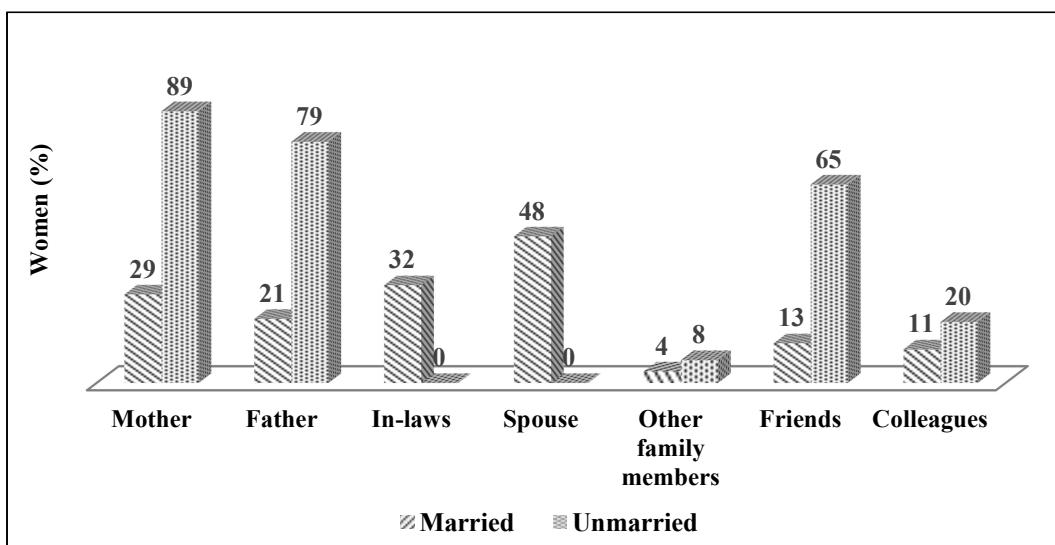
A Woman employee the way her mother supports her said-

“My mother is my lifeline without her I do not know how I would have survived in this job. When I come back from work my food my clothes everything is ready. I just have to eat and sleep. In the evening too she makes everything available for me, and I don't have to think about anything. It's because of her support that I have managed to survive in the call centre for such a long duration.”

The sources of social support available to the women employees varied by their marital status. Figure 7.10 shows the major source of source support available to the women employees by their marital status. Twenty-nine percent of the married women received social support from their mothers as compared to 89 percent unmarried women. The married women mostly stayed with their in-laws and husband and therefore, the proportion of married women receiving support from their mother is less as compared to the unmarried women. Fathers were also an important source of support for the unmarried women (79 percent). Only 21 percent women had fathers as their source of social support.

Thirty-two percent of the married women got the support from in-laws and 48 percent from their spouses. Other family members such as siblings, grandfather, uncle, aunt, etc., provided support to four percent of the married women and 8 percent of the unmarried women. Friends were a significant source of social support to the unmarried women (65 percent). Thirteen percent married women got social support from their friends. Colleagues were a source of support for 20 percent unmarried women and 11 percent married women.

Figure 7.10: Source of social support for women employees by marital status



A woman while commenting on the ways in which her husband supports her, said-

“There were times when I was completely stressed out and had lots of mood swings, but my husband was always there by my side. He always helps me with my domestic chores and our daughter's responsibilities. My colleagues are always there for me during difficult times at work. Without them, I would not have been in this job for such a long time.”

7.4.4. Ways in which social support was provided to the women employees

Different people provided social support to the women in different ways varying from emotional support to empathetic support (Table 7.11). The major role of the mother was to provide the caregiving support to the women employees, which included taking care of household duties (69 percent), taking care of food and health (64 percent), and ensuring proper rest during the day (57 percent). The mothers of the women encouraged them when stressed due to work (44 percent) and also took care of the dependents at home (38 percent). The primary role of the father was to provide empathetic support, which includes supporting the night work (51 percent), providing encouragement for continuing in the job (47 percent), support in career decisions (43 percent) and providing assistance and directions related to work (33 percent). Seventeen percent of the women's fathers also provided assistance in household chores. The role of the mother-in-law was mainly to provide instrumental social support. The mother-law of the women helped the women through taking care of the household responsibilities (16 percent), ensuring rest during the day (16 percent). Thirteen percent women's mothers-in-law helped through taking care of the dependents, food, and health and encouraging when stressed due to work. Fathers-in-law supported the women through constant encouragement to continue in the job (29 percent) and through supporting the night work (28 percent). The husbands of the women employees provided support through assisting the women in solving work-related problems (30 percent), supporting night work (29 percent), support in career decisions (23 percent), encouragement to continue in the job and even assistance in the household chores (19 percent). The friends provided support to the women through providing support when required (61 percent), to cope up with the stress (54 percent), enhancing social life (42 percent), sorting out problems and helping in making decisions (56 percent). Colleagues also played a significant role in the social support for the women employees.

Colleagues assisted in overcoming work stress, helping in difficult situations at work and providing support and care when the employees were not well.

Table 7.11: Ways in which social support provided to the women employees

Ways of providing support	Women (%)^a	Number of Women
Mother		
Taking care of household duties	69.1	140
Taking care of food and health	64.1	130
Ensuring proper rest during day	56.5	115
Encouraging when stressed	44.0	89
Taking care of dependents	38.0	77
Father		
Supporting night work	51.2	104
Encouragement to continue in the job	46.6	95
Support in career decision	43.1	87
Work related suggestions and direction	32.8	67
Assistance in household duties	16.8	34
Mother-in-law		
Taking care of household duties	16.3	33
Ensuring proper rest during day	15.8	32
Taking care of dependents	13.3	26
Taking care of food and health	13.0	26
Encouraging when stressed	13.0	26
Father-in-law		
Encouragement to be in the job	28.6	58
Supporting night work	27.6	56
Assistance in household duties	16.8	34
Husband		
Work related suggestions and direction	30.0	61
Supporting night work	29.0	59
Support in career decision	23.1	47
Encouragement to continue in the job	19.2	39
Assistance in household duties	19.2	39
Friends		
Providing support when required	60.7	123
Helping to cope up with stress	53.6	109
Enhancing social life	48.8	99

Continued.....

Ways of providing support	Women (%)^a	Number of Women
Sorting out problems	41.7	85
Assistance in decision-making	35.4	72
Colleagues		
Guidance during difficult situation at work	81.8	166
Support and care when not well	48.5	98
Overcoming work stress	39.4	80

Note: ^a Total figure may exceed 100 percent due to multiple responses.

7.4.5. Family social support available to the women employees by marital status

The women call centre employees work in a stressful work environment, odd hours and loads of stress and pressure. The working condition at the call centres requires the support of their families. Table 7.12 shows the kind of family-level support that the women employees receive. The family support for the married and the unmarried employees have been compared in the table. Fifteen percent of the women strongly agreed with the statement that they had people in their family to whom they can talk about their problems at work compared to 16 percent of the unmarried women. Fifteen percent of the married women strongly disagreed that they have people in their family to whom they can talk about their problem at work compared to only 10 percent unmarried women employees. Twenty-seven percent of the women employees strongly agreed that no one in their family could understand how tough their job was compared to 26 percent of the unmarried women. Twenty-eight percent of the married women agreed that they had no one in their family who could understand how tough their job was as compared to 35 percent of the unmarried women. On a brighter note, 22 percent of the married women and 14 percent of the unmarried women strongly disagreed to that they had no one in their family who could understand how tough their job was. Twenty-two percent of the married women as compared to 28 percent of unmarried women strongly agreed to that when their job gets

them down they can seek solace in their family. The married women could get less amount of comfort from their family as compared to the unmarried women who always had their parents and family to comfort them in difficult times that the stressful call centre work brought with it. Thirty-nine percent of the married women and 43 percent of the unmarried women agreed to that they could find comfort in their family when their job turns them down. Fifteen percent of the married women and 10 percent of the unmarried women disagreed with the statement that they could find some comfort in their family when their job gets them down. Twelve percent of the married women strongly agreed to that their family could not help them when they got tense with work compared to 18 percent of the unmarried women. Twenty-one percent of the married women and 23 percent of the unmarried women strongly disagreed that their family could not help them when they got tense with their work. Twenty-seven percent of the married women and 19 percent of the unmarried women strongly agreed to that when things are not well, and if the family is around they understand them, and it makes them better. Family support is crucial for the women employees due to the unconventional nature of the job and the high work pressure. Therefore, the table makes it very clear that the women employees though got support from their families, but the support was less in the case of the married women as compared to the unmarried women employees.

A woman employee's mother-in-law commenting on the way she supports her daughter-in-law said-

"I understand that it is tough to work at night, and it affects their health, so I make sure that both of them have their food properly. I also ensure that when they sleep, there is silence in the house so that they can sleep in peace. Since I am old and not keeping well, I am not able to do all the work myself, so I need the assistance of my daughter-in-law. She

tries and finishes most of the household tasks such as shopping and arranging the wardrobe during the weekends so that the pressure of work is less during the weekdays.”

Table 7.12: Family support provided to the women employees

Family Support	Married (%)	Unmarried (%)
Talk to family work related problems		
Strongly agree	14.6	16.4
Agree	50.0	43.1
Neither agree nor disagree	3.7	9.5
Disagree	17.1	21.6
Strongly disagree	14.6	9.5
Family understands the adversities		
Associated with the job		
Strongly agree	26.8	25.9
Agree	28.0	34.5
Neither agree nor disagree	9.8	3.4
Disagree	13.4	22.4
Strongly disagree	22.0	13.8
Family supports during rough time at work		
Strongly agree	22.0	28.4
Agree	39.0	43.1
Neither agree nor disagree	2.4	3.4
Disagree	22.0	15.5
Strongly disagree	14.6	9.5
Family helps when tensed due to work		
Strongly agree	12.2	18.1
Agree	37.8	36.2
Neither agree nor disagree	8.5	6.9
Disagree	20.7	15.5
Strongly disagree	20.7	23.3
Presence of family helps when things do not go well in life		
Strongly agree	26.9	18.7
Agree	50.7	56.1
Neither agree nor disagree	3.0	5.6
Disagree	4.5	10.3
Strongly disagree	14.9	9.3
Total	85	118

7.5. Summary and Conclusions

Social support is an integral component for the survival of the women in the call centre employment. The women employees have to manage both the house and the work-life

along with working in unconventional work with high work pressure. The night work and the high work pressure increases the need for the social support for the women employees not only from the family and friends but also from the colleagues and the supervisors. The social support is a crucial determinant of the survival of the women employees in the call centre employment. The stress and the work pressure at the call centre make social support essential for the call centre employees. Without proper social support, it would be difficult for the women to continue working in the odd hours in the long run. The work timing makes it difficult for the women to take proper care of their routine life. Since they work at night, they need to sleep during the day, which in turn hampers their normal day to day routine. They need someone to look after their food, rest, and other daily necessities. For the unmarried women staying with their family, situation becomes simplified as they have their parents to take care of their everyday life. On the other hand, the married women have to take care of their family and domestic responsibilities along with taking the job responsibilities. The primary source of support for the unmarried women was the parents and friends while for the married women it were husbands, in-laws, and parents.

The support of the parents and the family is essential for the women employees right from the joining the call centre to successfully working there. Most of the parents of the women employees supported their decision to join the call centres. The social support available to women employees was measured in two ways the perceived social support from outside work and the social support available at work. The unmarried women were more likely to receive social support from family, friends, and others as compared to the married women employees. Living arrangement and the years of employment were also significant predictors of the social support that the women received. The women staying with their parents were more likely to receive the social support outside the workplace. Most of the women employees had parents and family members who assisted them in their domestic

chores. Different people provided social support to women employees in their own ways. The social support provided by the mother/mother-in-law was mainly instrumental social support while father/father-in-laws/spouse provided the emphatic social support. Friends and colleagues helped the women employees to cope up with the work pressure and bad times. The majority of the women felt that they would not have survived in the call centre if the social support was not available for them. The social support at work was measured with respect to support from colleagues and supervisors. The social support that the women received at work was significantly related to their job-related well-being, work-life balance, work-family conflict and to their psychological health as well.