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MOMPREENURSHIP IN INDIA: A PERSPECTIVE ON MOTHERHOOD PENALTY

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Abstract

Economic prosperity of any nation is greatly influenced by the growth in its entrepreneurial domain. Industrial advancements and economic progression by propelled by the entrepreneurs. Behind a society's vigor and success, entrepreneurs have a significant role to play. However, the concept of entrepreneurship has never been in the domains of gender-neutrality. Historical Narrative of the entrepreneurial activities and the resultant organization structure has been uniquely masculine. These disparities in role expectations from men and women have their roots in gender stereotypes. Gender stereotyping basically refers to the socially accepted or believed usual tenets of male and female. This gender role spillover has negative influence on the women participation in workforce. According to GEM report 2021/22, a significant entrepreneurial intention gap among male and female has not been witnessed at the global scale, however in terms of TEA (Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity); only two out of five initial stage entrepreneurs were found to be women. The present study would shed light on present status of mompreneurs and the challenges faced by 'mumpreneurs' in India.

Key words: Mompreneur, gender-neutrality, role spillover, masculine etc.

1.1 Introduction

Economic prosperity of any nation is greatly influenced by the growth in its entrepreneurial domain. Industrial advancements and economic progression by propelled by the entrepreneurs. Behind a society's vigor and success, entrepreneurs have a significant role to play. The influx of new, innovative ideas has a pivotal role to play in boosting economic growth of any nation (Cook et al. 2022). The same has been proposed by the Endogenous Growth Theory (1980's), which states that it is the internal factors such as investment in innovation, human capital etc., that contribute or boost economic progression and not due to factors that arises from external sources to an economy (Romer, 1994). However, the concept of entrepreneurship has never been in the domains of gender-neutrality. Historical Narrative of the entrepreneurial activities and the resultant organisation structure has been uniquely masculine. "Entrepreneurship has been a "man's" domain" (Bird & Brush, 2002, p.41). They are often regarded as the 'Captain of the Industry' i.e., as captains they are well-equipped in coordinating manufacturing and distribution related tasks (Schumpeter (1934)). Although, the term 'Captain' does not necessarily infer 'Male', however, in the year 1934 it largely reflects the masculine aspect. Collins and Moore, in the year 1962, penned down a book 'The Enterprising Men', which caters to empirical investigation into executives and innovators, who were male. Furthermore, McClelland (1961), a renowned American psychological theorist, also described an entrepreneur as "the man who organizes the firm (business unit) and/or increases its production capacity". This goes to show that the concept of entrepreneurship is more



of a gender biased phenomenon; more masculine in nature (García& Welter (2013)). These disparities in role expectations from men and women have their roots in gender stereotypes. Gender stereotyping basically refers to the socially accepted or believed usual tenets of male and female (Liñán et al. (2022)). Social or gender stereotyping stems from the social roles male and female occupy in the society. Social role theory (Eagly& Wood (2012)) states that as per to the norms associated with the social positions they play; men and women behave differently. Boundaries in social roles are fixed in a manner such that it is less likely for men to engage in household chores than women and serve as their children’s care takers. In contrast, men were assumed to be play a more masculine role and engage in waged jobs which demands physical strength, impulsivity and aptitude to lead (Wong, A. et al. (2016)). Matthaei (2001) in his study referred it to gender polarization, where sex-based division of labor was rigid and men were assigned ‘Paid work’ in an economy and their female counterpart were confined to ‘Unpaid work’ within the boundaries of their home. In India, the burden of care jobs shared by women in comparison to men is nearly 8 times (Table 1). This has a detrimental effect on women participation in labour force. Taking up ‘Care’ or ‘Pink Collar jobs’ by women has matter of discretion, but these responsibilities are bestowed on them by the society and patriarchal norms (Matthaei (2001)). For decades, role of women has been content with 3 k’s: Kitchen, kids and Knitting (Deepalakshmi (2019)). Becker’s Work-effort hypothesis (1985) states that since mothers have to devote considerable amount of time in taking care of their ‘pink-collar’ responsibilities, they “spend less effort on each hour of market work than married men” (Becker (1985), p. S33)

Table 1: Unpaid care burden based on gender

REGION	TIME DEVOTION TOWARDS CARE JOBS (<i>in minutes</i>)		GENDERED BURDEN
	Men	Women	
Overall	40	335	8.4x
Rural	42	344	8.2x
Urban	33	317	9.6x

Source: Nikore (2022)

This gender role spillover has negative influence on the women participation in workforce. Gender role spillover refers to how gender-specific expectations are absorbed into work environments” (Greer et al. (2001)). According to GEM report 2021/22¹, a significant entrepreneurial intention gap among male and female has not been witnessed at the global scale, however in terms of TEA (Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Activity); only two out of five initial stage entrepreneurs were found to be women. Moreover, as per a study by WIPO (World Intellectual Property Organization), global parity in innovation and creativity among male and female is likely to be achieved in 2061 i.e., 38 years from now. Gendered differences or biasness has been well captured in the Global Social Norms Index 2023 by UNDP². The report, based on 170 nations, highlights that 46 percent believes that “Men should have more right to a job than women” and 43 percent of people supports the assertion that “Men make better business

¹ GEM Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. (n.d.). GEM Global Entrepreneurship Monitor. <https://gemconsortium.org/report/gem-202122-womens-entrepreneurship-report-from-crisis-to-opportunity>

² 2023 GENDER SOCIAL NORMS INDEX. (n.d.). In <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdp-document/gsni202302pdf>



executives than women do”. Such attitudes impede gender equality. However, for economic resilience and independence, the role of women need not be confined to ‘pink collar jobs. They can play a pivotal role in boosting family economy as well (Dhamayanti et al. (2022)). To quote Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru “In order to awaken the people, it is the Women who has to be awakened. Once she is on the move, the household moves, the village moves, the country moves as a whole, and thus, we build the India of tomorrow” (Deepalakshmi (2019), p.51).

1.2 Mompreneurship

The term ‘Mompreneurship’, a portmanteau of two words ‘Mother or mom’ and entrepreneurship, is an important aspect in the field of female entrepreneurship. The term was first coined in 2002 in the book “Mompreneur: A mother’s practical step-by-step Guide to Work-at-Home Success” by Cobe and Parlapiano. Ekinsmyth(2011, p. 105) defined mompreneur as “an individual who discovers and exploits new business opportunities within a social and geographical context that seeks to integrate the demands of motherhood and business-ownership”. Jean and Forbes (2012) defined mompreneur as women who manages the role of being a mother, while being an entrepreneur. The concept of motherhood penalty has become often related to working moms. Motherhood penalty basically relates to decline in human resource or manpower owing to women quitting job, splitting their energies between life and work and resorting to adverse career choices in life on becoming a parent (Kelley et al. (2020)).

Motherhood penalty is not only restricted to wage disparity between male and femaleas highlighted in most previous researchers (Kricheli-Katz (2012), England et al. (2016), Sun, Z. (2022)). They are often judged as being less ‘competent, dependable and authoritative’ (Correll et al. 2007). When responsibility to fulfill multiple roles arises, a split in attention can be witnessed and thereby none of the responsibilities or roles receive its due share of attention (Vercruyssen& Van de Putte (2013), Kelley et al. (2020)). Mothers often fail to fit in the perspective of ‘Ideal worker’- one who is ready to dedicate overwhelming effort at workplace, even if it demands sacrifice in other concerns (Ridgeway &Correll (2004)).

³Work-life interface, intersection of work and private life, can produce positive (work-family enrichment) as well as negative outcomes (work-life interference). Despite these hurdles, many successful mumpreneurs have emerged over the years in India. The following is the list of such successful mompreneurs.

Table 2: List of Mompreneurs in India (Non-exclusive list)

Sl. No.	Mompreneur	Product/Service
1.	FalguniNayar	Nykaa
2.	Ghazal Alagh	Mamaearth
3.	Vineeta Singh	‘SUGAR’- beauty brand
4.	Suman Dash	Vastradi-Ethnic SambhalpuriSaree
5.	Suchi Mukherjee	Limeroad- Virtual Scrapbook
6.	Mani Pavitra	Pampered Kids
7.	MeenaBindra	BIBA

Source: Jumpstart Magazine ((4 Successful Indian Mompreneurs You Should Know About, 2022)), Marketing Mind ((Top 10 Successful Mompreneurs in India, 2019))

³Work-life interface.(n.d.).Psychology Wiki. https://psychology.fandom.com/wiki/Work-life_interface

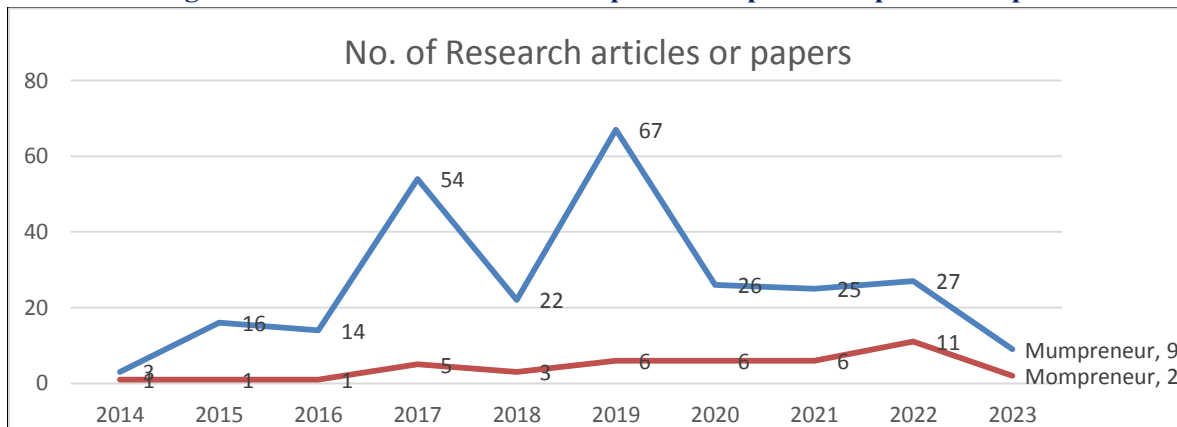


The thrive to be a mumpreneur can result from many push and pull factors (Nel et al. 2010). The steady growth of mompreneurs around the world can attributed to the need for financial independence, availability of lucrative market opportunities, flexi-work hours, desire to take up challenges, quipped with necessary skills to be an entrepreneur, being one’s own boss etc. (Jean and Forbes (2012), Deepalakshmi (2019)).

1.3 Significance of the Study

Scholars and academicians have begun to recognise the concept of entrepreneurship from both economic and social viewpoint. Previous literatures have pointed out that for a sustainable economic prosperity at domestic and global level is achievable, when entrepreneurship domain is opened to all citizens, regardless of their gender (Nel et al. 2010). In such a scenario, thrust on ‘mompreneurship’ is of paramount importance (Steyaert& Katz (2004)). Mompreneurship or mumpreneurship has received its due share of attention over the last few years and often hailed as a new-age feminism (Dhaliwal, A. (2022)). Paramount interest in the field of entrepreneurship has been on explaining the reasons behind entrepreneurial exits. Reasons behind entrepreneurial exits can be categorized into two: Intentional exits (underperformance, favoring paid employment etc.) and personal reasons (negative outcomes from work-family interface). ‘Mother penalty’ has been one of the personal reasons for working moms or enterprises held by mothers to resort to ‘Stay-at-home’ motherhood. Moreover, research in this subset of female entrepreneurship has been limited (table 2). In addition to this, there is dearth of data with respect to mompreneurs in the country as well as for regional areas. The present study would throw light on the motivation behind mompreneurship and various challenges and enrichment experienced being a mompreneur.

Fig 1: Research in the field of ‘Mompreneurship or Mumpreneurship’



Source: Dimensions database

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The present study attempts to shed light on the following objectives:

- a. To determine the motivation factors behind mompreneurship.
- b. To determine the outcome (enrichment or interference) of work-life interface among mompreneurs.



1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the motivating factors behind mompreneurship?
2. Do mompreneurs experience work-life enrichment from their work-life interface?
3. Do mompreneurs experience work-life interference from their work-life interface?

1.6 Research Methodology

The present study is basically exploratory in nature. The research has attempted to delve deeper into the subject matter as limited studies pertain to the same. Moreover, there has been dearth of data from secondary sources to substantiate the understanding of the concept in the region taken up for the study. In the study, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach at data collection, using a semi-structured interview (appendix 1). The rationale behind such approach is: firstly, the present study is basically exploratory research, with an attempt to draw insights on the subject matter, which is a relatively new in the domain of research in the region. Secondly, such approach allows researchers to have face-to-face dialogue and receive spontaneous response from the respondents (Bokkens 2021). The interview protocol developed for the present study has been adopted for Bokkens 2021, given in (appendix 2). 50 mompreneurs were approached in the city of Guwahati for in-depth interviews. Contact details of the potential respondents were obtained based on snowballing technique. However, only 20 of them agreed to be a part of the study (Response rate 40 percent). The questions for the interview were adopted from Jean and Forbes (2012, p.119) for motivation behind mompreneurs and from Fisher et al. (2009, p.451) for enrichment and interference in work-life interface.

1.7 Findings and Discussion

The following section highlights the findings of the study. The demographic profile of the respondents for the survey is given as below:

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

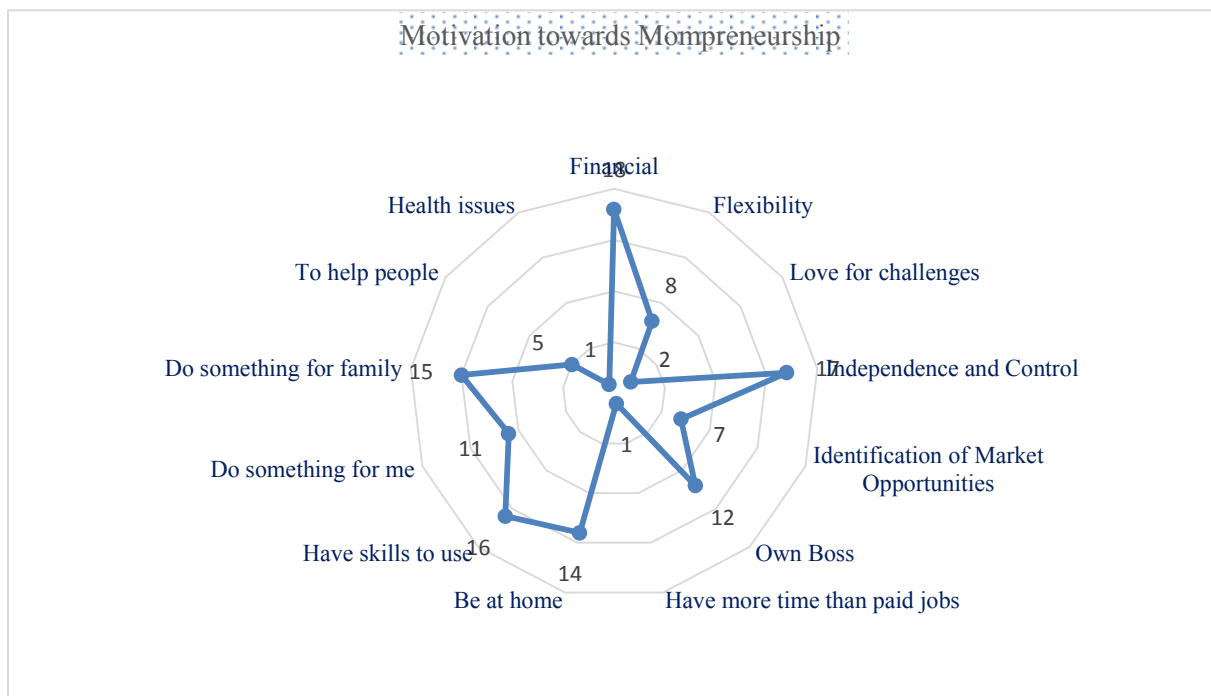
Sl. No.	Demographic Variables	Categories	No. of respondents
1.	Age	20-30	3
		30-40	2
		40-50	11
		50-60	4
2.	Family Size	Up to 3 members	7
		Up to 4 members	8
		Up to 5 members	5
3.	Educational Qualification	Up to 8 th standard	7
		8 th - 12 th Standard	10
		Graduation	3
4.	No. of children	1	8
		2	9
		3	3

Source: Primary Survey



Based on the inductive interviews being made for the study, the following findings are recorded by the

Fig. 2: Motivation towards Mompreneurship (Radar Graph)



Source: Primary Survey (adopted from Jean and Forbes (2012, p.119))

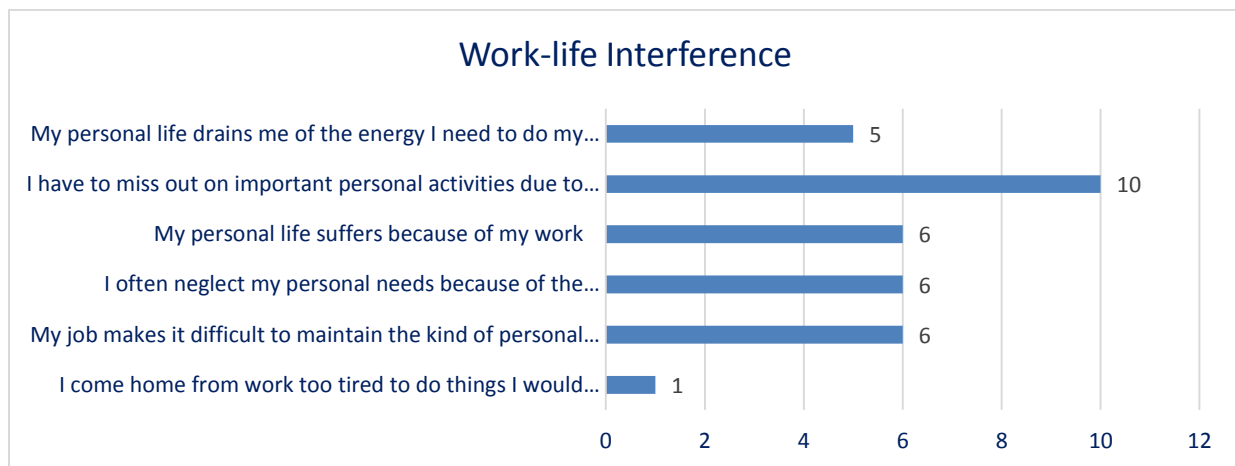
researcher (Radar graph fig. 2). Desire to gain economic strength (financially sound) has been the primary motive behind the respondents to step into the domain of entrepreneurship. Out of the total respondents, 18 have voted for the same. Followed by other motivations: willingness to gain financially independent and control (17^{*4}), to employ their inherent skills in business (16^{*}), to contribute something towards family (15^{*}), not to leave home (14^{*}), be one’s own boss (12^{*}), do something for once own life (11^{*}), to have flexibility in work hours (8^{*}), desire to help others (5^{*}), have identified an untapped opportunity (7^{*}), once willingness to take up challenge (2^{*}) and inability to work outdoors owing to health problems (1^{*}).

The interviewees have also reported various inferences in their work-life interface. 10 of the total respondents have reported to missing out personal life owing to number of hours devoted towards work. Other experiences of interferences in their work-life interface are: maintaining personal relations in life (6), ignoring or overlooking of personal needs (6) and suffering in private life due to work (6) and feeling of tired and exhaustion due to work hours (6) (Stacked Bar fig. 3).

⁴ * No. of respondents out of 20



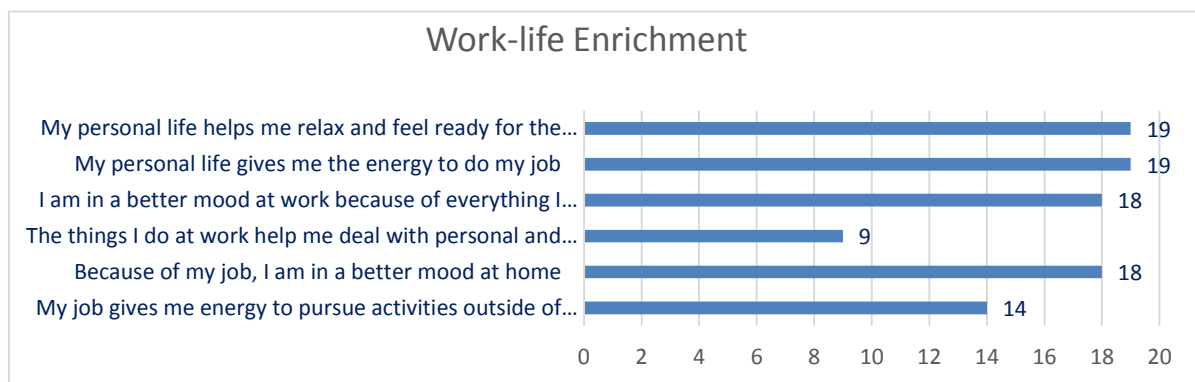
Fig. 3: Responses to Work-life Interference



Source: Primary Survey (adopted from Fisher et al. (2009, p.451))

The work-life interface has also resulted in various experiences of enrichment among the respondents. 19 out of 20 respondents have voted for ‘feeling of relaxation’, ‘gaining energy’ and ‘experiencing good mood’ due to their work engagements. 9 of the total respondents agreed that work life has actually assisted in handling domestic matters at home. Moreover, 14 out of 20 respondents have agreed to leveraging energy harnessed in one’s workplace to cater to other important matters in their life) (Stacked Bar fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Responses to Work-life Enrichment



Source: Primary Survey (adopted from Fisher et al. (2009, p.451))

Conclusion

The study attempted to through light on the motivations developed by mompreneurs in starting up a business and also determine the various work-life interface interferences and enrichment experienced by them. An in-depth semi-structured interview approach has been employed by the researcher in gaining insights into the aforesaid objectives. A total of 20 mompreneurs in Guwahati City were approached for



the survey. Based on this inductive approach, the researcher found that longing to gain financial strength has been the key motive behind the interviewees to step into the domain of entrepreneurship. Out of the total respondents, 18 have voted for the same. Followed by other motivations: readiness to gain financially autonomy and control, to employ their inherent skills in business, to contribute something towards family, not to leave home, be one's own boss, do something for once own life, to have flexibility in work hours, desire to help others, have identified an untapped opportunity, once willingness to take up challenge and inability to work outdoors owing to health problems. The study also highlighted various work-life interferences: Missing out personal life owing to number of hours devoted towards work, maintaining personal relations in life, ignoring or overlooking of personal needs and suffering in private life due to work and feeling of tired and exhaustion due to work hours. The work-life interface has also given rise to in various enrichment among the respondents in their work-life interface: 'feeling of relaxation', 'gaining energy' and 'experiencing good mood' due to their work engagements, assistance in handling domestic matters at home and leveraging energy harnessed in one's workplace to cater to other important matters in their life.

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