CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

NEED FOR AN INNOVATIVE AND ENRICHED SOCIOLOGY OF WORK

For a gargantuan treatise like this that encompasses theory as well as empiricism, sociology and gender, and an empirical observation of four categories of women professionals, it is not entirely practicable to proffer the minute details of each aspect of the academic piece in one concluding part. That is why, for an organized grasp of the work, the researcher has supplemented succinct summary to respective proceedings section-wise as well as chapter-wise. This helps to comprehend the leitmotif of the research in a step-by-step manner. Despite that, there is also a need to summarize the entire study in toto in order to acquire a holistic conspectus in a precise manner. This will aid the reader to ken the findings of study in an integrated way. Thus, this chapter tries its best to highlight the dominant discoveries that stem from the academic quest.

As the foundation of the thesis is constructed both upon theoretical and empirical postulates, it is imperative to initiate the exercise with theoretical assumptions. As one ferrets out the portrayal of 'work' in classical sociology, one discovers that the response of the discourse has been tame and bland. At a conceptual level, no scholar has directly dealt with the phenomenon called work. No wonder, all the four classical thinkers, viz. Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Herbert Spencer have dealt with the aspects of industrial labour. They are obsessed with the construction, analysis and understanding of a type of work that is not only economic, paid, but also that is satisfying, specializing organizational, calculative, rational, valued, competitive, bureaucratic and contractual. Although they insinuate the meaning of work, they schematize in the language of labour. Moreover, classical thinkers are largely concerned with 'work' in public domain. The entire gamut of discourse revolves around the subject called 'man' describing his ability, wit, skill, action, struggle, experience, survival, labour, volition and the like. It all represents a eulogy of the agency of man. The contribution of women, their labour, expertise, agency and experience remain absolutely opaque. In epitome, classical sociology suffers from two shortcomings. One
at a conceptual level, it remains pauciloquent on the notion of work. Two, it stays insouciant to women's agency.

While trawling the phenomenon of work in modern sociology, one's finding is not much different from that of the classical one. To begin with, there is no formal discourse of 'work' under the rubric of 'work'. What is culled from the scholars' dominant discourses can be viewed as references, hints and indirect/peripheral discussions in relation to work. Modern social thinkers are mostly concerned with paid labour/employment prevalent in public, industrial, organizational, bureaucratic or informational mode. In other words, modern sociology is predominantly preoccupied with the understanding of pursuits in public sphere. What is conspicuous in its discourse is that it remains almost nonchalant to the non-paid and non-public facets of pursuits carried on in private spheres of life. However, scholars like C. Wright Mills, Raymond Aron, J.E. Goldthrope and Robert T. Dubin have been exceptions in that they delineate work in the language of work. But the leitmotif of their discourse is not directed at contributing to and/or building a 'sociology of work'. Although such scholars do talk about work, their core concerns aim at proving/disproving something else. They could not imagine, create and sustain their criticality and inquisitiveness to fit their view in a proper discourse of work. Like classical sociology, modern sociology is almost indifferent to the unpaid, invisible and household dimension of work. Yet scholars like Raymond Aron and J.E. Goldthrope do ingeminate the importance of housework in social life. However, the approach to formulate a systematic and an all-encompassing theorization of 'work' is conspicuously missing in their work. There is little attempt to explore the meaning of work as a vital aspect in individual's life. In other words, no scholar has directly deliberated upon the philosophical/phenomenological enigma of work. In short, modern social thinkers are not operating their discourse within a systematic paradigm of work. A perusal of sociological traditions, classical as well as modern, suggests that a formal discourse on sociology of work is almost 'non-existent'. It is owing to such non-existence and conspicuous apathy to acknowledge women's agency in the context of 'work', that feminist scholarship poses serious criticisms to sociology as a discipline of knowledge construction.
The proposition trotted out by feminist discourse appears quite plauditory. Its accusation towards the *male-stream* sociology for remaining insouciant to the issue of women's work stays methodologically well placed. However, feminist scholarship commits a fundamental error in delineating women's work as unpaid. It is the error of applying market-centric/contractual/profit making concepts to the non-market sphere. It has to be well understood that housework is carried out in a socio-cultural context that comes under the ambit of a domestic economy, not under market economy. Thus, it does not need a formal approval by market economy to be termed as work. Housework is an important form of work in its own right.

Feminist scholars accuse sociological tradition for its overindulgence in public domain pursuits and brutal negligence of diverse activities associated with private domains of life. The message of feminist epistemology is loud and clear: that the economic value of a woman's contribution can be phenomenized only when it is perpended in perseity and not through the prism of patriarchal stereotypes. *It proposes that there is a need for sociology – as a branch of academic enquiry – to be equally sensitive to both the domains of work: private and the public. As regards the dominant understanding of work in sociological discourse, it spells out that the conventional formulation of work should not be accepted peremptorily as it is one-sided, masculine, hegemonic, anti-women, and hence, gender insensitive. At a time when women are increasingly entering the public work domain, found in all echelons of the job hierarchy and when work sphere itself is gradually getting de-masculinized, de-conventionalized, de-segregated and feminized, feminist epistemology aptly urges the discourse of work to jettison its language of masculinity, be truly sensitive to the diverse facets of work, renew itself in accordance with the renewal of the work domain and remain gender-sensitive as well as gender-neutral. To stress the obvious, feminist scholarship enriches the discourse of 'sociology of work' methodologically as well as substantially in order to deal with the long-festering dispute surrounding the notion of work and resolve the question of 'invisibility of work' within the discourse of work. The discovery pertaining to the empirical study of women professionals is quite flabbergasting. Although it has been amply summarized profession-wise, there is a need to systematize the findings for an integrated understanding.
As regards the factors influencing one’s choice of a particular profession, there is no single universal factor that motivates women to take up a job. Perspectives differ as per individual inclinations and personal pressures. It is noticed that such factors are four in number. One, abject poverty: that is, financial deprivation. Two, for attaining financial autonomy: that is, being an earning member in society as like men. Three, passion to serve: that is, volition. It is found that this passion is not as honest and innocent as it appears. In most of the cases, it is shaped by factors extrinsic to one’s volition; those relate to the esteem quotient and the prosperity content associated with the job. The study of doctors is a case in point. Four, lure of the job; that is, the glamour quotient associated with a certain profession. Such lure is a combination of 3Ps: they are power, prestige and privilege (3Ps). Our study of women administrators best explains the degree to which 3Ps moulds one’s choice. Irrespective of the factors, the very determination of contemporary women to be a part of public work domain manifests their revolutionary attitude towards the glass ceiling as well as patriarchal ideologies that have so far been impervious to alteration.

Our discovery pertaining to the marital status of women professionals trashes the much-advocated proposition that employed women have a better chance in matrimonial bazaar. What emanates from the field is that matrimonial prospect of lady professionals varies from profession to profession. This explains why a sizeable number of women in police and administration are unmarried and why more than 90 percent of women are married in professions of medicine and academics. Factors other than one’s employment play a crucial role in affecting one’s matrimony. The character of a particular job, or for that matter, the societal image of a job in general influences the marital prospects of its lady professionals to an immense extent. In other words, the manifest public image of a certain job impinges upon women’s marital futures, who pursue that particular pursuit.

As regards the financial background of lady professionals, a majority of lady professionals hail from sound financial background. Sound financial background and high achievement/achievement motivation are positively correlated. This explains why the category of ‘poor’ background is almost negligible in the case of women serving in professions like academics, medicine and administration. The preponderance of women...
hailing from ‘poor’ and ‘average’ financial background is manifest in the case of policewomen. Hence, the proposition that emerges from the situation is that belongingness to humble economic background and acceptance of female-unfriendly-masculine-socially undesirable job are positively correlated. Thus, one’s level of aspiration/attainment is to a great extent conditioned by/related to one’s economic location. The influence of caste and sex has been absolutely zero on the score.

To explore women’s career-family balance is to come across a series of tensions, constraints, compromises, trials and tribulations. As family itself denotes a full-time engagement, any pursuit that is taken up along with it is bound to create pressure on working women. They feel hamstrung by time and social constraints. Patriarchal compulsion - be it the obligation as mother, duty as a wife or loyalty as a bahu - is the most powerful and the most impressive of all influences. At times, it distorts, twists and mangles all their independent aspirations/will. However, notwithstanding such influences, there are extraordinarily spunky careerists who come forward to move themselves at both ends: family and career. As marriage implies an initiation into a round-the-clock attachment, contradiction ultronically erupts the moment a woman starts blending family with career. Motherhood is found to be the biggest constraint in her career. She feels hurt and ruffled by two things: (i) guilty-mom syndrome and (ii) not-giving-hundred percent-professional feeling. What is encouraging to note is that she perseveres to jostle for a balance between two worlds of work. Conflating the traditional/affective occupation on the one hand and the rational-economic pursuit on the other constitute her everyday ethnomethod. Today’s working mother is a kind of perpetual agonistes who has the need to cope with her inner conflicts between familial responsibilities and professional demands. Yet what is praiseworthy of her ability/approach is that she manages to twist and turn manifold commitments without jeopardizing any of her important priorities. She appears to have learnt the art of multitasking: she knows how to hold divergent responsibilities, expectations and challenges in a state of equipoise. Throughout the day she keeps changing her avatar from time to time as per requirements without altering her incarnation. Prioritization and selective performance are the means through which she
harmonizes the dual burden. She also knows when to say 'no' to a certain task. She is a traditional modernist; that is, opening up, but rooted in classical mother-wife role.

Work-family balance does not always necessarily mean reduced working hours, nor does it imply a reduced workload. It simply means attempting to harmonize both family and job and draw a stable equilibrium between one's personal and professional life. Twenty-first century working moms are certainly trying hard to be more emancipated, taking both the professional and personal in their side and attempting the balancing act between work, home and motherhood. Despite being working women, they are taking parenting more seriously. Although motherhood is culturally considered to be the raison d'etre of every woman, that does not deter the determined. They take up the gauntlet: to be an affectionate mother and an assertive professional. For a married professional, it is no longer a case of choosing between career and family; rather, it is a task of harmonizing the two. The hard-driving careerist woman gets switched off as soon as she leaves office, and the traditional Indian wife takes over. In order to make the balancing act possible a woman professional develops a syndrome of dependence on two things: one, support at the level of family and two, her informal-personalized rapport with co-workers at workplace.

While the nature of the balancing burden is similar to all working mothers, certain constraints are profession-specific. For instance, a policewoman's tragedy is much worse. She is confronted by a round-the-clock job, which is horrendously strenuous for a woman; problem compounds when a married lady cop toils to dovetail job with family. Similarly, women administrators encounter serious handicaps owing to the nature of their profession, which involves things like rigid time schedule, tour, commuting, frequent transfer and the like.

However, it is a generally agreed upon view that unmarried women are relatively more devoted to their profession. They are frontier women who live life on their own terms. Although the burden of career-family balance is almost non-existent in their personal life, it is absurd to speculate that they enjoy a stress-free/hassle-free life. They also do encounter humiliation/hearsay for staying spinster at a personal level and harassment/discriminatory treatment for being woman at workplace.
Irrespective of their degree of competency, achievement, performance and commitment at workplace, for women professionals, family is always paramount and profession is secondary to it. Even those who have remained unmarried due to some constraint or the other, the mirage of family haunts their mind time and again. It does not matter whether she is a police or a doctor, administrator or an academician, achieving worker or a formal worker; familial commitments rule the roost in her life. The perception that reigns supreme in their psyche is that a woman is incomplete till she is a mother and motherhood symbolizes the ultimate ecstasy in her life-world. Although jockeying for equilibrium between career and kinship inflicts her physically as well as mentally, she tackles the double burden stoically, keeping family in mind. For a sizeable number of women, job is not simply secondary to family; rather, it is paravai in nature and has to be retained exclusively for economic ends.

The reason why family is coddled is simple. It involves those people whom one loves, cares and emotionally relates to. It is the repository of one’s love, affection, emotion, bond, peace, happiness, trust, companionship, hope and reliance. To cheat it means to cheat oneself. This is not to suggest it is impossible for a working mother to be a serious careerist. Rather, as we have minutely exemplified in the previous chapter, serious professionals do exist though their proportion is less. But what is striking to note is that irrespective of her nature of employment, a married professional’s headquarter lies in her family. Careerists have internalized the reality as well as inevitability of the double-burden as a modus vivendi. That is why the very existence of double-burden, per se, is not stressful. Rather stress stems from one’s inability to adequately/satisfactorily perform one’s familial role. This signifies that the ideology surrounding family (including that of ‘women for hearth’) still holds its roots in the psyche of emancipated women. In general, women’s approach to employment is one of quid pro quo. For many, it is like a contractual engagement to gain financially. There are very few lady professionals who are emotionally attached to their pursuit and who personally feel ignited to resplend in their career. Otherwise, for most women, career takes a backseat and it revolves around the centrality of kinship commitments. Having a pleasant home and family is their biggest priority, overriding all professional aspirations.
Male chauvinism constitutes a hallmark of all professions: its degree of manifestation varies from profession to profession. Its intensity is mildly experienced by academic women and lady doctors. And the reason as to why it is not violently felt in these two professions (of academics and medicine) is the relative absence of physical proximity factor, which has been systematically explained in previous chapters. Yet, in both the professions, men tend to be supercilious and they find it intrinsically uncomfortable to appreciate women’s accomplishments. The thesis that erupts from the study of these two professions is that non-existence of proximity factor and non-occurrence of sexual harassment at work place are positively correlated.

As one begins to explore the experience of women in police and administration, one discovers male chauvinism in its carnal form. Sexual harassment continues to be an integral part of police department. Policemen perceive WSIs as masculine females with loose moral character who shall not hesitate to offer sexually by a mere request or proactive favour. As these women have taken up a profession for which they stand socially stigmatized, policemen expect them to fill up the absence of their wives in the Thana. Many women experience harassment in some form or the other; but they prefer not to complain as it would amount to further victimization or even it may cost them their reliable job.

Another manifestation of male chauvinism relates to the phenomenon of ascriptive inequality that has pervaded the department of police which is explicit in the practice of intra-job discrimination in matters of posting; that is, a WSI is never posted to head a general police station and made to work there under her equal-ranking male colleague. What one notices is really intriguing. Police department is governed by, hierarchized in terms of and unwittingly discriminates against women on the basis of sex. Male hegemony is pervasive. Policemen have an insatiated penchant for masculinizing and monopolizing the workplace.

Similarly, anticipatory sexual behaviour (ASB) is inseparably associated with the so-called steel frame of Indian administrative domain, found among male personnel. The tendency of certain men to get closer with lady officers in anticipation of sexual
cooperation is nothing foreign to the domain. We have already thrashed out the issue in detail in our early discussions.

It goes without saying, both policemen and male officers think that they are much more superior to their female counterparts in terms of on-the-job performance. The point that arises forcefully from the study is that intra-job--inter-sex superciliousness is an integral phenomenon of all professions and intra-job--inter-sex harassment/exploitation is a reality found in some professions. Co-existence does not necessarily mean concinnity. Accommodative behaviour is a professional compulsion. What is commendable is that despite such discouraging ambience, snooty treatment and harassing behaviour, modern women have the spunk to grasp the nettle, join such employment, continue to perform their professional assignments like their male co-workers and try to restrict their interaction with males to professional cooperation only. Of course, it is true that women prefer to hush up the experience of (sexual) harassment once they accidentally come across it, as it would attract further stigma, humiliation and even risks on the professional front. Yet their everyday strategy stays like this: draw a boundary line between personal and professional, ensure that co-workers respect this line and guard your personal space against their disguised demeanour.

Another dimension of male chauvinism is felt at the level of ‘acceptability”; that is, acceptability of women administrators. Usually men subordinates prefer not to work under a lady boss. This menace is especially wide spread in the domain of administration. Still they think that working under a lady boss is an insult to manhood. There is a brutal uneasiness among men to regard a lady as their officer/boss. Thus, they try their best not to get posted under her, or else, get transferred soon if posted by default. In short, total acceptability of a lady boss among male subordinates continues to be an eluding goal.

At the level of competency, women’s excellence educes little approbation from men. Although lady professionals cock a snook at patriarchy and bulldoze inhibiting constraints to pursue career, their competency in work domain evokes glacial response. The obscurantist prejudice of male superiority is yet to disappear. The seniors think she is not efficient. The colleague feels he is supercilious and the junior perceives it is
unbecoming of his masculine identity to serve under a lady superordinate. Across all professions, men think that they are more competent than their female counterparts. In other words, *at a perceptual level, competency stays a male term.*

As regards changes in women’s life-world, career has been something of a *curate’s egg:* a bundle of contradictions; both a boon and a bane. In short, it has cast both positive and negative repercussions. Let us postulate the positive side at first. To begin with, we live in an era where women in general and working women in particular are grappling with the questions of identity, competency, freedom and comparable worth. The apprehension that such *identity* will get garbled under the shadow of patriarchy does not appear apodictic. With women vindicating their *tour de force* in almost all spheres of public life, the much-vaunted metagrobolizing prejudices plaguing the *second sex* are rendered almost impotent. Hence at the outset, a career woman *manufactures an identity for herself, which is independent of her kinship. What she delivers in public work domain defines what she is.* Second, she acquires a reliable strength to bear the risks in personal life. One can afford to stay spinster/single throughout the life and live in a dignified way. Third, employment has led to a revolutionary shift in women’s marital prospects. Men slobber over working brides as they increasingly realize that double income helps a lot to lead a prosperous life and exhibit a conspicuous style of life. In fact, double income is one of the prime reasons why even in-laws prefer an employed bride. This signifies the kind of dignity that career women assume as a result of their employment. Fourth, there has been a tectonic shift in parents’ attitude towards daughter’s career. Every parent now has a career dream for his/her daughter. The growing ardour of parents to see their daughters as employed professionals comes as a whiff of fresh air in an ambience sullied by patriarchal prejudice that seeks to domesticize women. *Papas and mamas* and lately even mothers-in-laws have begun encouraging their daughter/daughters-in-laws to be a part of the public work domain. Reason? This is marked something as a status symbol. Fifth, women not only assume status but also an ever-expanding interactional circle.

On the pathological/abnormal side, employment implies a toiling life for working mothers. They toil singularly to combine employment with family and *carry both ends of the log.* Second, there are certain jobs that are stigmatized against women,
which have the potential to plunder women's matrimonial chances. Employment, *per se*, does not necessarily enhance women's marital prospects. A career ceases to be a boon in this respect if its societal image is anti-women or woman-unfriendly. This explains why a sizeable number of women in police and administration have remained estranged from matrimony. Third, the phenomena of male chauvinism, sexual harassment and anticipatory sexual behaviour have emerged as an upshot of men's intolerance as well as vulnerability, which a woman professional encounters in her professional pursuits. Fourth, although work sphere has been accommodative of both the sexes, a woman's performance gets little recognition from her male counterparts. This is not only frustrating but also agonizing in nature. But what is shocking to note is that such invisibility of recognition is common to almost all professions studied for the purpose. Moreover it is premature to conceive that the menace is confined to four professions only. Rather, it may be found in other domains of public sphere, as men are preponderant almost everywhere. For instance, if we trace back to the history of Nobel laureates in areas of science, we discover that even the agony of women scientists of the stature of Nobel laureates is not much different. When Dorothy Hodgkin won Nobel in chemistry in 1964 one newspaper greeted with the headline "Oxford housewife wins Nobel prize."¹

The intellectual sickness of patriarchal male chauvinists lies in the fact that they cannot extol a woman scientist's stunning triumph in unconditional terms: even if they appreciate her feat, it is expressed in a trivial and stigmatized way; that is, a housewife won a chemistry Nobel, as if a scientist could not or in other words, as if Dorothy Hodgkin was only a housewife and not a scientist. Similarly, there were many women who were egregiously denied the prize principally because they were women.² For instance, Jocelyn Bell Burnell, the Cambridge University astronomer who discovered pulsars, did not get a prize, although her supervisor, Anthony Hewish, received one in 1974 for recognizing the meaning of his assistant's work.³ Recognition of merit should be unbiasedly acknowledged. It should neither be hijacked in masculine terms nor be

---

² There are so many women who have been denied Nobel. Ideology of gender is omnipresent. Ibid., p.15
³ Ibid. P.15
ignored completely. It requires a perceptual shift in men’s thinking to acknowledge merit in candid terms, not in sexist stereotypes.

As regards the salary of employed women, it has little to do with the ideology of male breadwinner. Although women claim to have been trained in modern education and pursue career in rational calculative domains, yet their approach to the economic contribution that they make to their family is purely familial. As their revelations suggest, a good many among the women earners perceive themselves to be secondary earners in their family. Their income is perceived as a supplement to the husbands’. Even if they contribute to the family’s common financial pool, husband is always regarded as the financial guardian of the family. In other words, husband still remains the undisputed supreme financial boss, despite their being professionally qualified active earners. In short, breadwinner is a male term.

As has been cited earlier, today’s woman professional epitomizes a variant of traditional modernist, who is ambitious enough to emancipate from the bondage of patriarchy, pursue a career in public work domain, architect her own identity and at the same time remain unconditionally implanted in her mother-wife-homemaker role. Although career-family duo represents a continuum of commitments, she toils to multitask constantly – switch seamlessly between divergent responsibilities by changing her avatar from time to time.

As regards work-family conflict, the following propositions are forwarded on the basis of the empirical analysis, cited extensively in preceding chapters. To begin with, the degree of work-family conflict is to a great extent contingent upon the nature of one’s familial support, personal-informal rapport with co-workers at workplace, nature of the job and one’s own approach. Second, ‘familial support coupled with personal-informal rapport’ and ‘work-family conflict’ are inversely proportional to each other. Third, job flexibility plays an important role in lessening work-family conflict. The experience of academic women is a case in point. It has been observed that flexi-time work helps in reducing the contradiction and balancing work-family somewhat better. In other words, flexi-time-part-time character of the job and reduced work-family conflict are positively correlated. In short, college/university teaching jobs, part-
time jobs or jobs with flexi-timings are more suitable to Indian women, who are traditional modernists in their orientation.

Both family and profession represent woman’s traditional-affective attachment and rational-contractual-economic engagement respectively. While both are important priorities in her life, the former constitutes her central life interest. In other words, the traditional engagement takes precedence over the rational-economic ones. To put it differently, ascriptive loyalty supersedes achieved ones; kinship supersedes career. That is, attachment with the role of wife-mother-bahu trio remains the central life interest for women professionals in present times.

It is true that recognition is a mirage for career women at work place. It is also true that male hegemony is omnipresent in various garbs. But to presume that women act in accordance with the diktats of male co-workers is preposterous. It is far more preposterous to conclude that women’s presence makes no difference at workplace or in the culture of work, for this conclusion would prove to be a non sequitur. In fact, the insights obtained from the study of policewomen would strongly counter any such argument. We have painstakingly delineated how their style of handling of cases involving women victims is absolutely different from those earlier dealt with by policemen. Instead of filing the case and sending the culprit to court/jail, their approach in counseling, persuasive, meddling and mediating, corrective, rehabilitatory and reforming in nature. Similarly, cent percent of the lady doctors highlight the role of feminine effect in their everyday doctor-patient interaction and consequent medical practice. As they aver, a female being is traditionally taught to be soft as well as tolerant, patient, humble, to observe, to listen more and speak less. All such things become assets for a lady doctor while listening to patients and curing their sufferings.

Public work domain, which has so far been a male’s forte, is increasingly being constitutive of both the sexes with the gradual intervention of ambitious women. It is undergoing a tectonic metamorphosis as a result of women’s employment. Both the phenomenon of work and the workplace are increasingly getting de-segregated, feminized, de-masculinized, de-conventionalized and de-hegemonized. This is certainly
a marvelous trend in the trajectory of men’s reformation (in terms of ego and prejudice) and women’s empowerment.

A point that emanates from the study is quite unambiguous. That is, ‘work’ in public domain has almost nothing to with the specificity of one’s biology or sex. Our empirical observation vindicates the truism that work is an enterprise that can be pursued, performed, intervened and accomplished both by men and women alike. The feminist message for critics as well as cognoscenti is quite clear: that the so-called second sex stands second to none in its ability to perform, achieve, compete and excel in public domains of work. The inveterate shibboleth that women cannot work in public sphere stands absolutely scotched.

Family is not an exclusively woman’s sphere. She is no home minister to singularly bear its entire burden. In addition, her pursuit of a career is in line with familial interests to an enormous extent. Hence, she alone need not toil to take care of the entire housework and to dovetail housework with office work. Husbands need to realize their familial duty and come forward to share the familial burden of their female counterparts. Then only women can be in a better position to harmonize home and employment in a slightly easier way.

The revolutionary zeal of women to join public domain implies that the modern Indian woman has become liberated not just in attitude, but also in adventure, taste, outlook, aspiration and attainment. Everything has undergone a tremendous change keeping pace with the changing times. The contemporary Indian woman has become more professional, assertive, ambitious and adaptive and yet, is grounded in tradition. She is given to a hectic life style that demands her to juggle more chores than ever before. She represents two dominant avatars in one single life: she is an adaptive careerist and a caring homemaker. Even men have accepted this change in their wives, sisters or daughters. Somewhere down the line they also contribute to the speedy metamorphosis.
Suggestions

On the basis of the present study of ‘women and work’ from the perspectives of gender and sociology, the following suggestions are prescribed by the researcher which ought to be sincerely taken into consideration both empathetically and humanly.

- As co-existence of both men and women at workplace is almost going to be an irreversible reality for generations to come, gender sensitization in every profession is urgent and necessary for men and women separately as well as in groups.

- It is not enough that each workplace has a full-fledged ‘sexual harassment complaints committee’, what is more important than this is that the members who constitute the workplace significantly feel its power, presence and effect.

- As the number of reporting of cases of sexual harassment is abysmally low, the employer (or the head) of the workplace should empathetically win the trust of women officials and encourage them to fearlessly lodge complaints with the ‘committee’ in case of harassment. The onus should lie solely on the employer to ensure the creation of an ambience wherein women can repose faith in the committee and in its unbiased instant justice delivery mechanism. It should also be obligatory on the part of the Departments of Women and Child Welfare/Social Justice and Empowerment, both of the Union and the State governments, to keep frequent surveillance on the existence and functioning of the committees at various work organizations.

- It is observed that the presence of the National Commission for Women is felt only when a case of ‘violence against woman’ elevates to national media. And we all know, the percentage of such elevated cases out of the total occurred cases is absolutely negligible. Thus, women’s commissions both at the state and national levels must pay attention to the menace of harassment at workplace.

- At the level of policy, women commissions should be directly made accessible to the victim of harassment. That is, the complaints committee at the workplace should not be projected as the only mega resort for seeking shelter/justice.
Conclusion and Suggestion

Along with it, provisions should also be revised in order to allow victims to lodge complaints directly with the respective state unit of women's commission or with the commission at the national level. The intent behind such suggestion is two-fold. One, woman at workplace gets another powerful option to lodge complaints. On the other hand, state-level units of women's Commissions feel more accountable to the issue of sexual harassment. Two, the very phrase 'women's commission' may act as fear psychosis in men's psyche and prove to be a deterrent. While encouraging women to take shelter of women's commissions when violated, precaution should also be there to ensure that the facility is not misused to settle personal scores.

- It is discovered that the presence of tiny tots in family renders woman's balancing act cumbersome. As a matter of policy, provision should be made for two kinds of reforms. One, the duration of maternity relief should be doubly expanded. Two, there has to be a provision of flexi-time work schedule (whose per day work duration should not exceed 2 hours) for working mothers for two years after delivery with effect from the termination of maternity leave. Of course, such provision of flexi-time work should be extended at best twice in a woman's career; that is; up to two deliveries. It goes without saying, such provisions should be equally applied in all professions.

- Women administrators should not be arbitrarily/frequently assigned tours or placement that necessitate longer commuting. Such assignments should be sparingly made.

- As regards police reforms, three things must be taken care of. One, the mahila prefix associated with the designation 'mahila police' should be immediately deleted. Two, the menace of ascriptive inequality prevalent in the department, which is explicit in matters of posting of WSIs, should be addressed forthrightly. WSIs should also be posted as heads of general police stations. Three, there should be a provision for at least one or more than one lady cop to accompany a WSI (or her subordinate policewoman) when she is assigned night duty in police station. This will discourage personnel from the opposite sex to take advantage
of her loneliness, make unwelcome requests or get closer on some pretext or other taking advantage of night.

- There is overall disappointment among academic women for their invisibility in educational administration. True, their disappointment is not unfounded. Provision must be made in such a manner that it ensures the representation of women in various spheres of educational administration and at all levels of policy-making bodies/committees.

- Provision of support facilities like child care centres in the premises of workplace or close by, commuting service, residence especially for single women should also be sincerely cogitated. The idea is to encourage women to join workplace, take care of their dignity, safeguard their interests, make policies gender-sensitive and turn the workplace female-friendly.

Need for an Innovative Sociology of Work

As a part of its contribution to the sociology of knowledge at an epistemological level, the thesis notches three feats. One, It reconfirms some of the established findings expounded by various scholars/studies. Two, it refutes some of the settled viewpoints put forward by different studies/scholars. Three and most importantly, this thesis proffers a plethora of ‘new propositions’ – theory-based as well as fieldwork-based – that are unique to this study. And such new propositions not only enrich the discourse of sociology of work, but also they provide new directions to our understanding of the enterprise called work.

At an empirical level, we observe that the public work domain no more follows a male-script. Women are no more scared of being labeled as masculine women, casual professionals, non-serious workers and salary-minded employees by their male co-workers. Their initiative to be employed women symbolizes trying out something new and being adventurous. Competitive achievement motivation is equally high in their imagination. Women are manifesting their penchant for independent identity/salaried job not just in metros and big cities, but also in small towns and villages. They are letting their imagination rule thin real life-world. On the contrary, it would be wrong to infer that only the women have changed with time and are contributing to the
Conclusion and Suggestion

metamorphosis in public work domain. As the public work sphere itself is increasingly becoming constitutive of both the sexes, the 'reciprocal' role of men in the process of such metamorphosis can never be undermined. Men, too, have started showing signs of flexibility, tolerance, openness and adaptability. The public work domain itself is getting de-hegemonized, de-masculinized, integrated and accommodative. The very initiative of a woman professional to be an adaptive workingwoman and a caring homemaker is symbolic of her attempt to dissolve the symbolic 'hyphen' that lies between the public and the private domains of work. Moreover, we have also examined the far-reaching implications of women's employment on the various aspects, i.e., on the institutions of family, marriage, women's identity, their constraints and challenges. Work is not merely confined to paid market economy. Rather, it denotes multiple connotations: an activity; a space for competition and excellence; a source of identity, power, prestige, privilege and happiness; a medium of self-expression. It is quantitative as well as qualitative; measurable and non-measurable; gender-neutral and sex-delinked. Our study of women professionals reveals that the effect of work as a pursuit is not restricted to the domain of work only. Rather it impinges upon various aspects of individual and social life. Hence, it is sociologically important to conceptualize the reality.

Therefore, the task before sociology is manifold. It needs to speak the language of work in order to understand work. It needs to seriously engage itself in the domain of work for a thorough comprehension of its diverse facets. In its attempt to 'discover' and 'delineate' the phenomenon of work, sociology must take the issues like private, public and gender into serious consideration. The present study signals just an initiation into such world of discovery and delineation. It represents a modest endeavour to systematically construct a discourse on 'sociology of work' based on rich theoretical and empirical observations. Within its limitations, it has tried to examine four sites of work (namely, academics, medicine, police and administration) from the perspectives of women's studies and sociology. Although it has attempted to organize certain theoretical assumptions gleaned from sociology and feminist readings and proffer a series of postulates based on its own empirical findings, the present thesis marks just an academic endeavour to initiate a systematic dialogue on work among social scientists.
Conclusion and Suggestion

With its conceptual framework, analytical novelty and insightful findings, the thesis creates and heralds a new beginning in the domain of sociology of work in India. It symbolizes an invitation to Indian sociologists to passionately construct ‘sociology of work’ as a formal/systematic branch of the larger discourse called sociology – the Queen of all sciences. At a time when the very domain of work is undergoing a ‘revolutionary’ shift and at a time when the very intervention of women in public work sphere has started bringing “alterations” in ‘work’ and other aspects of social reality, the present thesis urges (Indian) sociologists to evolve innovative vocabulary to comprehend such alterations and revolutions. The domain of work is in a state of perpetual change. Sociologists need to innovate their approach and equip themselves with new sensibility to understand, delineate and redefine the phenomenon called work and renew its discourse from time to time. This thesis is just an organized beginning in this direction. A plethora of literature ought to be written, a great deal of work needs to be accomplished, a systematic debate should be carried on and a persistent enquiry/research needs to be undertaken in the ambit of ‘sociology of work’. The discourse of work is really in its nascent stage. Its ascent to the mainstream of current sociological discourse is solely contingent upon our creative sociological imagination – an imagination that persistently seeks to enquire, question, innovate, define, redefine, rewrite, enrich, renew, construct, deconstruct and reconstruct. We need perpetual reflexivity, contemplation, research and rethinking in order to evolve and augment the field of sociology of work. And this thesis is just a humble intervention and initiation in this rethinking and redefining endeavour. It is through constant research that the discourse of work will renew and enrich itself. Of course at a later juncture of his intellectual trajectory, the researcher will contribute to its enrichment and renewal.