



## WOMEN WORKERS IN ORGANISED RETAIL SECTOR: A STUDY OF HARIDWAR, DEHRADUN AND RISHIKESH CITIES OF UTTARAKHAND

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### Abstract

The Indian retail sector has opened vast employment opportunities and women employees are the preferred choice of retail to deal with sale for the certain product categories such as food and grocery, cosmetics etc. Young women with impressive communication skills are better employees in comparison to male. This paper examines the profile, nature of jobs, employment conditions, and working conditions of women workers employed in retails in three cities of Uttarakhand.

The findings reveal that the retail is offering jobs to educated & young girls; a few older women are also employed. Most of the girls are unmarried, educated up to intermediate. In most of the cases, the head of the family is not working and the earnings of the respondents become mainstay of their family. Standing throughout the duty in the mall is extremely tiring and creates fatigue and monotony. Foreign direct investment may be a solution to the problems of the employees of retail..

**Keywords:** Retail, Head, Fatigue, Monotony, Mainstay.

### Introduction

Over the last ten to twelve years, the Indian retail sector has completely transformed. Traditional markets are losing its shine and importance and new forms such as supermarkets, departmental stores are fastly coming up. Malls are being built both in metropolitan as well as small cities and thus introducing the customers a novel marketing experience, enjoyment and satisfaction. The retail boom has setup in India. India tops the global retail development index as the most suitable and attractive market for retail investment. Vast Indian middle class and its retail industry are key attractions for retail industry giants entering into these new markets. India's sound economic growth, rising population and changing lifestyle provide a highly attractive environment for retailers (Dibb, 1996). Retailing is one of the important industries in India accounting for over 10 % of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and 8% of its employment (FICCI, 2005). Modern retailing, which presently accounts for 4 % of the total market, is likely to increase its share to 22 % by 2012 (IBEF, 2007). With increasing urbanization, the Indian customer is also becoming more trend conscious. There is a shift from price consciousness to an awareness design and quality as there is a greater focus on looking and feeling good (Sarvar, 2006). This trend is also prevailing in rural areas.

The retail sector has also opened up vast employment opportunities for the youths in India. According to a study, the retail sector in India is poised to employ about 5, 00,000 skilled people by the end of the decade (Keshva, 2003). This sector offers many types of jobs to the people. As per the recent trends management graduates are required for inventory management, brand management, supply chain management, etc, finance professionals are in great demand for accounting, cost control and analytical functions. In this customer oriented sector human resource managers are also required for training, development, motivation and manpower management. A large number of employees are also required for marketing and sales functions whereas skilled personnel are required for security and safety management. Now, it is clear that this industry has opened many types of employment for the educated youths of the nation. Thus, this sector is witnessing a trend what become popular for the IT (information technology) sector and the BPO (business process outsourcing) sector in terms of the creation of jobs.

Women are considered to be more suitable for certain jobs in this sector. With the customer being the king for all retailers, women are quit expectedly becoming the choice in most front-end profiles, which require constant interaction with customers. Women employees are also preferred choice in certain product categories like food and grocery, cosmetics, kids, jewelry, home décor and apparels. Young and smart women with impressive communication ability are considered better employees as they manage to stay longer in the service industry as compared to men (Goyal et al., 2008).

During the last few years, many new form of retailing including speciality stores, departmental stores, discount stores, and variety stores have come up in Haridwar, Dehradun and Rishikesh city in Uttarakhand. Among these formats, a departmental store is a large retail unit with an extensive assortment of goods and services that is organized into separate departments for the purpose of buying, promotion, customer service and control. It has a wide range of selection of products offered by any general merchandise retailer, often serves as the anchor store in a shopping centre and is usually part of a chain (Berman and Evans, 2002).

This study was undertaken to analyse the profile and working conditions of women working in nine retail, departmental stores or mega mart or big bazaar in three cities of Uttarakhand i.e. Haridwar, Dehradun and Rishikesh. These stores are selected randomly for the study. All the women employees of these retailers were personally contacted by the researcher and primary data was collected from them with the help of a structured information schedule. Another purpose of this research is to find out relevance of foreign direct investment in retail.

## 1. Data Interpretation and Findings

The data and findings related to the profile, nature of work, income, expenditure, contribution to family income, employment conditions, and working conditions of the respondents (women workers) are presented hereunder:

### A. Profile of the Respondents

During the study it was found that majority of the women employees, 61.12% are in the age group of 18-20 years and 27.78 % are in the age group of 21-25 years. Thus, about 89 % of the respondents are just 25 years old or less than 25 years. Only, 2.78 % respondents are in the age group of 31-35 and 36-40, whereas, 5.56 % constitutes the age group of 26-30 (Table 1). This figure is the result of the fact that new wave retailing requires only young, beautiful, slim, smart and energetic sales staff to deal with the customers; this is reason behind preference to younger girls for employment. They are also free from family other burdens and different members of their family provide them required help and support in reporting timely to their duty. It is also true that younger generation people are likely to be more energetic and enthusiastic dedicated employees.

Table 1: Age wise Distribution of the Respondents

S. No.	Age Group	No. of Respondents		Total	
		No.	% age	No.	% age
1	18-20	66	61.12	66	61.12
2	21-25	30	27.78	30	27.78
3	26-30	06	5.56	06	5.56
4	31-35	03	2.77	03	2.77
5	36-40	03	2.77	03	2.77
6	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

More than one fourth of the women employees were found to have a family size of 1-3 members, 37.04%, 25.93% and 11.10% of them have 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12 members in their families (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by the Size of Their Family

S. No.	Family size	No. of Respondents		Total	
		No.	% age	No.	% age
1	1-3	28	25.94	28	25.94
2	4-6	40	37.03	40	37.03
3	6 and above	40	37.03	40	37.03
6	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

Table 3 reveals that highest percentage of the women workers (46.31) were found educated up to the intermediate level, 31.48 % were found graduate. Only, 5.55 % post graduates and the same proportion of respondents also holding a diploma in computers. This pattern was almost similar in all the nine categories of the sample malls.

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Their Educational Qualifications

S. No.	Educational Qualifications	No. of Respondents		Total	
		No.	% age	No.	% age
1	Matric	12	11.11	12	11.11
2	Intermediate	50	46.30	50	46.30
3	Diploma	06	05.56	06	05.56
4	Graduate	34	31.47	34	31.47
5	Post-graduate	06	5.56	06	05.56
6	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

The all respondents were asked about the occupations of their father or husband and very interestingly, it was found that the fathers or husbands of 24.07% employees (Table 4) did not work. This means their families are highly dependence on their earnings. 44.45% of the respondents reported that their fathers or husbands are skilled workers like gardener, carpenters etc. about 19% reported that their fathers or husbands are in the service whereas 13% reported that the head of the family is self employed.

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Occupation of Their Father/Husband

S. No.	Occupation of Fathers/Husbands	No. of Respondents		Total	
		No.	% age	No.	% age
1	Nil	26	24.07	26	24.07
2	Skilled Labour	48	44.45	48	44.45
3	Self Employed	14	12.96	14	12.96
4	Govt./Pvt. Service	20	18.52	20	18.52
5	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

The present study found that about 90% of the respondents were unmarried and they share their views with researcher very frankly in this regard and reveal that the nature of this job is more suited to unmarried girls because they have to work for long hours till late in the evening, which is not suitable for married women. This finding also directly related with family responsibility and socio-cultural pattern of the Indian society. Actually, it is not possible for married women to work for longer hours till late in the evening due to their different roles in the family. Thus, we can say that the retail is more suitable work place for unmarried girls.

The data available in Table 5 are evident that 42.58% respondents belong to below poverty line families with monthly income Rs. 9000/- or less than Rs 9000/-. The monthly income of the families of 38.48 % respondent is less than Rs. 12000/-. Only 24.92 % respondents belong to the families whose monthly income is ranging between Rs. 12000-15000 or more than Rs. 15000/-. Now, it is very clear that there is preponderance of the respondents who belong to the very poor families.

Table 5: Distribution of the Respondents by Monthly Income of Their Family

S. No.	Family Income (In Rs.)	No. of Respondents		Total	
		No.	% age	No.	% age
1	3000-6000	08	07.40	08	07.40
2	6000-9000	38	35.18	38	35.18
3	9000-12000	34	31.48	34	31.48
4	12000-15000	14	12.96	14	12.96
5	Above 15000	14	12.96	14	12.96
6	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

## B. Nature of the Job

The data given in the table 6 demonstrate that a large proportion of the respondents, that is, 48% women workers work as sales associate or senior sales associate. In fact, in these designations, there is no difference in the nature of work. If the qualification and experience of the candidate is higher than her counterparts, she is given a high designation of sales associate or senior sales associate. Actually, these girls arrange the materials in display windows and display racks check the stock in the morning and deal with customers. Only four of the respondents are working as customer care executives (CCEs) and the same numbers of girls are working as trainers for the sales staff. Nearly, 10% are working as cashier on the cash counter. It was also found that an equal percentage of them are working as security guards either for checking of female entrants to the mall or working in the ladies' trail rooms to prevent any undue theft.

Table 6: Nature of the respondents' Job -a Designation wise Distribution

S. No.	Job/Designation	Total Number of Respondents		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age
1	Sales Girls	24	22.23	24	22.23
2	Senior Sales Associate	50	46.31	50	46.31
3	Advisor	06	05.56	06	05.56
4	Customer Care Executives	04	03.70	04	03.70
5	Trainer	04	03.70	04	03.70
6	Cashier	10	09.24	10	09.24
7	Security Guard	10	09.24	10	09.24
8	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

## C. Wages and Salaries

All the respondents get their wages and salaries on monthly basis. Table 7 reveals that a majority of the respondents (61% of the employees) are earning a monthly income of less than Rs. 5, 500.41% of them are earning less than Rs. 4,500/month. None of the respondents get monthly salary or wage above Rs. 7, 500. Almost all the employees were satisfied with their present salary. The respondents disclosed with the researchers that "working in a modern departmental store is a more prestigious job than working in a traditional retail shop or in a factory as a labour. Payment for the same job profile varies from store to store and for the same job in same store too, the payment varies on the basis of qualification and experience." Here, it is very clear that there is no any wage and salary slab for the employees working in these malls. In reality the wages or salary are negotiable. Therefore, the girls working in the same store and performing same or equal job also often get wages/salaries different from each other. About 13% employees do not get any allowance while 87% get free uniform twice a year from their employer. All employees are covered under the schemes of the provident fund and employees' state insurance.

Table 7: Wages/Salaries Wise Distribution of the Respondents

S. No.	Wages/ Salary (Rs)	Number of Respondents		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age
1	3500-4500	44	40.74	44	40.74
2	4500-5500	22	20.37	22	20.37
3	5500-6500	10	09.26	10	09.26
4	6500-7500	14	12.96	14	12.96
5	More than 7500	18	16.66	18	16.66
6	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

### D. Expenditure and Savings of the Respondents

The data given in table 8, shows that a majority of the respondents (59.25%) spend their income on meeting the family needs. 28% respondents spend their hard earnings on their own education. Only 12.96% respondents keep their income as their own pocket money. The information available in table 9 reveals that after meeting their expenditure 62.96% is not able to save any amount while in 18.52 % cases, respondents themselves or their family save less than Rs. 1000 per month. Nearly, another 18% of the respondents are able to save Rs. 1000-3000.

Table 8: Distribution of the Respondents by the Use/Expenditure of Their Earnings

S. No.	Item of Expenses/Use of the Earnings	Number of Respondents		Total	
		No.	%age	No.	%age
1	To Support Family	64	59.25	64	59.25
2	Own Pocket money	14	12.96	14	12.96
3	Own Education	30	27.77	30	27.77
4	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

Table 9: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Savings Out of Their Earnings

Saving Per Month (Rs.)		Savings Out of The Earnings of the Respondents		Total	
Sl. No		No.	%age	No.	%age
1	Nil	68	59.25	68	59.25
2	Less Than Rs. 1000	20	18.25	20	18.25
3	1000-2000	14	12.96	14	12.96
4	2000-3000	06	05.56	06	05.56
5	Total	108	100.00	108	100.00

### E. Contribution to Family Income

A majority of the women employees (about 52%) contribute about 40-60 % to their family income. Another 16% manage to contribute 80-100 % to their family income. This trend is completely based on the nature of Indian women. In fact, Indian women are having great attachment with their family and can do any kind of sacrifice for their family and family members. These women are the great financial pillars of their family since in many cases the father/ husband or head of the family is not earning any money and the income of the respondents is the mainstay of their family.

### F. Working Conditions

The physical conditions of these malls are very conducive. There is very good lighting provision, proper ventilation, air-conditioned environment and potable water is available to the employees. In fact, these facilities are provided as compulsion to attract customers not as a welfare measures. As reported by the respondents, the major difficulty they face is that they have to keep standing throughout the working hours and no facility is provided to sit even in free time. This phenomenon creates problem of fatigue and monotony among the employees.

Almost all the employees described themselves as temporary employee but about 50% respondents feel that their job is secured. There is provision to give one-month notice or salary in lieu of this, from both employees and employers to leave the job or to terminate the services respectively. There is also provision for weekly off with pay but in rotation not on a fixed day to all the employees. As the malls have a festive atmosphere on the weekends, when maximum number of customer visit there. There is also provision for two casual leaves in a month. No any other holiday is given to these employees; neither any extra payment is made for working even on national holidays like Republic Day or Independence Day.

About 46% of the employees reported that they get on-the-job training from time to time ranging from 15 days to 30 days or even 60 days with purpose to improve communication skills, shop keeping, customer care and etiquette etc.

Table 10 reveals that a majority of employees (about 54%) working in the shopping malls in Haridwar, Dehradun and Rishikesh come daily to their workplace from a distance of 18 kilometers or above. Only 5.56% respondents have to cover a distance of less than six kilometers.

The various modes of transportation in both the cities, Haridwar and Dehradun include bus, auto rickshaw, bicycle, scooter and car or by foot. It is evident by the figures given in table 6 that about two-third of the respondents travel by auto rickshaw which is easily available and cheap mode of traveling in any city. In fact, these auto rickshaw ply on set routs and keep picking and dropping the passengers as per their requirements and they charge only Rs.5-10 from each passenger depending on the distance travelled by them.

Table 10: Distance of the Workplace from Residence & Mode of Travelling of the Respondents

Distance (KM)	Total with		Total		Mode of Travel	No. of respondents		Total	
	No.	% age	No.	% age		No.	% age	No.	% age
Less than 06	06	05.56	06	05.56	Bus	30	27.78	30	27.78
06-12	30	27.77	30	27.77	Auto Rickshaw	70	64.82	70	64.82
12-18	14	12.96	14	12.96	Scooter	04	03.70	04	03.70
18-24	24	22.23	24	22.23	Foot	04	03.70	04	03.70
24 and Above	34	31.48	34	31.48	Total	108	100	108	100
Total	108	100	108	100					

## G. The Hours of Work

According to the prevailing shops and establishment act in the state of Uttarakhand, no person shall be employed about the business of an establishment for more than 48 hours in a week and 9 hours in any single day. As per the provision of the act, even in the case of seasonal work or when there is exceptional pressure of work, the total number of overtime hours worked by an employee must not exceed 50 in three months, and the person employed overtime shall be paid remuneration just twice the rate of his normal wages/salary calculated by the hours.

A majority of the respondents (57.41%) works for 9 hours a day while 44.59% work for as much as 10 hours a day. Thus, women working in the departmental stores work for 54-60 hours a week which is very higher than the prescribed 48 hours. In fact, these women are overtime of about 72 hours in a quarter which is 22 hours more than prescribed limit of overtime and no any extra payment is being made to them. It has been found that a sizeable number of employees are asked to come early in the morning to make preparation for sale.

Table 11: Distribution of Respondents on the Basis of Their Hours of Work

Sl. No.	Hours	Duration	Total Number of Respondents		Total	
			No.	%age	No.	%age
1	09 am-06 p.m.	09 Hours	40	37.04	40	37.04
2	11 am-08 p.m.	09 Hours	22	20.37	22	20.37
3	10 am-08 p.m.	10 Hours	22	20.37	22	20.37
4	10:30 am-08:30 p.m.	10 Hours	24	22.22	24	22.22
5	Total		108	100.00	108	100.00

## 2. Conclusion

The modern organized retail sector has opened various job opportunities to educated, young, beautiful and smart girls. Most of the girls working in malls are unmarried and educated up to the intermediate level. In most of the cases, the head of the family is not found to be working and the earnings of the respondents become the mainstay of the family. We can say that the families of these respondents are dependent on their job which is main reason why most of the respondents are readily traveling a distance of more than 24 kilometers and come to the city from the adjoining semi-urban and rural areas. Working conditions of these stores are very good. However, they aspire to have desk job because standing throughout the duty hour in the mall is extremely tiring and creates fatigue and monotony among them.

Through Foreign Direct Investment in the area of retail we can create high level of competition among the retailers and there may be a complete change in wages and salary which is presently very poor; there may be change in methods of work and working conditions also and hours of work will be properly regulated with proper leave arrangements. Thus there may be improvement not only in the conditions of women employees but also to all others employees and quality of services of the retails will improve because only satisfied employees can provide full satisfaction to the customers.

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