CHAPTER 1

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India ranks 135 in the Human Development Index (HDI) among 187 countries in the world in the year 2014. Ever since 1990, United Nations Development programme (UNDP) has been publishing reports on significant global development issues, trends and policies. In HDI, a measure derived from life expectancy, education and income levels, India has shown slight improvement from 2012 to 2013 due to improvement in living standards. Women in labour force participation constitute 28.8 percent compared to 80.9 percent for men. Women are vulnerable to climate change, industrial hazards and natural disasters due to location, position in society and sensitive periods in life cycle, observes HDI 2014. We are aware that societies that are tolerant towards gender bias and inequality, exhibit very less economic growth than gender neutral societies. India’s Twelfth five year plan has prioritized efforts to end gender based inequities, discrimination and violence against women.

Attitude on women today is not very different from the past. Traditionally, sex role definitions have assigned family sphere to women and work sphere to men (Gutek.A.Barbara, 2000). But, working women in recent years have undoubtedly proved themselves in all walks of life. As per the ILO’s Global employment trends 2013 report, though women employment in India has grown to 9 million between the year 1994 and 2010, their labour force participation has declined from 37 percent(2004-2005) to 29 percent in 2009-10(as also cited in the United Nation’s Social Development Network Report 2013). The Global employment trends report of 2014 also observes that women labour force participation continues to decline. Cultural ethos and social norms restrict women from taking up certain employments. Underenumeration of women in employment, stiff competition from men, occupational segregation in certain employments and rising household income have been preventing and influencing women from choosing vocations for economic necessities. This depicts changing trends in
women’s labour force participation. This paradoxical situation calls for the attention of human resource practitioners and social workers to look at the decline in women work force in India as they are valuable human resources. Social work researchers need to focus on the social and cultural causes that prevent women from taking up productive employment.

Women constitute half of our human resource today and are equally responsible for the future human resources. The concern and focus of policy makers, administrators, as well as social scientists, should be drawn on women’s work place issues. Hence, empowerment and education of women should form an inseparable agenda if we have to envision the growth prospects of our Nation.

1.1  Historical Transition: From ‘Chula’ to ‘Board room’

Parikh & Shah (1994) have categorized the factors that have influenced the roles and relationships of women in the Indian society. They are summarized as follows.

- The distinctive nature of western culture from that of India and its impact on India for nearly three centuries.
- Transition of 2,500 year old Indian agricultural society to that of today’s industrial society.
- Roles performed by men and women have been influenced by changes in the institution of family and community as a result of urbanization.
- Universalisation of primary education has opened tremendous avenues for women.
- Industrialization has paved way for the creation of formal industrial work organizations leading to an increased demand for human resources. This has enabled the entry of educated women to management positions in formal work organizations.
The historical milestones exhibit emergence of a professional woman from a woman in the agrarian society, who was a victim of changes in a family structure and role relationships due to urbanization, to a professional woman of the modern society. The change in her role has prompted her to be educated under the concept of universalisation of primary education. When formal organizations were established as a result of Industrialization, the educated women gained entry into industries and subsequently to managerial positions.

In this transition, the most challenging task for women was to shift their role anchors from the traditional agrarian society to the evolving roles in the industrial society. Parikh & Shah (1994) did a qualitative analysis of 600 women managers and administrators at different managerial levels, to picturise the historical transition from the entry of women in management to the emergence of a professional and career oriented woman. The authors cite that the years around 1950’s saw entry of women into formal organizations. Anxiety mounted on the woman’s role as a mother and simultaneous management of societal, familial and organizational roles. This had an impact on the job allotment, policy formulation for the welfare of women, and interpersonal relationship of women with her family and work place members.

Despite having the status of goddess, women in Indian society were far away from equality with men in ancient India. A clear demarcation of the role of women as a care taker of home and men as gatherers of food had been in existence since a very long time. Girls were socialized to be submissive and gentle. Disparity in education levels and access to health services did exist. Women’s education and workforce participation were low though they outnumbered men in the primary sector (Pawan Budhwar et.al. 2005). The historical transition of women can be divided into various phases from the year 1950 to 2014.

1.2 Phase I (Changes during 1950’s)

There were two types of women who entered into formal organizations in the year 1950’s. The first set of women primarily took up service jobs exclusively
for monetary benefits and successfully managed their respective roles at home and office in alignment with social expectations. They gained the credit of being pioneers in breaking their barriers and entered in formal organizations.

The second set of women were intelligent, educated and were not compelled to perform household chores as their families belonged to business arena with professional orientation. Majority of them had to take up jobs due to the sudden death of a significant family member. They could attract recognition for their work due to their courage and strong family background. They had no pressure to add to their household income and had economic independence. Thus the women in Phase I proved to their families and society that they can manage multiple roles effectively, if they were given an opportunity (Parikh & Shah, 1994).

The concept of women as ‘Office goer’s in the metropolitan cities in India began in the early 1950’s. Colleges in cities like Bombay and Delhi opened morning colleges to enable their young students above 18 years to earn while they learn. Enriched with the joint family support, these young working women at the clerical levels could enjoy autonomy though economic independence was not even thought about. Life at clerical level was less challenging and more secure. Women were fairly satisfied with doing whatever they were told to. Aspiration to rise in the career ladder was less (Sekaran Uma, 2000).

1.3 Phase- II (Changes during 1960’s)

This phase witnessed mounting educational status of women enabling them to grab new frontiers with aspirations for career growth. Since there were professionally educated women, they could directly enter middle level of management. By this time, women from 1950’s and 1960’s were promoted to middle level management from their junior level entry. They overloaded themselves with responsibilities in their aspiration to climb the corporate ladder. In their orientation towards family and emotional relations, they were caught with societal expectations and role attitudes. Perplexed with logical and rational outlook on one end and emotional on the other, women became defiant, rebellious and started
competing with male colleagues. Shipping and advertising firms could witness insurgence of women at clerical, supervisory and first level management positions with banks, manufacturing and service industries spreading their wings to the mofussil areas (Sekaran, Uma 2000).

By the end of 1970’s women had started to enter into professions which were hitherto not considered as their domain. The biggest change in role orientation was that they started seeking family as a ‘co-holder’ of both roles and ‘sharing’ of responsibilities rather than being solely held as responsible for ‘mothering’ (Parikh and Shah 1994:148). Women managers had become visible, during the latter part of 1970’s. (Kaila H.L, 2004).

1.4 Phase III (Changes through 1980’s)

Women emerged in their social and work roles, in this phase. Unhappy with the segmentation of social and organizational roles, women of 80’s carved a role and life space to manage their home and work spaces and became professionals. Women began to emerge as a powerful work force in the world economy and started demanding equal pay and status with men in the workstation.

The women’s entry, career path and professional growth depended on the vision of the top management of the organization. Similarly if there is a patriarch to support her educational and economic aspirations, she could choose a career for herself (Parikh & Shah, 1994). This depicts the Indian patriarchal ideology of women as dependent on men for significant decisions in their life.

As Sekaran Uma (2000) has pointed out, the women executives who joined work in the 1960’s and 1970’s were contented with junior management level jobs whereas in the 1980’s educated women started aspiring for jobs that can take them up the organizational ladder in a fast track mode. There were two sets of women employees. One set continued to be dutiful daughters in law and sincere employees simultaneously, by adding stress to themselves and another set of educated, aspiring women who could convince the elders at home, that a full time
household help can substitute their work at home. This was accepted after initial resistance. There was an influx of women in careers like banking, health and civil service in addition to teaching in the 1980’s. An attitudinal shift in the mind of urban middle class parents enabled girls to be enrolled in schools. This period had witnessed a significant change in the attitude towards urban women and towards women belonging to middle class. They had acquired the status of ‘white bloused workers’ in India (Vaz, 1988).

1.5 Phase IV (Changes through 1990’s)

Upward mobility had always been accompanied with socio-demographical, environmental and attitudinal changes in the life of career women. In order to avoid the unpleasant consequences from spouses, many career women decided to marry in late 30’s or not to marry at all. Women managers compared to their male counterparts were found less inclined to get married and have children (Greenglass, 2000). Late marriages were accepted by some women as there was no economic insecurity. Both the men and women could get economically well settled before marriage. This indicated how women could overcome environmental and societal pressures to get married and make decisions about how they want to lead their life. Working Spinsters were not looked at with raised eyebrows. The demographic factors also could have contributed to the change in the attitude of people as there were 929 women per 1,000 men as indicated in the statistical outline of India 1992.

Arranged marriages were declining and bachelors started marrying eligible women from work places which gave them an opportunity to discuss their life plan well in advance. Though men did not change much in their attitude towards women, the change occurred in considering that marriage is no longer ‘indissoluble’ but a mere contract whose terms are laid out clearly to confer certain benefits on the parties entering into it. Attitudinal changes were evident in the work place as paternalistic bosses were replaced by young and vibrant bosses who could encourage women to take up challenging assignments (Sekaran Uma 2000). This set of women were second generation ‘office goers’ whose in-laws had struggled in 60’s, 70’s and
80’s to pursue a career of their own and hence were supportive. Such families had decentralized power distribution and though there was a common kitchen, there were small pantries to take care of individual needs. Each unit in the joint family household existed as an entity and right to privacy was respected. This enabled a vast majority of women to advance in their career.

As Jain, M. P Sharma, S Biswas & R. Brijnath (1994) have aptly portrayed, “the patriarch and matriarch have been reduced to figure heads, who like constitutional monarchs, reign, but do not rule” (cited in Sekaran Uma 2000:92). Moreover women with career aspirations were ready to forgo marriage for the sake of career. Women who aspired to be managers were less likely than men to get married and have fewer or no children at all (Greenglass, 2000). In 1990, income tax exemption limit for women employees was raised above male counterparts. Such efforts prompted women to continue in their jobs.

The UN Report of 1991 shows that the proportion of women who were economically active showed an increase between 1970 and 1990 in the developed regions, western and eastern Asia and the Caribbean. This period witnessed a significant landmark of the passing of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments in 1992. These amendments provided women’s participation in local governance through reservation of seats in local bodies and village panchayats in India. This was expected to elevate participation of women in governance (Pawan, Budhwar et.al 2005). The period between 1970 and 1991, saw the increased labour force participation from 21 percent – 58 percent, which was highly commendable during that decade. Women started entering occupations three decades before 2000 and had taken up diversified professions which were earlier male domains including banking, marketing research, police, Information technology, Communication etc. (Nath 2000).

1.6 Phase V (Changes in the decade 2000-2010)

A combination of social, organizational and personal biases contributed towards sustaining the employment of women in managerial positions at a lower
level. Lot of macro level changes have been brought out by the economic reforms that began in 1990’s (Datt, 2003). Organizations in India started looking for talented human resources and realized their need to change their traditional attitude towards women employees (Budhwar & Boyne, 2004). Beth Axelrod, (2008) in an interview on the challenges of hiring and retaining women, had pointed out the challenges of recruiting women in a dynamised business arena. Further, she pointed out that identifying and addressing issues that obstruct women’s ability to build lasting careers along with leadership development was to be focused which is possible by dealing with the underlying beliefs and behaviors that hinder her career development. She has also stressed the need to have a platform or a network to share women’s issues. Women also are looking for a network of other women to share experiences, to solve problems, to look to as role models and to learn from. Women should be kept in the pipeline to avoid being inadvertently overlooked.

On one side the social values of the Indian society were influenced by the new work dynamics and on the other hand, women’s aspiration towards career were brought under global focus (Naqvi Farah, 2011).

1.7 Phase VI (Changes during the period 2010 - 2014)

The female employment percentage in the public sector which stood at 13.5 percentage in 1991-2000, increased to 16.38 percentage in 2001-2010. The female employment percentage in the private sector increased from 21.06 percentage in 1991-2000 to 24.50 percentage in 2001-2010 as cited by Brahmanandam (2013) in his analysis on employment of women in India. Private sector has employed more women than the public sector, overtaking banking and retail sectors which had been traditionally considered to be employing large number of women. Tata Consultancy Service (TCS), India’s largest software services exporter, in July 2014, has emerged to be the largest employer of women among private sector companies. Women comprise 32.7 percent of its 305,431 consolidated workforce as reported by the Live Mint & Wall street journal on 31 August 2014. It has also reported that IT sector has employed one million women of the total 3.1 million people employed, as per NASSCOM, the software body. Compared to the 1980’s and 1990’s women seem to
have been opting for management courses and aspiring to be in senior management positions in their workplaces.

Chaudhuri Bivas & Panigrahi (2013) had observed the gender issues in terms of female workforce participation and wage differentials in the organized manufacturing sector in India based on the data gathered from Annual survey of industries. Only 20 percent of female workers were found to contribute to production process directly, during the year 2000-2001 and 2009-2010. Significant differences were noted in the female work participation and wage differentials across various industry divisions and various states. The top seven states with more female workers in the manufacturing sector in India included Kerala (65 percent) and Tamilnadu (41 percent). Social restriction, wage differentials, and emergence of informal sectors are cited to be the reasons for low female workforce participation in manufacturing sector in India.

This phase consisted of ‘Gen Y’ people who are born from 1980 to 2000, also known as ‘Millennial generation’ or the ‘MeMeMe’ generation or Net generation, one of the largest population groupings, ever seen in the world, as observed by Raina Anjali, (2014). With 426 million people, India today has one of the largest Gen Y workforces in the world who have a flexible view on space and time with a 24 x 7 schedule with an attitude to be ‘always on’ and ‘always in touch’. This applies to women employees as their outlook towards family and workplace gets highly influenced by the generation in which they live.

As put forth by Tandon Aditi (2014), ‘Gen Y’ employees are influenced by work space and work environment. They prefer to work comfortably from anywhere in the world, with a multitasking mind that can concentrate on social or casual work environments. They consider restrictive technology as a demotivator and as a hurdle for quality work. Their ways of meeting deadlines and managing work-life balance differs from that of older employees. The latter may skip other work activities and complete work before leaving from work whereas a GenY approaches work mixed with fun. They may relax during the day, refresh themselves and stay awake whole night and emerge successful in meeting the same deadline before the expected time.
As Cheriyan Mona (2014) has expressed, cultural constraints, gender bias centered on executive presence and style of communication still hinder women’s careers in India. While women in the past wanted to supplement family income through work, today’s women look at career prospects along with money as the motivator. Shouldered with eldercare responsibilities, some women face ‘daughterly guilt’ which outweighs maternal guilt. Managing the career graph of Gen Y, especially that of women is not easy considering that the social expectations on women’s role do not change in the same pace as that of technology.

1.8 Models on Women’s Work Status

Gutek, A. Barbara (1992) has commented that women do not possess certain characteristics required to achieve as much as men could achieve. She cited the following reasons:

- Institutional structures have hampered the progress of women.
- Men as a group are more powerful than women as a group.
- Social roles encourage men to achieve in the work and women to nurture in the home.
- Women possess certain characteristics that block their success.
- Men and what they do are valued more than what women do.

Based on these observations, she has explained about the following models on women’s work status.

Individual Deficit Model

This model views that men are individuals and the problem of women’s work status rests with women. The causes are the innate biological differences between men and women, differences in early socialization and training, emotional instability, lack of logical thinking and rationality compared to men. Motivators for
women are not the same as that of men and are not serious about their jobs. This model underlines that deficit in motivation, personality, assertiveness and sensitivity to power issues in the organization make women unfit for management roles (Gutek, 1992:34). This model ignores the external factors that influence the development of these characteristics.

**Structural Model**

This Model attributes the ‘Work structures’ as responsible for motivations and personalities of women. Their aspirations are low because the work structure provides less opportunity for them to excel in their work. These situations are reflected in their behavior. Women are isolated from informal networks and are susceptible to pressure. Their powerless, dead end positions do not give them autonomy to perform. Any change to improve her work status should focus on the organisational structure.

**Sex Role Model**

As the name implies, this model focuses on the work related definitions of male and female roles. This model has been inspired by Talcott Parson’s theory of division of labour between an “instrumental” husband and “expressive” wife (Gutek, 1992:35). Women are influenced by the societal expectations of appropriate behavior patterns expected for women, in the world of work. So they tend to choose female oriented jobs or jobs that are attributed by the society to be designed exclusively for women. Their employment is considered to be relatively unimportant by women themselves. This model attributes her problems at the work place to the spillover of other roles played by her in the work place. Her gender based stereotypes prevent her from aspiring to higher career positions. Violation of the sex role expectations is responsible for the problems concerned with her work status, as envisaged by this model. If she chooses to deviate from the sex role expectation at the work place, externally she faces hostility and harassment. Internally, she is subjected to the role strains emanating from a non supportive environment. Societal
differentiations between the sexes and the sex linked assignment of responsibilities for work and family were considered responsible for the work status of women.

**Intergroup Model**

Based on the premise of ‘groups’, the Intergroup model bifurcated men and women into social categories who have dominant characteristics which are related. Men are considered to be the ‘in group’ while women are considered to be the ‘out group’. While in-group similarities are underlined, differences are emphasized. Male characteristics are considered to be the norm of ‘goodness’ and deviations are considered to be deficits. This is based on the presumption that male activities are superior to that of females. This model says that an individual’s behavior can be influenced based on the group membership (Gutek, 1992).

**Significance of the Models on work status of women**

The ‘Individual Model’ advocates that change in the individual would bring about improvement. For example, if there is a deficit in information, women can be provided with accurate information on the kinds of career development programs available to them. Training programs to build capacities, enriching themselves about corporate etiquette, writing about a business plan, breaking the glass ceiling etc can be interventional measures to remedy the shortcomings of women. The ‘Structural model’ focuses on bringing about change through altering institutional operations to foster greater equity between the sexes. A thorough reassessment of the requirements of the jobs, accurate job analysis and vertical linking of jobs to create alternate career paths for women can go a long way in addressing the issue. The need of the hour lies in enabling gender balanced succession planning, equal opportunity for employment, employing more number of women employees and equitable reward system for work of equal value. The ‘Sex role model’ suggests bringing about change in the women’s work status by considering the couples as equal partners and integrating their career and family stages, together. The ‘Intergroup model’ suggests that negative consequences can be minimized by avoiding exaggeration of similarities within the groups and
differences between groups. Job stratification based on gender further puts men and women workers poles apart and reinforces gender stereotypes. These changes call for a major reconstruction of the society. The changes that have occurred in the past are based on the Individual deficit model. Though women are educated and their labour force participation has increased, still key power positions are not accessible to many. This can be achieved only if there is a change in the other models which is a real challenge. Families, employees and the society at large need to be sensitized to achieve this change.

1.9 Women Executives in Organisations: A Psycho-Social Perspective

Sastry. Nalini (2000) sums up the sociological features and processes associated with the employment of women in organizations. The author describes the influence of socialization in the decision of women to take up work outside the home, the choice of occupations and the specializations which determine the extent to which she can rise up in the organizational hierarchy. Deliberate choice of certain occupations, disadvantaged socialization, increased economic pressure and little training have lead to less powerful designations with less chance of career advancement. According to her the study on Indian organizations has revealed that female executives who conform to female sex role, experienced more conflicts related to sex role, than those who adopted male sex role, in their organizations. Feminine sex role orientation was linked with sex role conflict in Indian organizations.

From time immemorial, management had been considered to be a masculine domain and those women who typically displayed such behaviors associated with that of men were accepted in the organizations (Greenglass, 2000). Type-A behavior pattern is characterized by excessive competitive achievement aspiration, exaggerated urgency, aggression and hostility. Research shows that women exhibit more prevalence of ‘Type-A’ personality than men (Greenglass, 1988). Two reasons are attributed for this: at the entry level, women may perceive that such aggressive, driving behavior is mandatory to be acceptable at the entry level in organizations and second, such management may require these behaviors to
be exhibited due to constant work pressure and expectations. Women are more distressed than men due to the strain experienced from the multiple roles that they occupy. Women have least control on their roles which adds to their misery (Dhanalakshmi, Swaminathan & Latha, 2007).

**Societal Stereotypes**

Disparities in literacy and nutritional levels, inferior status of girls to that of boys and the widespread notion that the duties of girls are different to that of boys is widely prevalent in the Indian minds. This could be the result of socialization. Women are made to believe that they cannot be successful in management. Stereotypes centering on their roles contribute to this situation. Masculinity has been associated to leadership and good managerial decisions. Femininity has been attributed to generosity, empathy and caring nature. Divisions of professions have also been attributed to such stereotypes. Professions like teaching, nursing etc. has been kept for women whereas finance, airline jobs have been associated with men. A general impression on HR is that it is a soft job centered on social and welfare issues and hence men tend to keep themselves away from it. Women are preferred in service sector than men because of their inherent nature of caring for other human beings (Sharma.Seema. 2008). Managers’ role involves mentoring, coaching and guiding. As the leadership style of women is interactive, they are perceived to be good managers by some organisations.

**Gender Stereotypes**

The stereotypes on women managers have been categorized into two. Women managers who belonged to the first category exhibited too much of feminine characteristics like being too sensitive, too emotional and attached to family than to the career. The second type of women managers exhibited too much of masculine qualities like aggressiveness and competency (O’ Leary & Ickovics 1992).
The societal stereotypes about women’s role in society also influenced the status of women managers as perceived by her male counterparts. Male Managers had stereotyped views that mistakes of women managers were overlooked while that of men was unfairly treated. As reported by Gupta et.al (1998), fewer male managers believed that women managers have the required objectivity skills for evaluation of business, are less assertive, less aggressive and are dominated by emotions in deciding workplace behaviours. Pawan, Budhwar et.al (2005) did an in-depth interview with six women in senior managerial positions comprising of government and private sector firms which were followed by a questionnaire survey of six managerial women in service and manufacturing sections. The study showed that working women belonging to lower and middle economic strata in India are driven by economic necessity and those women in upper middle class are driven by career aspirations. Educated women have shown keen interest in taking managerial positions and aspire to climb the career ladder. The study highlighted the strength of women managers as listed as sensitivity to human relationships, ability to understand, ability to network, sense of dedication, commitment, crisis management, multitasking skills, and act in a gender neutral manner. These findings are in sync with those of Gupta et al., 1998; Kulkarni, 2002 and Mehra, P. 2002.

**Approaches to Work**

Mehra, P (2002) has listed out various approaches towards work based on anecdotal information. The first approach considered women employees to be adopting a masculine style of functioning and be assertive leaders like men. The second approach recognizes that women should do the same work as that of men but acknowledges that they have ‘different needs’ like maternity leave and flexible working opportunities. The third approach presupposed that a unique style and attitude are brought to the work place by women managers. Companies with women employees that follow this approach were likely to take their organizations to greater heights. Organisations who wish to have more women managers can encourage women to adopt a unique style of leadership.
Role Orientation of Women

Role overload is one of the most crucial dilemmas faced by a working woman (Sekaran Uma, 2000). Being considered as the sole proprietor of household chores and child care she is torn between career role and familial role. She ends up in doing all the expectations associated with both her roles and these results in lack of rest and anxiety. All these can be attributed to her socialization of mother being the sole care taker of home, acculturation of woman being the sole proprietor of maintaining a good conjugal relationship, and the Indian patriarchal ideology of men considering it as their birth right to be served by women. Williams and Kurina (2002) have indicated that changes in gender roles, family roles, role reversals, and family structure has lead to dramatic shifts influencing the mental and physical health of women. These factors are responsible for stress affecting the women in the 21st century.

1.10 Gender Mix of Employees in the Organisational Sector

With the advent of globalization, technological advancement and changing psycho social economic and political scenario, there is a steady upward movement in the social status of women in the society. An increased literacy level, cohabiting with increased participation of women in employment, in the organised sector is seen. Women are the significant agents in ‘socialisation’. Socialisation refers to the process in which an individual learns to live in the society. Organizational Socialization refers to the ways in which she gets integrated into the culture of the organization. Women are significant in the employment scenario of the organised sector. Organizations’ invest heavily on the recruitment, induction, training and development of the employees. Career interruptions and late entry into the corporate life slows down the career progression of women (Sastry Nalini& Subrata Pandey, 2000).
1.11 Barriers in the Career Progression of women

An Indian woman’s life goes through schooling, puberty, college, career, marriage, reproductive challenges, career exit /career reentry, menopause, retirement. In each of these stages, certain challenges are imminent and pertinent. There are certain health issues related to the reproductive tasks and post delivery, emotional issues occupy major part of her time. Kulkarni (2002) had listed out that traditional and cultural inhibitions acquired by women from infancy, nurtured through parents and reinforced by their socialization was the major hurdle to rise to leadership position. Each of these socializing agents reiterates the submissive role of women. The tussle created by parenthood and career are affecting her career progression. Inability to travel overseas, transfers, being away from families all affect her significantly. For an exclusive involvement in career, ‘motherhood’ itself had been a significant barrier to many (Gupta et.al 1998). Exclusion from informal networks which were male headed, hampered their ability to manage organizational politics. These were significant in a linguistic, ethnic and caste based Indian society (Pawan, Budhwar et.al 2005). However those women who could succeed to reach higher positions decided to stay back and confront the challenges, maintain the personal drive and gather familial support (Nath 2000). The major obstacles for career progression can be grouped based on family and Organizational demands.

1.12 Stress inducing factors in the life of career women

Career women face stress due to job insecurity, blocked promotion, workplace issues with colleagues, impending retirement and unfair performance appraisals. Although stress can affect at all the stages in the career life, those in the middle age are more vulnerable. Promotion opportunities decrease and the impact of stress due to child care, eldercare, financial commitments etc will have a cumulative impact on the women. At this stage they may compare themselves with the career accomplishments of their peers and may feel unsatisfied and stressed.
Role Related Dilemmas

Moving up to higher positions has stirred the mind of women in the management level with dilemmas like role overload, normative and identity dilemmas. Unlike the male counterparts, the working women do not have the bliss of taking rest on weekends as child care and household chores are considered to be only the woman’s responsibility. Indian patriarchal ideology does not favour men to support their women in any household chores. The figure 1 given below illustrates the dilemmas faced by working women.

Figure 1.1 depicting the dilemmas faced by working women

Source: Developed by the Researcher

Often working women have been faced with ‘Identity dilemma’. In their socialization they are familiarized with the cultural exposure nurtured in patriarchal ideology. Their values and ethics are moulded by acculturation which comprises of the values they have grown up with and the ones which they have acquired. Guilt rules them when they are unable to attend to the nursing needs of a sick child to that of meeting an office deadline. Indian men are attuned to the expectation of his wife waiting for him at home, at the end of the day while a working wife would be returning home late. This results in building resentment and anger which may spark
and ignite the spousal relationship. She is forced to choose between family and career. She needs to choose between a good mother and a good manager (Sekaran Uma, 2000).

In addition, women face ‘normative dilemmas’ due to the conflicts that arise between the lifestyles that a working woman would find convenient and the norms that the society would attribute to her status. Employed women need to sensitized on the above mentioned issues and the ways to deal with them.

**Glass Ceiling vs Glass Escalator**

When the advancement of a person within the hierarchy of an organization is stopped at a lower level because of some form of discrimination, it is often referred as ‘Glass ceiling’. Within the corporate environment, there are factors that hamper their growth within the organization. Family responsibilities, inability to manage work and life, higher roles demand higher degree of commitment requiring more hours of work. People react differently to assertive women. Differences in the perceptions of leadership behavior of women, inability to take global exposures due to family commitments, etc., act as barriers for their advancement. Indian women have been successful due to their inner drives, interplay of organizational and familial responsibilities despite the culture of the country favoring patriarchy. Women executives in India earn about 40 percent less than what men earn in their entire career. Women declare ‘gender barrier’ as the factor that prevents them from being successful in their work place (Reddy yamini, Daita Nirmala & Krishnaveni, 2009).

Cheriyan Mona (2014) had indicated that the reason for mere 5 percent of women in corporate board rooms in India is due to the increased level of female attrition at the middle manager level. This may be due to the conflict around career objectives, need to prioritize between familial and professional objectives and insufficient mentoring/training to reach the top. Especially women in Gen Y category (those born between 1980 to 2000) expect five features that enable them to do their work. They are role clarity, clarity on goals and expectations, open
communication, encouragement from colleagues, and opportunity to express their opinion. Many of these features in fact reduce role related stress, and may enhance job satisfaction.

Participation of women in economic activities depends on the socio economic and cultural conditions prevalent and hence varies from country to country. Women holding senior positions are a rarity and economic necessity is the major drive for taking up employment (Gupta1979).

1.13 Statement of the Problem

Success of an organization depends on the people who work for its development. Human resource represents the axis of any organization. Satisfied and contented employees contribute for the organizational development. An unsatisfied employee adds to lower morale, lower productivity and increased turnover in organizations. Job performance, organizational effectiveness and a well trained human resource are inseparable elements in any organization’s growth.

In the present study, women executives are chosen to be the respondents because work force participation of women has increased in the past few years. The problems of women executives deserve attention as they do two work shifts- one at home and the other at office - both equally demanding. Work sphere and family sphere are the major spheres in the life of a working woman. An employee should manage it effectively to avoid becoming the victim of stress.

Married and working young women are haunted with issues like having a baby soon after the marriage, challenges in parenting, sleepless nights, issues of school going children, menarche and associated issues, and ‘empty nest syndrome’ in the old age. With no help in this regard, working women are forced to limit their activities at the work place to the bare minimum as between career enhancement and family, they invariably have to choose the latter. Lack of spousal support builds up frustration, anger, hatred and resentment as a career woman sees no viable solution except her career sacrifice. This piled up emotional frustration has its spill over in all
the roles that she plays in her life, disturbing others concerned. At the work place, women may face challenges in work performance, interpersonal relationships and technological upation. The barriers in her career advancement, concept of ‘glass ceiling’ and role related issues may affect her productivity. This may also affect the mental health of the women employees. Mentally healthy employees are important assets to organizations as the coping ability of such employees with the organisational stressors would be better. A comfortable work environment and a better Quality of work life is an important determinant and predictor of mental health of its employees Priya, S. (2012). Thus the Human resource development and Organisational development efforts in any organization should focus on developing the mental health and work related skills of the employees, for ensuring organizational prosperity. To enable this, the employees should have clarity about the role that they are performing, should be rewarded according to their performance, and an enhanced morale towards the organization. In this context, it is important to study Organisational role stress, Job satisfaction and Quality of work life of women employees, as they have significant relationship with the mental health of the individuals. If any one of the above variable is disturbing the individual for a longer period of time, unattended, it can lead to individual, social and organizational breakdown.

1.14 Rationale of the Study

As women are significant resources in the country, an attempt is made to understand her aspirations, role related dilemmas and her needs to lead a satisfied work life. There have been extensive studies on women’s issues in the work place. A plethora of studies have been undertaken in the world on the variables under study - Organisational role stress, job satisfaction and quality of work life. Some of them have been sector specific, organization specific, small or medium sized samples, or a combination of one or two of the above mentioned variables. But no studies have been undertaken combining all the above mentioned variables, specific to women executives covering three significant sectors of the Indian economy. There is very little information on the intervening role of role stress in job satisfaction and quality of work life in organizations. As stress can affect the mental health of employees
and the future of organisations, efforts should be made on addressing the issue at the Organisationaal socialization level itself. Prevention of development of gender stereotypes in the future generation is possible through fighting the gender stereotypes and instilling gender neutral ideas throughout life through effective socialising agents in the personal life as well. Building social networking relationships, identification of constraints/disparity in the distribution of women employees in the Indian corporate sector and efforts to avoid gender disparity can help the corporate women in overcoming career hurdles. Many women face hurdles in career progression. Being a study focusing on women exclusively, the study has made attempt to learn whether women perceive that there are barriers for their career progression. Hence, this study addresses the gap in literature of being the exclusive gender study focused on human resource development. A gap exists in the understanding and evaluating the efforts of individual employees as well as organizations in managing role stress. In the literature on ‘Gender in Industries’, there is a felt need to include the expectations of women employees from their organizations to deal with their work place issues. Therefore this study assumes great significance.

1.15 Scope of the Study

The main aim of the study is to learn about the level of Organisational role stress, quality of work life and job satisfaction prevalent among women executives in IT, ITES, manufacturing and Service sectors in and around Chennai region. The study looks at the relationship between the above mentioned variables. Since women belonging to different sectors are covered, customized strategies in coping with stress can be devised. The findings of the study can be instrumental in making retention policies for women, reducing role related stress experiences in the Organisation. The relationship between Organisational role stress, Quality of work life and job satisfaction can be used by Human resource development practitioners and Organisation development specialists in implementing policy decisions for enhancing organizational productivity.
In attempting to study about the major variables, the study takes into account its antecedents, impact of demographic characteristics and its implications. The consequences of stress, individual and organizational measures to alleviate stress has been recorded. The study also voices the expectations of the respondents from their organizations, to keep role stress away.

Women have been actively involving in the labour force participation of India. With sprouting educational institutions, engineering colleges and Management schools, Chennai can boast about its large number of educated women workforce spanning across the sectors. The government of Tamilnadu has invested heavily to make Chennai a favoured destination for IT and ITES companies. Chennai is considered to be the Detroit of automobile industry. It is a significant manufacturing hub and service sector investments are also booming. Under these circumstances such a study encompassing all the above mentioned sectors in and around Chennai region draws considerable significance from the economic perspective as well.

The study voices the opinion of women executives on what they can do to keep stress at bay. In this backdrop, the present study examines Organisational role stress, Quality of work life, and Job satisfaction among women executives in Information technology, Information technology enabled services, manufacturing and service sectors in and around Chennai region.

1.16 Research Objectives

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To understand the demographic profile of the women executives in the IT, ITES, manufacturing and service sectors in and around Chennai.

2. To analyze the extent of organizational role stress prevalent among women executives in the IT, ITES, manufacturing and service sectors and identify the prominent role stressors.
3. To study the consequences that arises due to organizational role stress of women working in the organizations in the IT, ITES, manufacturing and service sectors in and around Chennai region.

4. To examine the measures adopted by Individuals and organizations to manage organizational role stress.

5. To know the factors affecting Quality of work life of women executives in the IT, ITES, manufacturing and service sectors in and around Chennai region.

6. To assess the level of job satisfaction of women executives in the IT, ITES, manufacturing and service sectors in and around Chennai region.

7. To identify the barriers for career enhancement of women executives.

8. To suggest suitable measures to alleviate Organizational role stress and Organizations there by improve Job satisfaction and Quality of Work life of employees.

9. To develop a social work model of intervention to manage the organizational role stress and enhance quality of work life and job satisfaction of the employees.

1.17 Research Questions

Research questions help in laying out the framework for research. Quantitative research questions are answered through hypothesis testing. The study focuses on the following questions

1. Are women executives in IT, ITES, manufacturing and service sectors experiencing stress that interferes with their job satisfaction?
2. To what extent does the quality of work life and job satisfaction of employees is influenced by organizational role stress?

3. Are there any obstacles for aspiring women executives to reach top most positions in the organizations?

4. Are there any factors that are common in determining job satisfaction and quality of work life of women executives?

5. Do the women executives know how to manage the emotional and physical consequences of stress?

This chapter has elaborately described the stages of evolvement of career women and the challenges that she had faced from 1950’s to the present period. Various models on the work status of women have also been elaborately covered. The next chapter would discuss the conceptual framework and review of related literature on the major variables under study. The purpose of literature review is to analyse and synthesize the most significant theoretical and empirical studies that support the rationale for the study.