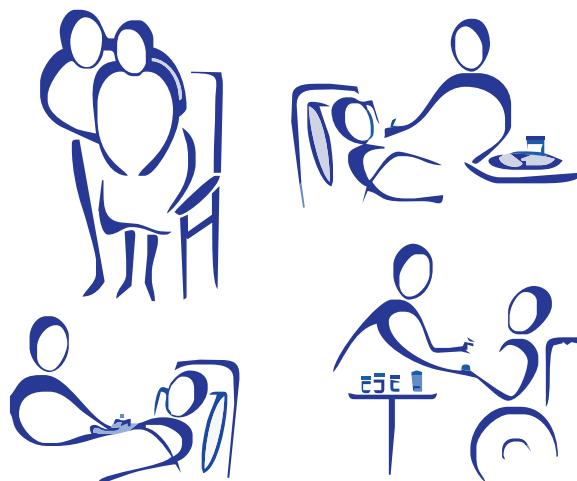


# CAREGIVING: THE IMPACT ON THE INDIAN WORK PLACE



A study to understand the absenteeism and work to family  
conflict among employed informal caregivers in India

Archana, a 39-year-old manager for a large company, is caring for her mother. She is her mother's primary care provider as both her brothers are settled abroad and has been arranging her services and taking care of her meals and errands for the past six months. Archana's 76 year old mother is suffering from dementia and other ailments need round the clock care and monitoring. During a counseling session, Archana opened up to a volley of questions and explained the woes of working caregivers and, during the interview, reported that she was struggling with the competing demands of a job, two children, a husband and the care of her ailing mother. When asked about the effects of caregiving on her work she replied: "My work is fine. Though it is demanding and strenuous, I'm managing all of my responsibilities, and I enjoy being in my office. Definitely, I know I'm not doing justice to my children but they seem to be adjusting. However, my marriage is on the rocks."

Archana is one of a growing group of Indians – working caregivers to elders. These workers are juggling their jobs and careers, their family responsibilities and their personal lives. Some working caregivers find caregiving a minor interlude that has positive consequences for them personally as a result of the satisfaction they experience from helping a loved one. Others discover that caregiving is a complicated and difficult set of tasks that require not only personal sacrifices, but professional sacrifices as well. And others, like Archana, find that they cannot be successful in all parts of their lives, and their relationships, health or personal activities suffer as a result.

The precise number of Indian workers who are providing assistance to an older family member is not known. Regardless of the actual prevalence, we can expect an increase in the number of people, perhaps two-fold, involved in providing care in the future due to the aging of our population and the increased number of women in the workforce. In few of the developed nations, as a result of the growing numbers of workers with elder care responsibilities, some large companies have begun work-based elder care programs. Supporting working caregivers is important for a number of reasons.

The proposed study hopes to provide an overview of the issues associated with working caregivers. We will examine the social and demographic trends influencing the growth of this group, their characteristics and their contributions to elders, and the consequences of caregiving for caregivers and their work. Next, we will briefly describe the various employer-initiated programs currently in place to support working caregivers and the evolution of these programs, followed by central and state governments' response to working caregivers, to date. The remainder of the study can be utilized to understand the potential role of the aging network in better supporting working caregivers, including current best practices and other possible strategies. We offer tips for getting started, including ideas and recommendations for internal program consideration, and tips for working with the business community.