PREFACE

This study presents an analysis of the dilemmas faced by women professionals in Kerala. It is the aim of the study to identify the problems encountered by married women professionals by virtue of combining family and career roles and to understand the key issues concerning the reconciliation of dual roles. Women in different professions - medicine, engineering, law and accounting - are studied in order to understand their common as well as the unique problems. A major purpose of the study is to identify the factors in the workplace and at home that are associated with ease vs. difficulty in combining work and family life. To examine the prevalence and the impact of gender discrimination in the career prospects of women professionals is another goal of this study. The study also focuses on the strategies women professionals adopt to cope with the situation and thereby to achieve work-life balance.

The findings contribute to an understanding of the realities of life of women in the professional field and also highlight the necessity of social and family policies in facilitating equal opportunities at work for these women. Reconciling work and family, (Work-Life Balance) is now on the social and political agenda of all societies. It is hoped that national and regional governments as well as individual workplaces will develop new and better policies to promote work-life balance for women.

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