CHAPTER VI

Familial and Extra-Familial Role of Women

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6.1 INTRODUCTION:

With Scientific development rationalisation in thinking and pace of modernisation and globalisation in present society, a perceptible change in the roles of the men and women is a very obvious and significant factor. The change in the role of the women in particular, is one of the most important striking factors of today’s society. As such the role of women and its changing dynamics in the world have attracted the attention of the social scientists, for a deeper probe to reveal and unfold the magnitude of such change and its concomitant effects on the social fabric.

Women are no longer the dependent and subordinate individuals that they were before. The treatment of women as individuals in their own right has changed the role of the women. Women’s role since centuries has been bound by more of duties and obligations, and minimal rights. This probably was because of the lack of economic independence given to her. But with the increasing demand for woman’s involvement in economic activities, and the resultant involvement in numerous social activities, women have become more vocal in demanding greater rights. It is not the women alone who are demanding greater rights, even the sensitized women have been helping the women to get their due in the society.

The change in the attitude of the individuals has added a new lease of life to the changing role of women. The review of literature of previous works reveal that women as individuals had one fundamental role i.e., to play the role of a homemaker. Since childhood she is socialised to play this role and maintain a subordinate view of herself in comparison to the male.

Further, since centuries she has been considered to be physically weak and hence, incapable of contributing to the economic activities in
the family. In her position as a weaker sex, she was treated as dependent, or as a burden on the male members of the family from childhood upto old age.

The traditional role of the woman was confined to the four walls of the house. *Being born a girl, made it and still continues to make it mandatory for her to do all the household activities, while the male members in the family are meant to be the bread winners.*

The views given in earlier paragraphs is a very simple and brief outline of the role of the women since ages. With this role continuing to remain as it is, the women have become the co-players of another role along with their male counterparts, with her involvement in economic activities. She no longer, is not only involved in looking after the familial responsibilities at home, but also has to fulfil her responsibilities beyond the four walls. *'Her duties, responsibilities and expectations at her place of work have brought out a new role for women, which may be treated as her extra-familial roles.'*

The *familial role* of the woman is a combination of various roles, which includes the *role of a daughter, wife, mother, sister etc.* These roles carry with them certain responsibilities which are binding on her. On the other hand, there is the *extra-familial role* of the woman due to her involvement in socioeconomic and cultural activities beyond the house. It includes the *role of an employee or employer, colleague, friend, feminist, social activist, cultural ambassador etc.* The familial and extra-familial roles of the women are the dual roles of most, if not all, of the women in today’s society.

The modern, materialistic society, which has given as well as requires women’s economic independence, has changed the position of woman. The
involvement of women in economic activities is more noticed among the *middle class*. A general understanding of the term middle class would mean those individuals or members of the society who are neither too poor that they have to struggle to meet their basic requirements nor are they too rich to be leading a life of luxury.

In the middle class, the members try to maintain a standard of living so that they do not slip into poverty. In their effort to maintain a proper standard of living, one would find both the male and female members of the family are involved in economic activities separately. This would give them an income to meet the demands of the various members of the family on the one hand, and to invest their surplus income in activities that would help them maintain their present standard of living on the other. It is in such a situation that the extra-familial role of the woman becomes very important.

The middle class woman, particularly in the Indian context, has been experiencing significant changes in her role due to the changing social context. At home, though she has to play the role of performing all the household duties, her burden has been reduced due to mechanisation of various household activities i.e., with the introduction of grinder, mixer, refrigerator etc. This has led to greater free time for women which in fact, has given women a chance as well as reason to be involved in some kind of extra socio-economic activity.

With the change in the attitude of the people, most of the women are educated. They prefer to make use of their educational qualification by taking up some jobs. Her position as a housewife, a mother, a manager of all the household activities in the family and on the other hand as an employer or employee, executive or subordinate at the work place create
a multiplicity of roles for a woman at familial ad extra-familial level. Due to the importance of both the roles, one may observe various impacts of the familial and extra familial roles of the women, on each other.

The familial role of the unmarried, employed woman is less complicated than that of the married employed woman. Further, one may also deduce that the familial role of the childless married employed woman is comparatively less complicated than that of the married employed woman with children. This variation in the responsibilities in the familial roles of the employed woman is likely to have a significant and varied impact on their extra-familial roles. In the familial role, a married woman has to look after the requirements of all the members. It is usually the mother who has to feed the children and prepare them for school on the one hand, and at the same time has to fulfill the requirements of her husband as a wife. She has to also cater to the demands of her in-laws invariably. Her position as an employed mother does not bring about any change in the responsibilities and expectations of her familial role.

An employed mother is no longer a mother in the traditional sense. She does not carry the single responsibility of simply nurturing her children at home. As an earning member, she has got the capacity to meet some of the financial demands of her children. Her status as an employed one has given her the advantage of having a voice in all the affairs of the family including decision making.

A woman with a full-time job is an active person. She has to meet the demands of her familial role most satisfactorily and at the same time, meet the demands of her job. Juggling with these two outstanding roles is not an easy task. Both the roles are very demanding. As such, neglecting one role for the sake of the other would only lead to stress and strain for the employed woman.
Even an unmarried employed woman has numerous responsibilities at home. In that sense, even she cannot escape the clash between her familial and extra-familial role. In case the unmarried employed woman is the eldest member in her family, it becomes her responsibility to meet the requirements of the rest of the family members. *Meeting the economic or financial requirements of the family does not give the employed woman any excuse to avoid her familial role.* This situation is a peculiar phenomenon for the employed woman while an employed male member in the family spends his time after his working hours as a time of leisure. He does not have to bother himself for preparing food, nor for cleaning the clothes, decorating the house, washing utensils etc. It is in the context of such a situation that one becomes aware of the dual roles of an employed woman.

The economic independence of the woman has increased the responsibilities in her familial role. While in her traditional familial role the women were not having the responsibility nor much right to handle external household affairs today, being employed has enlarged her responsibilities. She has got decision making power in investment, budget and other family matters that would require her active involvement.

The fact that women are today more involved in external household responsibilities should not give a negative view regarding the traditional familial role of the women. Since ages, the importance of her views in familial matters cannot be denied. Due to women's experience in dealing with the various members in the family, and her understanding of their nature has given her the position of an effective advisor and guide though this position lacked authority and power to implement her views. The change that one can notice is that, the women of today have the power to implement
their views. This power no doubt emanates from her position as an active participant in family matters.

The woman is not only a decision maker within the family but also in activities outside it. Her views are given as much importance as that of her male counterparts in the socio-economic and cultural spheres. Especially in the economic sphere, where women are either engaged in some form of economic activity or are at least the budget-makers in the family, their views and decisions are respected and accepted unlike in the traditional period, when their views though respected was not necessarily accepted.

In her place of employment she is being accepted as a person with intelligence. Women have also become more assertive. Active participation of women in various spheres has given them a confidence, that has totally changed their personality. The personality of the confident women is one of accepting challenges and giving their views and decisions, a substantial amount of weight, as such making it impossible to underestimate or even undermine their decisions.

The employed women in particular have gained greater control over their economic status. Their control over and access to their income, savings and credit has improved. Her role as an employee or employer, colleague or friend, subordinate or manager, self-employed or professional, social activist or cultural ambassador has given her a freedom of movement and interaction with her fellow human beings, which she could never have otherwise dreamt of. One must not be misled into believing that this freedom of movement and interaction is absolute. One may not forget that whatever may be the freedoms given by the society, there are some limitations that continue to bind the women to the traditional values.
and norms of the society. An employed woman would find it difficult to interact with her colleagues at her place of employment without some hesitation. Such limitations give various dimensions to her role.

The independence, confidence and decision making characteristics which becomes a part of an outgoing, economically active woman has a profound impact on her familial role. In her familial role, the qualities she gains because of the sense of confidence is carried over. She remains no longer submissive and dependent. She can handle the affairs of the family, as any male member during any crisis.

Thus, one may conclude that the role of the woman has become very broad. It would be an interesting task to bring out the varied dimensions of the role of women, especially the employed women. The employed women being subject to the impact of handling the traditional female role on the one hand as well as their role as an earning member project themselves as interesting subjects of study.

6.2 FACETS OF ROLE - AN INTRODUCTION:

The employed middle class women are bound by familial responsibilities inspite of being engaged in economic activities. Their chance for engagement in economic activities is dependent usually on familial values. As this particular study has been done in an *urban setting*, one, would, no doubt, expect to come across an open society where there is not only occupational mobility but also mobility in women’s social life. And, of course, the researcher has not been disappointed.

6.3 DIMENSIONS OF DAUGHTER’S ROLE:

An enquiry into the role of the employed women in this research setting, brought out the distinctiveness in the variety of roles that these women had to reciprocate to.
As daughters, there has been a tremendous change in their role. The traditional role of the daughter as a subdued, obedient, selfless, dependent and forever a burden on the parents till they are married off has changed. As a reverse trend, the contemporary woman is now self assertive, independent, authoritative and competitive.

The earning daughters have been noticed to be highly westernized and modernised in their outlook. They prefer to choose their dresses and personal attires according to the prevailing trends. Parental discretion and pressures on fashionable items is usually given a blind eye. The table given below is an indication of the growing self assertiveness of today's women, especially the unmarried daughters.

Table No : 6.1
Selection of Personal Attires

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Selection</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>76.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table no : 6.1 indicates that from the total number of unmarried respondents 76.47% of them, choose their dresses personally. Parental pressures to stick to traditional dresses are not being accepted by these contemporary women. This situation can be attributed to their economic independence. Their role is now being shaped by opinions which develop due to their educational exposure and impact of media. Most of the respondents were educationally highly qualified than their parents. This made them feel that their parents were unable to keep up with their modern outlook and life-style resulting in conflict between the parents and the economically strong modern women. Role conflict ensued due to
respondents' inability to make their parents or family members accept their visibly independent role in almost every sphere of their lives.

Two interesting case studies highlighting the growing individualism of the women's role, especially among the unmarried women is being presented here:

Rajashree, a twenty seven year old computer science lecturer in a college prefers to handle all her affairs, ranging from dressing to choice of life-partner on her own terms. She did say that "my parents do not like my life-style and my freeness in mixing with male colleagues and friends. They even find my dressing sense, especially my wearing of jeans and small tops distasteful. But I personally feel that, if I do not maintain a lifestyle according to the prevailing trend, my chances of success in the presently competitive labour market is reduced." A very important point that the researcher observed in this interview is that the respondent was able to justify her independent role and her reduced interest in pleasing her parents on the ground that a carefree life-style was a requirement for personal development.

Similarly there is one Swata Mishra, who lives in a hostel in Bhubaneswar. The data gathered in her interview revealed that her parents had given her complete freedom in deciding everything for her life. She was doing a job of her own choice and lives her life on her own terms. The significant observation in this case is that the parents themselves wanted that their daughter should be an extrovert, outgoing and smart. So that she can manage her life without being dependent on others.

Unmarried respondents' view on choice of marriage partner can be pointed out as a growing role reversal due to changing values of the society. The values of the society are no doubt changing due to increased
materialism and also materialistic values. In the case of who has the first priority in choosing one's life-partner, the table no: 6.2 is very bold and clear.

Table No: 6.2

Selection of Marriage Partner (Unmarried respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of Selection</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents &amp; Self</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>31.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>68.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the above table that the unmarried respondents wanted complete freedom in choosing their life partner. In fact, there were even a few women, who felt that being economically secure, they do not want to enter into a marriage. *Marriage, according to these highly egoistic and ambitious women, is a liability in their career development.* Further, 68.23% of the respondents preferring to choose their life partner based on their terms and conditions is a sign of growing female individualism.

It would be wrong to presume that, the daughter's role ends once she is married. It has been sighted that, even after marriage, the daughters have tried to maintain relations with their parents not only at a social and cultural level but also at financial levels. The economically secure, married daughters stated that they were able to give some amount of financial support to their parents without having to depend on their husband. Though, such cases were not too numerous, but then these cases are an eye opener. For now the daughter's role does not end with her marriage. She has gained the position of an individual with an opinion and mind of her own.
Career Orientation has become a part of the educated and unmarried women’s role. Due to increased educational chances these enlightened individuals do not want to while away their education. Economic independence is another attraction for these women to be career oriented. In fact, in the Indian society there is a generally held view that daughters are a burden on their parents and family members. Now a days, parents want their daughters to do jobs or atleast be well qualified to take up a job in the future. This view has been growing in the general mind set, because the parents do not want their daughters to become a burden on them neither before their marriage nor after.

6.4 CONTOURS OF THE WIFE’S ROLE:

Marriage for women creates new roles. She is now not only the daughter of her parents, but also a wife, a sister-in-law, a daughter-in-law, an aunt and a mother (when the situation arises). In one word she is a housewife. She is the one given the responsibility to care for everyone and everything at home. It doesn’t make any difference whether she is employed or unemployed, as her role after marriage is varied, due to the numerous relationships that exist and develop thereafter.

The wife’s role is a dynamic one. She is in charge of the management of the home. In a nuclear family women as wife’s have to meet the demands and stereotyped duties for their husband. Similarly, the joint family have some additional duties and responsibilities that need to be satisfied by the wives in addition to caring for their husbands. Though the wife’s role has hardly changed, the inventions of new home appliances and growing modernisation have changed her life style and role management within the family.

Women are now required to be more up-to-date with the latest
equipments and materials required for various activities that they have to perform at home. This enables the employed wives to meet the demands of their familial roles satisfactorily and at the same time reduce the time they have to spend in meeting the family roles. As such home management for the employed wives require a scientific attitude. In addition to this, a positive change in the attitude of the family members and the husband can go a long way in putting a check on the role-conflicts that develop in the life of the employed wives.

In this context, the researcher's conclusions on the assistance the respondents received in conducting their household activities are indicative of the changed attitude of the family members towards the employed women. A considerably large number of highly educated wives in the study said that their husbands were very helpful in managing household activities. Not only the husband but also in-laws and in some cases grown up children gave their mothers considerable relief in managing household duties. It was also observed that the married women who were less educated and were earning a comparatively lower income, the assistance from husband and other family members was lower. This observation brought out the three layers of relationship between education, income and assistance in household activities, especially for the married women. In this context the case of Sushama a middle aged, low income employee in a library is worth noting.

Sushama, 39, feels a sense of regret at having been unable to get a higher education. She said “Were I more highly educated I would have got a job with a much better salary. Under such a circumstance my position at home would have been something very different. For then, I am sure my in-laws and husband would not say that my salary was too meagre, to be made an effort for.” During the interview Sushama became emotional and
said “Though I am a working woman, at home I have to do all the activities with very minimal assistance from my family.”

Though not all, but then a comparatively larger number of married women earning a higher income due to their better education expressed a more positive attitude towards their family members.

There is a noticeable change in the attitude of the husbands towards their employed wives. Some of the wives accepted that their husbands were ready to help them. There is an instance in which an officer working in the RBI, one Mrs. Sahoo who earns a salary higher than her husband said that “My husband has learnt to accept the fact that I too am an individual who has achieved a position in the society just as he has.” Mrs. Sahoo pointed out that though during her younger days her husband had been less helpful, now a days he has become more acceptable to her employed status and is more supportive. She said that he doesn’t mind giving a helping hand in doing household chores. This change, Mrs. Sahoo attributes to the influence of the views of her son’s and daughter’s on her husband. According to her “todays children hold the view that a family cannot run smoothly without the cooperation and economic involvement of both husband and wife.”

Just as it is difficult to say whether the chicken came first or the egg, it is equally confusing to say whether changing views and opinions are causing change in women’s roles or rather the changing role of women, are causing a change in societal views.

The role of the employed wife within the family are numerous. She has to care for all the requirements of her husband, children and other family members. Her role extends from caring of family members to caring of the house, its cleaning and decoration. Keeping family commitments,
caring for the aged at home, nursing the ill, meal planning, cooking, serving, budgeting, shopping and other miscellaneous activities are part of a wife's role.

The present study is indicative of the growing role-sharing between husband and wife so that the employed wives are less burdened at home. In fact, the researcher observed that the respondent's inability to give full time in family care due to her job, made it inevitable for the husband or other family members to help, share or give her relief from the roles and duties that they have always considered to be solely hers.

The following table is indicative of the changing trend in familial role of married women. Cooking is one area that the Indian women have accepted as a task that forms a major role in the house. Especially for the married women, cooking for all the members of the family accordingly to their taste, requirement and health forms a major part of their household duties.

Table No : 6.3

Assistance in Cooking (Married Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance from</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>18.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-laws</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nobody</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>42.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A quick glance of Table no: 6.3 could raise a question in the mind of the reader, as to what is new in this finding, when 42.42% of the married employed women attended to their cooking activities with very minimal help. A closer observation would bring to light the researcher's point of view. 57.58% of the respondents indicated that their involvement in economic activities had created a situation in which other members of the family had to assist or rather participate effectively in cooking activities.

Such assistance, was observed to be the result of lack of time that the employed women had to face in doing the household cooking. In the cases where husbands helped their wives, the tensions from role conflict were considerably lower. Moreover, such a change on the part of husbands has been deciphered as a behavioural change resulting from widening of the women's roles. In fact, the researcher would like to point out to a future topic of study hidden in this behavioural change. While on the one hand the women are taking up roles beyond the four walls of the house, the husbands are gaining new roles within the four walls. This situation is likely to bring about greater gender equality in the society in the near future.

Household activities involve financial management which is very essential for maintaining a good standard of living. Control of the family assets, budget and keeping track of bills has been an area traditionally dominated by the men. In the joint family, it is the head of the family who looks into these matters. With joint families being mainly patriarchal, it is the male members who control the family finance. But with changing times, where both men and women are contributing to the family assets, some changes were noticed in the way the financial management is being done is today's joint families. The nuclear families had a different lifestyle. As this type of family runs on the initiative of the male earning member in some cases, and in some case on the initiative of both the earning
couples, their financial management differed from that of the joint families.

Table No : 6.4

Family Structure and Control of Financial Matters (Married Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of Family</th>
<th>Control under</th>
<th>Areas of Control</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Family Assets</td>
<td>Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint Family</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>2 (1.51%)</td>
<td>2 (1.51%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>10 (7.57%)</td>
<td>13 (9.84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>2 (1.57)</td>
<td>4 (3.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Any other</td>
<td>15 (11.38%)</td>
<td>10 (7.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Family</td>
<td>Self</td>
<td>12 (9.09)</td>
<td>52 (39.39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>59 (44.69%)</td>
<td>10 (7.57%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>32 (24.25%)</td>
<td>41 (31.08%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Anyother</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Money affairs and the management of them is an area that makes a middle class family a middle class one. It is in this class, that money matters are controlled and outsourced in such a manner that all the basic requirements of all the family members are met comfortably. The materialistic middle class of the present society requires the participation of both the husband and wife in the economic affairs, to maintain a middle class standard of living. It is in the light of this setting that, the researcher probed the areas of money matters. The participation of the economically
independent women in this matter, revealed some socio-economic changes that attracted the attention of the researcher.

As per the Table no : 6.4, of the 132 married respondents, maximum number of women got the chance to be fully/solely involved in making the family budget. The least chance for sole female control was in the area of controlling of the family assets. A most common reply, for the respondents' involvement in budgeting was that they were considered to know better about the requirements at home. Hence, they were automatically engaged in not only preparing the family budget, but also making the necessary savings.

In relation to preparing the family budget, Mrs. Shanta Rao, a teacher, in a government school, said, that "Women are considered not only capable of earning a living, but also they are considered to be more sincere and capable of handling the family matters most efficiently without being wasteful." This reply has acted as a gist for the researcher that answers the question of why there is a growing female role in the family economy. This finding is a rather recent development as per the researchers study. Earlier, the society or rather the family was not only male dominated in handling of the family assets but also in the matter of running the family budget.

It is the entry of women in employment, which has widened her role in the family economy. The difference in the family structure showed a rather huge variation in the economic roles of the employed women. Being a member of the joint family seemed to reduce the independence as well as responsibility of the women. The respondents who were members of the joint family were least involved in the money matters of the family. It was only in a few exceptional cases that the women were solely engaged in the family economics.
The Nuclear Family is a consequence of the growing urbanisation. In fact, female employment can be seen as a requirement of the nuclear family. As the survival and success of this family depends on the greater economic involvement of the female members, hence it tends to give more independence and responsibilities to the women. As such the economic role of the employed women in family matters is more prominent in the nuclear family.

In most joint families the economic matters were mainly taken care of by the husbands or some other senior head of the family. There were few instances of husband-wife cooperation in handling of the money matters.

At the same time, there is the nuclear family which has given women independence not only to develop as an individual but also the freedom to handle the family and make it economically strong. The nuclear family has encouraged the combined participation of the employed couples in handling their money matters. From this study, it was found that 122 respondents from nuclear families claimed their family was grounded on husband-wife cooperation.

Even in the matter of keeping track of bills, there were a considerably large number of women managing the matter single handedly, there were an even larger number i.e. 37.12% of them, who were sharing this role with their husbands. Single handedly or with cooperation of the husband, the researchers interpretation of the facts, pointed towards greater role sharing between couples as well as widening of the roles of women in familial matters.

Women having control over the family assets were very few, especially in the joint family. Even in the nuclear family, the family assets
were mainly controlled by the husbands. This is probably because women rarely get any share in the family property. But this situation is no doubt changing. As in the case of Minati Das a government servant, who said “I was given some dowry during my marriage, but after that I have not been given any property by my parents. All my parental property will go to my brothers.” She said this, inspite of the fact that she was aware, that the law entitled her to receive a share in the family property. But then Minati felt that her relationship with her brothers would become bad if she asked for her share from the property. As such she had bought some land in her name by investing the savings from her salary. This has been the situation of some of the other women too. There were still others who had the courage to demand for their rights in the family property.

No doubt, the scenario is changing, as most of the respondents put forth the view that their daughters should not face the same situation as theirs. They asserted that they would see to it that their daughters got a share in the family property so that they could have a more secure life.

Women's role in the family is greatly influenced by the amount of time they spend in doing household chores. Household chores not only included cooking, but it also includes cleaning, washing, decorating and doing small activities like shopping for vegetables etc. It is usually the wife who has to handle these activities. Other members of the family participate in these activities, when they feel like or when it is inevitable. Hence a wife's involvement in household chores consumes a lot of time. In fact, quite a large number of respondents claimed that they had to spend more then 6 hours i.e. about seven hours or more, in managing household activities every day.

An interesting finding in this area was made, by drawing a comparison
between the income level of the respondents and the time spent in managing their home. Irrespective of the marital status of the respondents it was found that lower the income, greater was the time spent in managing the house. The following, table no : 6.5 is meant to represent the above said comparison specifically among the married women only.

**Table No : 6.5**

**Income level and Time Spent in Managing Home (Married Respondents)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income level</th>
<th>Time Spent in Managing Home (in hrs.)</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 - 2</td>
<td>2 - 4</td>
<td>4 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An analysis of Table no: 6.5 indicates that lower is the income greater is the time spent on household chores. It is worth noting that, of the three very highly paid respondents, two of them said that they had to spend a lot of time managing household chores. This is a very peculiar situation because, individuals with a high income can afford to maintain a servant who can reduce their burden of doing household chores. At such a stage the case of Mrs. Patro, a doctor, is worth noting. Being a doctor, she earns a substantially good amount of money. She has two grown up sons. She has a private clinic near her house. But then she has to attend to patients even at home almost always. But this doesn't mean that she neglects her household duties. Though she has a female servant at home to help her
out, yet Mrs. Patro finds it difficult to rely completely on her maid servant. She said, “though I may not be doing all the household works personally, yet my constant supervision and vigil is very essential. I have to see to it that all the house work has been done properly and everything required for the house has been brought. This, in a way, takes up a lot of time.”

The quality time spent in managing household activities had a different meaning for the low income earning women. While some of the employed women with higher income had to spend above 6 hours in home management, the stress and burden of it for them was lesser, than for the low income earning women.

A lower income meant lesser chance to spend lavishly on maintaining a fulltime maid servant. That the respondents income was low doesn’t mean that the family income was also low. Most of the lower income earning women did not consider it feasible to maintain a help for doing all their household chores. Dishwashing and cloth washing were areas in which these respondents sought help from servants. A few respondents considered it a wastage of money to keep a maid. They felt that it reduced the amount of money that they could have otherwise saved for the future. As such most of the respondents toiled hard on their own to do the household chores. This has been responsible for a lot of stress and role tensions for these women. They try their best, to do all the household activities like any other full time housewife and at the same time try to be punctual and efficient at their respective jobs and its requirements. This is when role conflicts become inevitable.

On the whole, it was found that irrespective of the income levels, maximum number of women were spending more than 6 hrs in caring for their family matters. But at the same time there is a growing number of
women i.e. about 37.87% women who are spending less than 6 hrs in managing the family. This is thanks to their job and at the same time substantial and inevitable help from the rest of the family.

The role of a supervisor and manager of family matters are the traditional roles of a wife. But, by taking up the role of a provider, these traditional roles of the women are undergoing a speedy change. Employed women are sharing an almost equal status with their male counterparts at home. The detailed and careful investigation of the respondents daily activities indicates a change in the mentality of the employed married women. These women in particular have been trying to change the mind set of the family members, whether it be a joint family or nuclear family. They no longer allow themselves to be taken-for-granted. Their inability to spare sufficient time in performing their stereotyped roles in the family has made them create a situation where, their family roles are shared by their male counterparts or other family members. In cases, where such understanding and help was not forthcoming, role conflicts and tensions prevailed. The respondents who were facing such a situation, hoped that there would be change in the long run, when their counterparts would realise that, the harmony of the family depended greatly on reduced role conflicts faced by the dual-roled women.

6.5 **ASPECTS OF THE MOTHER’S ROLE:**

In her role as the head of the household, the modern day employed mother has to adjust her functions at home with that of her job like a juggler. Just as a juggler manages to keep several objects simultaneously in the air by skillfully throwing and catching, similarly a mother does the same things with her functions at home. Time adjustment is the primary activity of any mother. When it is an employed mother we are talking about, then, this
activity becomes even more crucial.

Other than carrying out the roles of a wife, a woman as a mother, has to give complete and devoted care to her children. Even if, a woman is a divorcee, a widow or a single mother, which no doubt exempts her from carrying out some of the specific roles of a wife, as a mother she is responsible for the development and socialisation of her child or children. Negligence of the needs and duties towards her children by a mother can cause a lot of tension to her, and it may significantly affect a child’s socialisation and development.

Some of the interesting discussions that the researcher had were with women who were mothers. Mothers gave first priority to their children above anyother person or work. Their activities, whether it was their work at home or at their job, everything was guided by the sole thought of how it would benefit or effect their child or children. Simple household chores were areas which the mothers were ready to neglect for spending time with their children. In a few cases, it was found that they preferred to take advantage of commercial services relating to the household, so that they could spend more time with their children. In a way, the researcher got the feeling, that these employed mothers had to make an extra-effort to look after their children.

The researcher has used the term “extra-effort” because, the employed mothers always showed signs of having a feeling of guilt at the back of their minds regarding their children, when the question of neglecting the family due to job came up.

Though the urban employed mother would like to have a reduced role in child care due to her lack of sufficient time, yet, it is she who has to always stay back or take time out regarding the matters of the child or
children. The findings in this study point out to some ambiguities that exist in family role-sharing. While quite a few respondents have given positive responses regarding their husbands sharing their familial roles, at the same time, these same women said that in case their child fell ill, it was they, who took a break from their jobs and not their husbands. These women justified their action on the ground that they as mothers could take better care of the child's needs than the father; moreover, this activity has always been treated as a part of the mother's role and duty. For the researcher, this finding seemed to hint towards lesser value being given to woman's employment, and their status.

**Pranati Das**, in her early 40's is a state government employee. Though she earns a good salary, highly educated and placed in a high position, she said, “When I return home from work, my husband waits for me to prepare a cup of tea for him. Though I am as tired as he is after eight hours of work, yet at home, cooking, feeding and caring seems to be my sole responsibility. On a few occasions whenever I have told my husband to prepare tea for both of us after returning home, he has obliged, but then, I have never felt he is sharing my familial role, rather he has done the work out of pity for me.” She even went on to say, “Whenever our kids fall ill I take leave from my work and stay back, never has it ever occurred that my husband felt it necessary to look after the kids and take a leave. In fact, even if I have had some urgent work in my office, I have never found my husband obliging me in this matter. The only remedy I have got under such circumstances is to get the help of my parents or some other close relative to come over and stay with us, until I could take a leave.”

Though the researcher has not yet gone too far in her examination of the available data, there seems to be a number of instances unveiling before the researcher, that would prove to provide a fertile ground for the
growing role conflict among employed women.

A study on the familial role of the employed mother would remain incomplete, if we do not take into account the roles of mothers who are divorced, widowed or single.

Being employed is life saving and a matter of security for the women of the above given categories. Seeing employment as simply a means of economic security would be wrong. As it is the growing independence and desire to be self-reliant that are drawing these women towards seeking employment. Urbanisation has encouraged nuclear families in growing numbers. Instability of these nuclear families due to incompatibility between couples leading to divorce or sudden death of the sole male earning members has also drawn women into the arena of employment. ‘Single Parents’ are also a reality of today’s urban society. Being a ‘single parent, itself makes it invariable for these women to be employed, as they get hardly any support from the family or the society. In fact the society seems to turn a blind eye to their existence. During the course of this study, the researcher did encounter one such respondent who accepted that she was a ‘Single Parent’. But, she preferred to keep herself under the category of a divorcee, as her child’s father was alive and more-over the society has yet to learn to accept a woman as a ‘single parent’, with dignity.

The role of these self-reliant single mothers appears to be somewhat different from that of those women living with their husband and children. The spouseless women have to look after their children’s needs with much more attention. They have been seen to be facing a situation, where, any laxity on their part, in personally handling their money matters and other duties, could turn out to be taken advantage off by scheming relatives.

In the case of Jhumpa, a self-employed widow in her mid 30’s with
a son of 12 years, living in a joint family composed of her brothers and
their family, life has been rather comfortable due to the support of her
sisters-in-law. Jhumpa is a self-employed tailor. The fact that she has
been contributing to the family’s income since the last 6 years has made
both her life and that of her sons in the joint family easier. Moreover, she
said, “as I am working I have been able to save some money for my son’s
future. My job has made me more confident, and I am sure, my son will
not be deprived of aiming for his ambition because he does not have a
father to support him.”

A very important finding regarding the women who were widowed
was that, they had to be more responsible with regard to decision making
for their children. Unlike a family composed of both the spouses and their
children, where sharing and partnership of the responsibilities decided the
roles of the spouses, the lone woman headed households made their task
more difficult. At home, these women have to look after every matter of
the family and at the same time fulfil social obligations, maintain social
relationships at all levels, without much support. In fact, these tasks become
daunting when these women are living in nuclear families. Most of the
widowed respondents in this study were living in nuclear families. The
very few who were living in joint families found life a little easier as their
responsibilities and roles were distributed within the joint family. As such,
child care was an activity that was taken care of by the elderly members in
the family, or by those who could spare time for it within the joint family.

The widowed women, in this inquiry, who were living in a nuclear
family, stated greater role conflict due to greater responsibilities. The
table given below is meant to provide data regarding the number of widows
living in nuclear and joint families.
Table No : 6.6

Widows and their Family Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Structure</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>79.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table no : 6.6 it is clear that maximum number of the widows were living in nuclear families. The reasons that these 79.59% women gave, for living in a small family were varied. In general, all these women found it easier to maintain an independent and self-controlled life style. Living in a nuclear family was a compulsion of living and working in an urban area. Some of these women did not want to become a burden on the parents or in-laws, hence, were working hard at their jobs to maintain a good standard of living.

At this point, going back to the main focus of this unit i.e. the widows who are mothers, the following table intends to highlight their family structure and point out the ensuing roles within it.

Table No : 6.7

Family Structure of the Widowed Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Structure</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>41.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>58.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the 79.59% widows living in a nuclear family there are 58.33% who are mothers. The number of widowed mothers living in a joint family is comparatively a little lesser.

Those women living in joint families indicated lesser strain from role conflicts, as they had the support of other members of the family. The constitution of the joint family of these women was quite different from the typical group of father, mother, their children and then their family. Rather, the widows and her children seem to be residing with a group of miscellaneous relatives. One important feature of the group that formed the joint family for the widows was that, it was mainly her parental side i.e. her brothers and their family or her sisters and their children that composed the joint family. Only a very small minority of the respondents of this category resided in the joint family of their in-laws.

Care, companionship, socialisation, social control, educational encouragement, etc. are functions that are carried out within the joint family on a shared basis. In fact, whether the joint family was of the traditional type or of the more unconventional type which is more common in an urban area, their existed a division of labour within it. The division of labour was done on the basis of convenience of all the individuals living within it. It was found that the employed mothers with minor children, could always depend on the other members of the family to take care of their children. With increasing competition in education, the role of the mother as tutors for their children has become essential. The structure of the joint family is such that, the employed women claimed to have greater leisure time. They did not have to bother too much about after school hours teaching of the children. As, there was always someone available in the house, who took care of all the children’s education. Appointing a tutor for educational
purpose was much rare in the joint families surveyed, in comparison to the nuclear families.

Employed widowed mothers, living in a nuclear family has been noticed as a trend, peculiar to the urban society. Some of these women got the jobs of their deceased husbands. These women continued to remain in the urban area away from their parental support in an attempt to give their children all the opportunities of education and employment, that would be available only in an urban setting.

The familial role of the employed widows living in nuclear families was noticed to be stressful for those women whose children were too small or unemployed. At the same time widows with children doing jobs, had less tension as well as lesser role conflict inspite of living in a nuclear family.

The divorced women continue to have a stigma around them, that makes remarriage difficult, even in today's modern society. Though, a remarriage is a rather difficult task for divorced women, it is not something impossible in the changing society, especially for an 'employed' divorcee.

The reasons for divorce were varied. But the main reason for seeking divorce for these women was to get some mental peace. Dowry demand, incompatibility due to clash of ego's, suspicious nature and adultery were some of the reasons for divorce, sighted out by the divorced respondents. Though the number of divorced women were lesser than the married women, yet there is a sign of obvious increase in the incidence of divorce.

With 11.33% of the women being divorcees in this study, it would be quite interesting to explore the familial roles of these women. A major number of these divorced women showed signs of being open-minded,
optimistic, hard working and ambitious individuals. Whatever might have been the reasons for their divorce, these women were at present trying to make the best of their career. They wanted to have complete control over every matter in their life and they wanted to be fully self-reliant. In the cases, where dowry demand was the reason for divorce, these women no longer looked at marriage as a security for one's future.

The familial roles of these women composed of their traditional roles as well as all other roles that their husbands would have performed if they were still married. Divorced women without children had lesser familial roles than those who were mothers. Divorced women were observed to resort to greater assistance from commercial sources to maintain a smoother management of their familial roles. The incidence of divorcees maintaining full time servants was greater than among any other category. Especially divorced mothers with small children, living in a nuclear family considered it very essential to maintain a full time servant. These women usually avoided engaging in the roles of house cleaning, cloth washing and even cooking in some cases, so as to be able to spend more time with their kids. In a way, the avoidance of these activities, was the only way in which these women could take time out to teach their children, or even take them for a outing. In case of those divorcees who could not afford to maintain a full time servant, life always seemed hectic, especially for those with kids. For instance in the case of Anuradha, a private college lecturer, who has been living on her own in Bhubaneswar with her 7 year old daughter since her divorce from two years, had this to say.

“My daughter is so young, that she needs me all the time. I know that this is the period when she requires my constant attention. But being a single parent, has made my task very difficult. Sometimes, I have to
encounter such a great time crunch trying to balance my time between my
two main priorities i.e. my daughter and my work, that I tend to get sick
too often. Hanging out with friends, partying, decorating the house are
activities I have given a back seat to. Which, I intend to carry out only
when my daughter is big enough, and can help me out in some of my
household activities.” Finally she says “I end up creating crazy time
schedules to give more time to my daughter.”

Maternal employment has changed the way women go about their
roles, mainly within the household. These women were not found to be
negligent, towards their maternal roles. Rather, as they were employed,
they considered it their right, to be relieved of some of their familial roles.
This relief, they expected to be extended from their husband or from other
family members, which ever may be the case. According to the researcher
role-conflict depended on the extent of lack of help and understanding
extended to the familial role of these employed women.

6.6 PARAMETERS OF THE ROLES OF THE DIVORCED AND WIDOWED.

Separation from their life partners in the form of divorce or death
of husband is likely to have a drastic effect on the role and position of the
concerned women. It is in this context, that the researcher finds it necessary
to enlighten the reader regarding the role of these women.

Employment, made a great difference to the lives of these women.
It gave them the confidence to face their life’s problems more
courageously. In the cases in which the divorced and widowed women were
issueless, they were saved from playing a very complicated role within the
family. They are able to move about more freely without much familial
role to perform as married women with children. Though in one sense this
situation may appear as very satisfying and less problematic for these
women. The researcher observed that these women suffered from loneliness and greater irritation. This mental situation acted as problematic and created stress. Which in the long run effected their role performance in the workplace. In a few instances, the familial roles were neglected by these women, because of their mental disturbance.

The roles to be performed at home as a member of the family did not differ much for the divorced and widowed issueless women from that of the unmarried women. In some cases these women were living in their parental homes and in some case on their own. Those respondents living with other family members complained of greater role conflict than those living on their own. But then, the former complained of lesser mental tension than the latter. The study regarding mental tension due to role conflict is an area, that one can understand in the next chapter.

6.7 WOMEN AND THEIR EXTRA FAMILIAL ROLES:

Large number of women are coming out to seek employment. In that process they imbibe into their personality, the role of an employer, employee, colleague, club member, social worker, socialite, networking communicator etc., depending on the circumstances of their job.

An employed woman has a busy schedule. She is not a full time home maker, for she has to give a substantial amount of time to her fulltime demanding job. Efficiently handling her responsibilities, in what ever role she has to perform, becomes a part, of the employed woman's activities. Role at place of work is mainly determined by the nature of work, working environment, communication skill and the type of people that one comes in contact with.

While at the familial level, the decision making power or activity of the women was studied from various angles. In the same manner this
dimension, has been compared with their income level. Through which, an attempt has been made, to show the role of women as decision makers at their work place.

Table No : 6.8

Income Level and its Relation with Subordination of Decision Making Power

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Decisions of Women Employee / Officer not taken seriously</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the employed women, queried in this study, felt very strongly about their decision making power at their place of work. Though the numerous respondents came from various income levels, and varied in their level of subordination, yet, they had the desire to make the required decisions, in their respective jobs. This gave them a sense of job satisfaction. But then, the respondents were very vocal in pointing out that their role as decision makers in the work place was not given enough respect sometimes.

For instance there is the case of Mrs. Lakshmi working in the A.G. Office Bhubaneswar. She is a woman in her mid 50's. According to her
"the female staff in the office is generally treated with respect. But then there were some individuals i.e. male colleagues who cannot digest the fact that their superior officer is a female. Usually such individuals spread defaming rumors regarding the concerned woman." Lakshmi hinted that "It is the work of such individuals to instigate other male colleagues to not take the decisions taken by their female superiors and colleagues seriously."

Before, some of the other interesting case studies are elaborated, a brief and precise analysis of table no : 6.8 is as follows :

As per this table, an all total maximum number of respondents i.e. 60.33% of them said that, decision made by the female employee or officer was taken as seriously as those taken by any male officer in the same position. In most cases the women opined that, it was the personality and the individual's efficiency at her job that commanded the required respect being given to her decisions. In a way, they reasoned that it did not matter whether the decision maker was male or female; what mattered more was the personality and efficiency of the person concerned.

The noticeable peculiarity in this table is that 48.83% of the higher income earning women felt that the decisions of women employee/officer were not taken seriously. At the same time a comparatively lesser number of women i.e. 30.45% of the lower income women had such a view. In-depth interviewing of these respondents revealed that, the lower income earning women held a very high opinion regarding those women earning a higher income. According to them, women holding high posts or earning a higher income always got more respect and are even taken more seriously when ever they take decisions. This viewpoint justifies the fact that lesser number of low income women felt that decisions made by the female employee / officer was not taken seriously.
At the same time, the first hand experiences of the high income earning women brought out that, many a situations do arise when they are not treated with due respect just because they are women. Though a number of instances can be reproduced to bring out this fact, there is one particular case, that the researcher intends to share with the reader.

Miss Mary (nick name) is a 48 year old, scheduled tribe woman. She entered government service after clearing the Orissa Administrative service. Today she is a highly placed official working in the Orissa Secretariat. She had this to say: “The decisions taken by a woman employee / officer are not always taken seriously. At some point or the other, there is this male superiority that sometimes act as hurdles in giving full credit and respect to the decisions made by a female employee / officer. The male domination or view of male superiority though remains implicit at the higher levels of the job hierarchy, at the lower levels, it is more explicit. In my case, I am the only female member in my department. I am the head of my department, but then my peon does not consider it necessary to listen to my orders, for he thinks himself to be superior as he is a male.”

The role of women as decision makers in the workplace, though has not been given full justice in many cases, yet there is this 51.17% respondents in the high income level, 61.67% in the middle income level and 61.93% respondents in the low income level who have cited that they as women have observed, decisions by women being taken seriously. According to most of these women, once a woman has proven that she is efficient and capable in her assigned job, there is very little chance of not being taken seriously. The variation in one’s superior or inferior position at the workplace determined the degree of one’s decision making power. Most of the women stressed that, at the workplace it mattered less
whether a post was being held by a man or woman. It was basically the position or the post that commanded respect and authority.

Employment brings with it a new set of relationships. These relationships go beyond the blood relationship. These relationships are called one’s relations with one’s colleagues. At times these relations become informal and a certain peer group is created at one’s work place. An employed woman, has to not only fulfil her duties as an employee or employer, but also has to cooperate and develop friendly relations with other colleagues so that her job role can be handled smoothly.

As a colleague, the employed women have a role, which is sometimes formal and at times informal. The researcher has bifurcated the employed woman’s role as a colleague into two. This has been done on the ground that, when these women required/gave help to their co-workers, in the matters of their official duties, it came under their formal role. In the matter of this role, the women always tried to maintain a practical and non-attached view regarding their co-workers. At the same-time these women, during their non-working hours or during lunch time, grouped together in particular groups. The individuals who formed the group, were not necessarily those individuals who were their immediate colleagues during working hours. Hence the second group formed the background in which their informal role existed.

Carrying out one’s duties, in the assigned post, cooperating with ones superiors as well as subordinates, maintaining a friendly and appreciative attitude towards one’s co-workers, upholding the values of punctuality and perseverance in carrying out the assigned tasks formed a part of the role of the employed woman. Commenting on the mistakes of ones coworkers, also form a part of her role.
Most of the urban jobs have a greater reach. The number of persons who obtain services from or are benefited by the urban labour force is very vast. Be it the public sector or private sector, a greater mass of the population is benefited by their services. In such a situation, it is the good communication link between the service providers and the service receivers which would determine the success of any enterprise. This environment has encouraged the female employees and employers to develop cordial relations with their beneficiaries or customers. These sort of relations are likely to develop into close ties, in which both the service provider and the beneficiaries share similar social views and are members of a common club.

In those jobs where there is direct contact between the service provider and receiver a close relationship develops with the passage of time. Even if these relations are shrouded with likeness and dislike, it is mainly the benefit factor, that keeps both the parties in continued contact. These circumstances no doubt has an equal and growing impact on the role of the employed women.

It is mainly through the contacts that develop during working hours, that the employed women have become members of some organisation or club. Some of these women are active members of political organisations and trade unions. Some of the respondents in this study showed themselves to be very politically conscious and active. Due to this interest, they participated and communicated with political activists. They considered it, to be a part of their extra-familial role. According to these women, their political activism was essential for progress in their career. Hence, this role has become a part and parcel of their career role.

Roopali Das is a Human Resource development officer in a
government aided organisation. She is 28 years old and is unmarried. She is a frequent party goer, club member and a constant socialiser. According to her “socialising is a requirement of my job.” Through which, she is able to increase her contacts. These contacts would later on be very useful for carrying out her job. Hence socialising is a very essential part of her extra-familial role or rather a part of her employed role.

This same factor holds true for G. Jaya, a sales executive of a reputed private company. Marketing the products of the company, convincing the probable clients, increasing awareness among the probable customers etc. are some of her tasks. This sort of a job, is very unpredictable in terms of the place where one would have to be at and the timing too. Jaya is a very outgoing, smart and talkative girl. This may be the reason why she has been very successful in her job. Moreover, she never misses a chance to attend parties and meetings arranged by the company. According to her, “socialising is very important in my field, as it is the main way to increase my friends circle as well as client circle. At the same time, my prospect for a better job is greater, only if I socialise and be in contact with people.”

Networking, is a term that is getting attached to an employed woman’s role. She is not only carrying out her duties specific to her job, but she is also increasing her contacts in the society. Depending on the jobs these women do, they are contacted by or come in contact with people engaged in various other fields. Be it politics, social work, wild life protection, environment protection, cultural and artistic development etc., are some of the areas that most of the employed women were actively or passively engaged in. These engagements have become an essential part of her role. It is through these activities that her network is growing. Her
interest in maintaining and being a part of this network, is as Sunanda Jorardar says “a requirement of the increasing competitiveness in getting a secure job.”

Sunanda is an MCA student, working as a teacher in ‘Sunny Dale’ school; she even takes private tuitions. Once her course is completed, she intends to take up a suitable job in the concerned field. Other than pursuing teachership, she also gives computer classes in a nearby institute, through this she intends to keep herself abreast of the latest computer languages as well as keep herself in touch with the fundamentals. All these extra activities, according to Sunanda, gives her an edge over her other classmates, in terms of confidence as well as working experience.

Reaching the workplace in time is as much an important role as doing the work. For the working hours determined the quality time they can spend at home. Maximum number of respondents showed their timing to be from morning 10.00 am to evening 6.00 PM. In the extra-familial roles it is not only the workplace roles that mattered but also the extra engagements of the women, which includes, kitty parties, social work activities, gathering to conduct religious programmes, participating in cultural programmes, attending parent-teacher meetings, participating in sports and other miscellaneous activities. These were some of the areas that the working women highlighted as some of the activities for which they had to take out time from their work and home schedules.

It would not be wrong to say that an urban society gives the best impression of the modernisation of a society. The role of the globalised and employed woman is no doubt, changing the life-style and outlook of the society. The common characteristic that has evolved among these middle-class employed women, is their inner strength and ambition. On
the basis of which these women have preferred to stick to their professions, whatever may be the ensuing difficulties. Last, but not the least, Mrs. K. Gauri a self-employed business woman, says that “having money at my disposal and that too made by my own hardwork, has given me the courage and determination to pursue my profession. The problem of managing my dual roles of home and business has not deterred me in the least since the last 10 years.”

6.8 SIGNIFICANT OBSERVATIONS:

“The role of women in our society has changed dramatically in last 3 - 4 decades. It will be erroneous on our part to accept the traditional role of women in this modern world. Women are now playing a diversified role in the socio-economic context of our society. They have emerged as a powerful influence group. The change in the educational, social and cultural setup has given a new dimension to our social structure and mind set.

“Education is as much a passport to respectability as it is a means of getting ahead economically." This is true for today’s educated urban women. The hierarchy of a job/career intellectually and economically seems to be the basis on which women choose their jobs. Their economic role has taken precedence over or is at par to their traditional role.

An analysis of table no : 6.1 indicates that the economic role of women has an impact on their life-style. The unmarried employed respondents preferred to have an independent view regarding their dressing. Even the parents were observed to allow their daughters to be fashionable and also allowed them to decide what they wanted to wear. Mobility in occupation and life-style has given the daughters greater independence. As many of these young respondents say “Our Parents want us to be the
way we are." The researcher observes that the urban middle class wants
to take full advantage of the opportunities opening up for their daughters.
The responsibilities in the familial role of the unmarried respondents were
considerably lesser than the married respondents.

Some of the unmarried respondents were observed to have developed
a personality that would surely have an impact on the future generations to
come. **Maturity, determination and adjustiveness** is what determined
the varied roles of these independent respondents. Marriage, for these
women, should be on their own terms. This is brought out from, the 68.23%
respondents wanting to choose their life-partner by themselves. Rest of
the respondents mostly held the view that a marriage can be most successful
if it had the full participation of their parents.

The household activities of the married respondents ranged from
cooking, cleaning, caring to shopping, feeding, budgeting and disciplining.
Quit a large number of respondents were still in charge of cooking, without
much assistance from the family members while the rest of the respondents
were getting assistance from various quarters within the family. The
expectation that all members in the family should give assistance in
managing the household activities is quite openly expressed by these
respondents. Such expectations caused dissatisfaction among those
respondents who were not helped and also those who were dissatisfied by
the quality of help given to them.

"Money matters in dual career families should be handled by both
husband and wife together." This is an opinion expressed by most of the
married respondents, yet in reality this was not the case. "**Marriage is
about taking decisions together-including monetary ones**"3 But the
structure of a family has an important role to play in determining who
controls the finance. In the case of respondents coming from joint families, it was mostly the husband i.e. 9.85% of them who were controlling the family finance. Only in 1.76% cases women themselves were head of the financial matters in a joint family. The situation is quite different in nuclear families, where both husband and wife were co-ordinating and pooling-in their income to run the house. 30.8% of the respondents were looking after their financial matters together with their husbands. But then, women’s dependence on their husband and even in some cases lack of interest in financial matters is seen in 25.76% of the cases, where the husband or any other member handled the money matters in the nuclear family. 21.48% nuclear family respondents were controlling the family assets, doing budgeting and paying bills all by themselves. Thus it may be said that the confidence gained from their economic independence has made these women self-reliant. Most of these women preferred to rely on their career for money, rather than on their husband. At the same time only 1.51% respondents from the joint family were personally involved in handling the family assets. This is probably due to very few joint families being headed by a female member.

House and Kids are still regarded the exclusive responsibility of their wives by most of the Indian husbands, inspite of the fact that women have taken up the economic role just as their husbands. Under such circumstances, the time these women spent in managing their home had an impact on their dual-roles as well as mental and physical well-being. Irrespective of the income levels from which the respondents came, it was observed that, maximum number of them i.e. a total of 62.13% respondents had to spend more than 6 hours in managing their house. This obviously points out to the fact that the employed women are still continuing with their traditional role though they have become economically independent.
"Sulajja Firodia Motwani, mother of a three year old boy and Joint Managing Director of Kinetic Engineering admits that it isn't easy being a working mother. The child needs you and wants to be with you and you end up living with guilt. To achieve some sort of balance Motwani divides her time between her three priorities, son, work and fitness, to the exclusion of all else - shopping, partying, doing up the house, and hanging out with friends.©

The respondents in this study said that *being an employed mother, they could not wish away their household duties*. Cleaning up the house, doing those thousands of small household chores, taking care of the children, supervising their school work - all require the attention of the mother. But the employed mother is no super-mom. She is equally stressed up and tired as her employed husband. As such many of these respondents felt that when they can't meet all their familial duties, they are neglecting their familial role.

Among the married respondents it has been observed that what ever may be their income level, they were spending some amount of time in managing their house. Women spending only 2 to 4 hour in managing the house have been observed to be maximum among the high income level respondents i.e., 33.33% of them. Only 9.44% of the respondents from the low income category had the scope of giving such a short time in home management. In this case it was found that some of these women were living alone, away from their families, hence there was nothing much in the form of household responsibilities to be attended to. Respondents belonging to the middle and lower income categories spending 4 to 6 hours in doing household chores were observed to be 26.08% and 27.36% respectively. Similarly the respondents spending more than 6 hours in household chores were maximum in the middle and lower income levels.
This shows that the lower is the income the greater is the household responsibility. As the income level increases, time spent in managing the home reduces, due to better facilities at home and also because there is scope for maintaining a help in managing the house. This particular study supports the hypothesis that role conflicts are likely to be higher in the case of women who are employed due to economic necessities. For it was found that most of the women belonging to the lower income level and middle income level were employed due to the economic necessity to maintain a good standard of living. Under such circumstances, though they spent their money on purchasing household appliances and items and on sending their children to good educational institutions, that gave the satisfaction of maintaining a good position in the society yet, they were unable to free themselves from household responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, decorating, etc. This became highly stressful for the respondents as they on the one hand were flaunting their material achievements but on the other hand they are always making an effort to manage all the household chores by themselves without any help, so that they can save money. But managing job role and familial role, with the stress and strains of one role affecting the mental and physical condition while managing the responsibilities of the other role, often lead to role conflict.

The role of an employed mother is the most complicated, as she has her children as the greatest responsibility. The amount of time and energy that goes into child care is more than the time and energy that goes into other household activities. In fact, the quantum of household chores increase with the coming of children. This is the view that came out during the course of the interview. The researcher observed that the employed mothers felt guilty and even worried at the thought that they were unable to give sufficient time in looking after their off spring, in spending time
with them, in understanding their psychological and emotional needs, in not being able to give sufficient time for teaching their children and so on. Because of the feeling that they are falling short of their role as a mother due to the time and energy that goes into their job, made these women put extra effort into caring for their kids. Role conflict is the end result of this extra-effort.

The employed mothers who were divorced, widowed or single felt secure as they were monetarily strong enough to be able to look after themselves and their off springs. These respondents had to be more careful and caring regarding their children as they were their sole support.

Of the total number of 49 widowed respondents, 24 are mothers. 41.67% of these widowed mothers reside in a joint family, while the rest 58.33% of them live in a nuclear family. The fact that maximum number of these widowed respondents are maintaining a nuclear family shows that they are self-reliant and are fully aware regarding the need to give their children a progressive environment for education as well as job opportunities. But taking up all the responsibilities alone has its drawbacks. Because, some of these women feel lonely, and sometimes are hardpressed in meeting the demands of their children. The widowed women with minor children faced maximum role conflict as their nuclear family status did not give them the advantage of support of other family members. As such their familial roles involving child care were too numerous and time consuming and at the same time they did not have the chance to show laxity in their job-role. But then the household chores that the widowed and divorced women living in nuclear families had to perform were considerably lesser then their married counterparts with a family.

The widowed mothers in the joint family did not have to spend too
much time in managing their familial roles, as the organisation within a joint family reduced their familial duties. At the same time the respondents living in nuclear families had some problem or the other. They were, in some cases, lonely and desired for support from their close relatives. But yet they preferred to live alone with their children / child and look after their requirements single-handedly. Role-conflicts were obviously greater among these women, as they mainly tended to give greater priority to their professional role than their familial duties. Most of these respondents do not want a support system, rather they prefer to go it alone and live life on their own terms. This could be said even of the divorced respondents.

Though many of these divorced women never thought that they would end up being alone, yet now they have learnt to accept life and live with confidence. This confidence is no doubt a result of their economic independence. But their role within the family remains the same. Some of these women had taken to living alone. Hence their role at home has reduced considerably as per the researchers observations.

The role of these women in their work place requires the responsibility and efficiency that is equally required in their familial role. But their efficiency is hampered in cases where they had to face harassment and exploitation. Though the respondents did face such problems, yet they did not openly accept that they were facing any harassing situation at their work place. But they did agree that there is exploitation of women in almost every field.

It has also been observed that the decision making power of women is respected and accepted by their colleagues and superiors. Most of the middle and lower income respondents i.e. a total of 159 respondents note that, women who hold higher posts are usually taken seriously. Further,
these respondents also said that, women who take their work seriously, whether they are employed in a high or low position are held highly by their colleagues, subordinates and superiors.

The roles that the employed women have at the extra-familial level are given as much importance as their familial roles. The extra-familial roles are mainly the result of their employment but these roles do not remain confined to their job. In fact new and varied roles evolve with this role.

For instance, Anuradha is not only a popular palmist but she is also the head of a woman’s group, a member of an ashram and so on. In all these positions she has to be a decision maker, a colleague a friend, a social worker and so on. It is when her extra-familial roles interfere with her familial roles and vice-versa that tensions arise between her two important roles. \(\text{Hence the hypothesis that the gap between official responsibilities and familial expectations is positively correlated with stress and strain holds true.}\)

References: