INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

Gender roles are a significant source of identity and follow one like a shadow. Very few can escape the pressure to fit into the mould set up by the society. In most of the societies, traditionally there was a clear cut division of roles for men and women. Men were trained to be the bread winners and women the home makers. In accordance with the roles, there were stereotypes associated with males and females. Males fell in the competence cluster and females in the agenetic (Broverman et al. 1972).

Men and women have been socialized to perform certain gender specific roles. Values pertaining to these gender roles have been entrenched in the psyche of generations and are difficult to alter. These roles have been changing at a relatively rapid pace, but the values that surround these roles have not been changing at the same rate. Many consequences arise from resistance to these role changes. This imbalance of role and value change has enormous implications for the future of the stability of the family.

Traditional role theories suggest that the competing demands of different social tasks produce role strain or conflict (Goode, 1960, Sarbin and Allen, 1966). These theories imply that people have limited energy and resources and may become over burdened by too many role relationships and demands. Psychological distresses are apt to emerge when people fail to reduce role tension or are overloaded by implementing strategies such as eliminating role relationships or setting up barriers to preserve their time from this perspective. Women who are trying to maintain several roles would be expected to experience negative and stressful feeling (Paula et al. 1986).

Traditionally, the type of jobs women and men could take up was largely sex determined. There were also limits that existed as to how successful persons could be in a
job depending on their sex. There were clear cut lines defining the difference between “men’s work” and “women’s work”. Men and women had been socialized to perform different roles. Women were socialized to work in the domestic sphere and men were socialized to work in the labor sphere. The phrase, “domestic sphere” is used here to refer to taking care of the home and the family. The phrase “work sphere” is used here in reference to work done outside the home for wages. Some sociologists have argued that “sex role segregation is a functional necessity for marital stability and even for the viability of society itself”. This is not an isolated perspective. Other social scientists shared this viewpoint. Freud, a leading psychoanalyst of the time, concluded that “women have lesser sense of justice than men; that they are less ready to submit to the greater experiences of life, that they are often influenced by their judgment by feelings of affection and hostility”. These sentiments imply that women are less rational and less equipped to work outside the household than men (Lichman, 2002).

More recently, traditional gender role assignments have been questioned. Changes in economic conditions, social norms, and in values (such as an emphasis on togetherness has shifted to an emphasis on individuality) have contributed to an increase in married women’s involvement in work force (Elkind, 1993).

The traditional ideas and norms about working women’s role that are still present can directly affect the marital relationship. Many consequences follow from increased involvement of married women in the labor force. But the reason that these consequences affect the family adversely is because the role of women have changed but traditional attitudes and norms about the role of women have not changed at an equally rapid pace.

Despite remarkable changes in the role of women in western society in the past few decades, traditional gender roles still exert a strong influence on how men and women interact within home (Major, 1993). Even when both partners are employed in demanding and well paid jobs, work around the house is usually divided along gender lines. Altogether, women spend more time doing housework than men, regardless of their gender-role identification (Gunter and Gunter, 1991).

A double standard exists for men and women in the work place. If a man is a dominant and/or demanding boss or employee may be praised and even expected of him
at times. However, if a woman demonstrates the same qualities, she may be considered bossy or overbearing. These ideas are shaped by traditional gender stereotypes. So, even if a woman does obtain position within work force, traditional stereotypes still burden her. The idea that men and women are equal in the work force is disproved many times. Women are discredited just because of their gender.

People's mindset is changing when they are exposed to the changing image of women in media as well as in real life situation. But recent studies show that men as compared to women have unlimited career options, receive more salary and have more job improvement opportunities. Traditional views towards the women's career are powerful barriers for women's job improvement (Pugliesi, 1988).

In the view of social psychologists, every career person in any job can be exposed to conflict. Moreover effect of career on women’s mental and physical health also depends on the nature of job. Women involved in jobs with limited scope to rise such as midwifery, nursing, secretarial service can affect their mental health adversely. Because such jobs are very demanding with fewer rewards, opportunity for advancement, limited power and participation in decision making.

According to Sarokhani (1996), traditional working women face more conflicts with multiple roles than non traditional working women.

Women experienced fear of success (Horner, 1972), as high achievement by women had negative consequences for her family life and marital happiness. Women’s achievement was a threat to the heterosexual relationship. For many years, in most of the areas, degree of separateness was maintained by placing women in relatively low level career slots (nurses, secretaries) where their job was to assist men performing important work (Saflilos – Rothschild, 1975).

Industrialization of societies led the women towards taking up jobs. During the initial stage of industrialization, the basic motivation for women to take up jobs was the economic factor. With the women liberation movement, modernization, and urbanization, last century has seen rapid transition in the gender roles with more and more women entering the job market. With the rise of women rights movement, there emerged an increasing awareness of need to reduce psychological barriers between genders. To a
marked extent, gender roles have become blurred. New term such as androgyny has appeared to indicate the desire in both men and women to assume characteristics of the other gender. Rigid gender typing is considered detrimental psychologically for both men and women (Bem, 1970). Women entering job market and male dominated professions, testify the changing attitude towards appropriate roles for men and women.

First few generations of women who dared to combine marriage and career bore the brunt by being super women, trying to be best at work place and also efficient housewives. Overloaded with work resulted in stress, anxiety etc. Negative attitude of the society towards employed women also led to feeling of guilt and doubt about their choice. Because of the stereotype that only men excel, her work was devalued and there was evaluation bias. Acceptance of female as boss by males was not an easy task.

Over the years, there is more acceptability of women combining marriage and career. Large number of females are being socialized and trained to be career oriented. There is more egalitarianism while providing opportunities to boys and girls. There is a greater acceptability and respect for female bosses. Females have proved their worth in the male dominated professions. In dual career families, there is more and more sharing of household work by husbands and the same has been validated by study of Chicago sub-urban households (Mowrer, 1969).

There is indication that gender stereotypes are fading away. Today’s college students ignore many of the stereotypes and down play gender differences (Swim, 1994). Assertiveness provides one example of change. American college men were consistently found to be more assertive in studies dating back to 1931, but recent research indicates no sex differences in their characteristics (Twenge, 2001). In movies, television programs, and advertisement, women are increasingly found in active, assertive, and aggressive roles. When exposed to non-traditional models in the media, females express more confidence in their ability and both sexes have raised expectancies with respect to female accomplishment (McArthur and Eisen, 1976). The impact of such image on behavior in an experimental setting is proved beyond doubt. It is quite reasonable to expect at least as much impact in our every day world.
These days in addition to the basic economic motivation, women belonging to middle and upper socio-economic status groups engage in career, not only for earning more money, but also for better individual development, good social level and other good things that come after taking a job (Park, 2000).

Almost all over the world, the last few decades have witnessed spiraling growth in the number of women entering job market and venturing into the arenas which were male bastions earlier. Reasons for taking up jobs include financial requirement and also in many cases seeking self-growth and independent identity. Thus, the focus has shifted from gender differences to examining differences between women with differential employment status. Employment does have an impact on the individual’s personality and psyche. Initial work on comparison between employed anc unemployed women indicated that employed women suffered from role strain, role conflict, anxiety and marital conflict (Chaudhry, 1995).

There is large empirical evidence to support that due to women taking up jobs, they are unable to spend enough time with the family and also combining the two roles leads to role stress. In many cases, due to role ambiguity and clashes between spouses on priorities, there is marital conflict. Increasing rate of divorce is often attributed to economic independence of women. The positive consequence of women’s employment is the changing image of women. Today, the employed women are confident, efficient, have more resources, power and also higher participation in decision making process. Gender roles are undergoing, change with more and more men to lend a helping hand to their employed spouses in managing the family. There is also more of egalitarian attitude.

Also, large societal changes may force women and men to change their roles. Traditional ideas such as appropriate roles for each sex and how serious it was to disrupt a marriage were a challenge. Women’s increased involvement in the work force has allowed for more independence for women. It has also caused a great deal of difficulties that are related to marital disharmony and instability of the families.

Since time immemorial, gender role stereotypes have existed and it has been difficult to alter these traditional ideas. The need and the desire for women to work may be inhibited by these views. Women combining marriage and career have many
consequences. These consequences affect the marital relationship. They have a particularly deteriorating affect on the marital relationship because men's and women's ideas about traditional gender roles have not changed as rapidly as the roles themselves. The disproportionate changes in roles and values may create many situations that are harmful and ultimately devastating for marital harmony.

According to the U.S board of statistics (1994), women engage in a narrow range of occupations, with half of working women holding just two types of work i.e., administrative support work and service work. Thus, women and work have changed, but there is still more than a trace of traditional beliefs incorporated into the work force structure in regard to women’s participation in paid work.

Like in most of the societies, Iranian women were traditionally engaged in household work, playing roles of self-sacrificing mother and wife. They were financially dependent on their male counterparts. Consequently, they were deprived of taking part in decision making for the development of society and the nation. But the present policy of the government has opened up many avenues for women. They are coming out of homes for training and seeking employment.

Women often fail to receive the appropriate credit, even when their work is exceptionally good. Women in academia face numerous obstacles. They are also at a disadvantage compared to men with respect to salaries and promotion (Callaci, 1993). One reason is that a woman is more likely to behave that she deserves a lower salary (Janoff-Bulman and Wade, 1996).

In Iran, occupation of women affects all members of the family and society in general. It is important because the number of women that are entering in the job market have increased considerably. This movement is still continuing. Catching up with global trends, Iranian women voice publicly their demands for access to education, employment, and political life. Women’s periodicals proliferate in which women defend gender equality in their reading of religious texts. They argue for women’s rights such as their eligibility to engage in religious studies, to hold judicial positions, to participate in the law making process, to stand for public offices, to have custody of children after divorce, to have equal considerations with men in testimony.
In Iran, the number of employed women has increased since 1967, which shows the society’s change of attitude towards the presence of women in the job market. During the years 1977 to 1987, however the number of employed women decreased due to the 1977 revolution and Iran-Iraq War in 1979. Moreover, there was an increase in the overall rate of unemployment. After the end of the war, the attitude towards working women changed and led to a higher rate of employment amongst women.

Women in Iran constitute 40% of the labor force in villages and 13% of the work force in the cities. This does not include self-employed women who work at home to contribute to the income of the family. In 1977, women constituted more than half of employed work force in production activities.

Table 1. Employment status of Iranian women during the years 1967 and 1999

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<tr>
<th>Unemployment rate</th>
<th>The jobless</th>
<th>Number of Women who got employment Demand</th>
<th>Number of Women who wanted employment supply</th>
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<td>1.94</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>1,013,000</td>
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<td>1967</td>
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<td>2.42</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>1,414,000</td>
<td>1,449,000</td>
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<td>28.47</td>
<td>398,000</td>
<td>98,000</td>
<td>1,370,000</td>
<td>1987</td>
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<td>24.43</td>
<td>398,000</td>
<td>1,231,000</td>
<td>1,629,000</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.35</td>
<td>272,000</td>
<td>1,765,000</td>
<td>2,037,000</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.67</td>
<td>498,000</td>
<td>1,911,000</td>
<td>2,409,000</td>
<td>1999</td>
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Table 2. Total number of women engaged in public sector 1989-2001 (in percent)

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<tr>
<td>Percent</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
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Source: The report concerning the Third Development Plan, the Statistics Center of Iran, 2002.
During the two decades of 1976-86 and 1986-96, the population over ten years of age and older groups increased by 3.6 and 3.3 percent and the active population by 2.7 and 2.3 percent on an average per year respectively. The difference in the rate of active, 10-year olds, and older population resulted in changes in the rate of workforce participation during the above two decades. The rate of their participation decreased from 42.6% in the year 1976 to 39% in the year 1985 and to 35.3% in 1996 (Asghari, 2004).

Moosavi (1999), while examining the status of employed Iranian women showed that most of the women are working in educational and cultural organizations. In the recent years the decreased rate of employed women is because of cultural, political, biological, economic and social problems, lower level of education, early marriage, and decision making of parents regarding marriage of girls before puberty, and putting all housework responsibilities on women. United States named decades of 75 to 85 as women's decade. It made the governments to realize the fact that without sharing of job market by the women and introducing promotional programs, the quality of life will not improve.

According to Collins (1981), family is built up by combining power and other domains that have many inequalities. He believed that these inequalities depend on the
sources that are beneficial for the two sexes. He also stated that the relationship between women and men depends on the power and money that they have in the society. Career for women is one of the powerful sources of improving their status. Career is the most interesting factor that a human being can think of and speak about. Career fills most of the precious time of human beings and for successful people it is a basic need. However, career for some people is an important factor for success and for others it is a burden. But today more and more women are considering career as important goal to ensure success, security, and satisfaction.

Paid employment has become increasingly significant in the lives of women. The paid work role can take on a variety of meanings (Markus, 1980). Many women see their paid work role as a central part of themselves, as their career, or as the continuation and fulfillment of their longstanding goals. For these women, employment may play a primary role in defining themselves and in providing meaning to their lives. For other women, employment may be thought of as just a job, a necessary part of their lives that contributes only negligibly, if at all, to their identities. These women may find other aspects of their lives, such as their relationship with their partners or children, more important for their self-definitions.

Career of woman does not ensure satisfaction, physical and mental health. There are many indications that show more career depression among working women than men. They suffer from more social problems and pressure related to their job than men that some times leads to lower self-esteem in them. Mental stresses among career women are more than in career men. After 30 years of age, self-esteem of career women decreases and problems in career increase as compared to men (Kazemi Haghighi, 2000).

Adjustment of women with both roles of working at home and working out of home depends on their personality, family relationship, and level of job, satisfaction in marriage and positive support from their husband and family. Their career is affected by the adjustment with their roles (Remennick, 1999).

On the other hand, employment is related to greater happiness and satisfaction. It may depend largely on the particular view of paid work that an individual holds. For some women employment is regarded as a career and long-term goal, and is likely to be a
central part of their view of themselves and their lives. For others, employment is not considered a career or life goal, and is not likely to be significant in their perception of themselves or their lives.

As the cost of living increased women's contribution in the family became important. Komarovsky (1953) and Landis (1955) opine that because women's sphere of activity has increased, it might lead to better quality of life for them.

According to Hunt (1965), majority of the working mothers believed that their children benefited through their mothers going out to work. They emphasized material benefits and also referred to greater independence and improved mother-child relationship. It has also been found that the majority of women whose mothers worked when they were children said that they did not mind.

Employed women may be experiencing the stress of combining marriage and career but the rewards of being employed i.e., independent identity, recognition, voice at work and in informal matters, respect and power offset the stresses and strains of dual role.

The positive consequences of women's employment in large scale studies are likely to be obtained only for those women who regard their paid work role as a significant source of self-fulfillment (Paula et al. 1987). However, even in less selective samples, employed mothers appear to be psychologically healthier than mothers who are not employed (Ross and Mirowsky, 1988).

Unemployment of women has been linked with a wide array of negative outcomes including decreased mental health and the deterioration of family relations. There is a great deal of evidence indicating that unemployment adversely affects psychological health. Specifically, researches suggest positive relationship between unemployment and suicidal behavior (Platt, 1984), depressive symptoms (Winefield et al. 1991), anxiety (Hamilton et al. 1990), psychological development (Gurney, 1980), higher marital stress and conflict (Broman et al. 1990), poorer marital communication and satisfaction with marriage (Larson, 1984) and feeling of helplessness (Winefield et al. 1991).
According to Bose (1985), housework relates to high isolation and low social rewards associated with this role. But little is known about the relevance of these findings for the housework experiences of employed women.

Edwins (1998) demonstrated that the satisfaction a woman derives from one of her life roles or an aspect of that role may alleviate some of her experience of conflict with multiple roles. That is, positive experiences obtained while performing role behaviors may have a mitigating effect on the negative experience of role strain.

According to Zarabi (2000), the women who seek employment or are employed in various occupations being better educated are likely to be more exposed to mass media, having better contact with development agencies as well as with their male counterparts. It is a well known fact that female employment has emancipated women economically and psychologically. Further, due to better aspirations for their children and burden of child bearing and rearing and because of employment hazards, these women are better sensitized towards the population problems and they tend to limit their family size.

More recent theories suggest that individuals may profit from enacting multiple roles, may increase individuals' privileges and resources in their social environment, assist in establishing social and economic status and security, act as a buffer for problems of failures in any single life domain, and enhance feeling of self-worth (Sieber, 1974; Linville, 1982; Thoits, 1983). Other recent studies of the risks and benefits of having multiple roles indicate that people who had more social roles, experience less psychological distress and mental illness (Thoits, 1983), greater life satisfaction and well-being (Barnett and Baruch, 1981; Manis, 1982). Enacting multiple roles thus appears to promote global well being. A number of studies indicate that multiple roles confer benefits to women's physical and mental health (Barnett, 1993; Green and Russo, 1993).

It could be argued that women who hold multiple roles may be better copers or less susceptible to psychological distress, and women who have fewer roles may be more vulnerable psychologically and drop or lose roles (Paula et al. 1986). Multiple roles widen horizon of women and lead to better growth.

According to Paula et al. (1986), women with three, four, and five roles expressed the greatest satisfaction with their jobs. Women who were working out and did not hold
any of the other social roles, showed the lowest self-esteem. In contrast, women who worked, had a partner and one or more children, were students, and engaged in at least one voluntary activity reported the most positive feelings about themselves. Thus, employed women having multiple roles were associated with higher self-esteem and job satisfaction and may be psychologically beneficial.

One reason that having multiple roles may contribute to higher self-esteem is that performing a variety of tasks and interacting with more role partners increases one’s sense of competence and facilitates the development of a richer and more complex view of self. A well-elaborated view of self, in turn, may enhance well-being and mental health (Linville, 1982; Pietromonaco, 1985). Alternatively, women who have higher self-esteem may be more likely to acquire or manage large number of roles.

However, some studies showed that playing more roles leads the women towards stress, increase in marital conflicts, dissatisfaction and perhaps affect the women’s role as a wife, especially the conflict in the traditional gender role that the women must take care of children and husband, must work to increase the family income. This view caused more psychological problems in women.

The effect on women of combining paid employment and family roles clearly depends on characteristics of the individual, her family, and her job situation. In general, however, occupying more than one role appears to buffer women from the stress within each role (Crosby, 1991).

Gove and Geerken (1977) report that among the married, unemployed wives experience higher levels of frustration that seem attributable to familial role demands than do employed husbands or wives. These include incessant demands, a desire to be alone, and loneliness, frustrations which in turn help to explain the higher level of psychiatric symptomatology among unemployed wives. Other studies suggest that marital strain may have a different impact on wives who are working than among wives who are not working. Thus, Cleary and Mechanic (1985) found that marital satisfaction is less important in its effect on depression among working wives than among working men or housewives, and that job satisfaction is more important for men.
The joint impact of family and employment roles was examined in an earlier analysis of some of the data presented here (Aneshensel et al. 1981). Among women having a family, being married or being employed was associated with lower levels of depression, but having both a work and family role did not seem to provide the additional diminishing effect on depression that it had for men.

Work and family roles appear to have a similar impact on physical health status. Verbrugge (1983) notes that there is widespread concern that women’s increasing involvement in multiple roles may harm their physical health due to increased stressors and decreased time to spend on health problems. She found however, that employed married parents tend to have the best health profile, while those with none of these roles tend to have the worst health profile. Thus, women with both job and family roles enjoyed health benefit from having multiple roles. This finding is important as physical illness and its restriction of normal activities acts as a stressor in elevating symptoms of depression (Aneshensel et al. 1984).

More and more women are developing new outlook towards their employment and instead of regarding it as a mere instrument of earning money, they derive self-satisfaction and fulfill their need for achievement and various socio-psychological needs and desires (Desai, 1957-1963; Hate, 1969; Kapur, 1930, 1970-72, 1974; Srivastava, 1972).

In the category of the employed women, some differences have been reported between professional and non-professional employed women on psychological variables. Negative consequences of restrictive role of women as merely homemakers have been reported by most of the researchers. Since employed women today are a force to reckon with, there has been a quest to examine the differences between the employed and unemployed women on a large number of psychological variables important for any individual. It is yet to be ascertained as to whether these differences exist prior to their employment or are the result of their being employed or unemployed.

Although very few studies have explored the potential impact of women’s feeling of self-efficacy on stress, it seems logical that existence of a relationship between these two may be negative. Bandura (1986) postulated that an individual’s sense of self-
efficacy operates to reduce perceptions and reactions to stress. Thus, it seems reasonable that the more a woman feels that she is able to handle successfully the demands entailed in her daily life, lesser is the experience of role conflict.

Although many personality variables have been studied in relation to coping with stressful life events, hardiness, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and quality of life were selected for inclusion in the present study for two reasons. Firstly these variables have been focus of extensive research and have been found to be related to successful adjustment across a wide variety of stressful life events. Secondly, chronic beliefs about the self, control, and outcomes reflect key components of an individual’s view of the world and of his or her ability to function successfully in the world and thus should be especially potent in shaping reactions to stressful life events. Brown and McGill (1989) have reported that after experiencing a positive life event, students with low self-esteem reported lower physical well-being and used the Student Health Center more often than those with high self-esteem. According to Bandura (1989), self-efficacy affects the health of the persons.

Today employment has assumed significance for women. With more and more exposure and acceptance, negative consequences of women’s employment are being replaced by positive impact on her personality. The employed women at times express feeling of powerlessness, worthlessness, guilt, vacuum, when they compare their plight with that of the working women. Keeping in mind the significance of variables like self-efficacy, self-esteem, hardiness, and quality of life for mental health; it is pertinent and to compare the employed and unemployed women on these variables.

1.1 Need of the study

In the wake of rapid social change in various spheres of Iranian Society, role and position of women are undergoing change at a rapid pace. Large numbers of women are taking up jobs and are managing both marriage and career. Women are taking up non-traditional roles and developing new outlook of life. These days, women have become more conscious of their own identity and status. Modern women know their self-worth
and they wish to develop self-reliance and self-esteem by taking up jobs in various spheres.

Gender roles are the master status and a very significant source of identity for the human beings. In view of the changing gender roles, it is pertinent to know as to in what ways the changed gender roles are affecting the women’s psyche, personality, family relationship and her position in the society. It is a natural concern to know as to what extent the changes are leading to positive or negative consequences. Because of the significance of gender roles for the individual and society, there has been a quest for knowing the level of difference between traditional women and non-traditional women. One comes across some employed women with lots of stress due to dual roles, whereas others are happy and satisfied. On the other hand there are housewives who suffer from depression and complexes due to the stress or monotony of household chores, lacking power and recognition, whereas there are other who are very happy in the role of a housewife. Any change in the society, till it is adequately integrated, there is always a quest for reward and costs involved in the changes. One of the pertinent questions that arises: Is the woman happier and better adjusted by relinquishing the traditional role or by combining the two roles?

Many researchers over the years have made comparative studies of employed and unemployed women on various psychological variables. There have been contradictory results. Moreover, the studies done 20-30 years back may not hold truth in the changed scenario for the measures already mentioned. Moreover, there is dearth of such studies on Iranian population. Most of the studies have been done outside Iran, from which it is difficult to generalize for Iranian population. It is therefore doubtful if the replication of such studies done abroad will yield similar results in Iran, with different social, cultural and political set-up. Therefore, there is a need of such a study in the Iranian set-up and culture.

The first few generations of working women faced number of problems like role conflict, guilt, role ambiguity, and discrimination at the job front, resistance from the family members for taking up jobs, lack of skills, and lack of role models. Gradually, there was transformation of women, with more and more successful female role models
to emulate, more acceptances, equal opportunities, less of discrimination. Today working women as a group has become force to reckon with. Still results regarding comparative studies of employed and unemployed women are far from unequivocal. Because there are large number of intervening and moderating factors (nature of job, family support, commitment to career, coping skills and personality) which are likely to determine the impact of employment status on the women.

Quality of life is a new concept and is a significant psychological variable. There can be a lot of difference in the quality of life of working and non-working women. Many of the unemployed women as compared to employed women are less satisfied with life because of vicious circle of poverty, illiteracy, and domestic tensions like substandard living conditions, large family size and so on. Unemployed women are less aware of social and legal rights, and are more prone to victimization by the society in general and their family members i.e., husbands, in-laws in particular. Besides, they are more vulnerable to stress, anxiety and frustration, because of lack of power, drudgery of household work for which they are not rewarded suitably. Because of restrictive role, there is not an ample opportunity for self-growth. As a consequence of this, quality of life has been found to have a solid bearing on mental health and illness. This area calls for more research. Data indicates that employed women have ability, committed interests and sound psychological health (Donelson and Gullahorn, 1977).

Another reason for positive effect of employment on women is that sphere of women activity increases with employment which in turn might lead to better quality of life (Korsarovsky, 1953; Landis, 1955). Combining marriage and career is perhaps more fulfilling as it leads to role expansion, takes one away from drudgery of household work which was devalued.

Hardiness and self-efficacy are relatively new concepts and have gained importance especially because of their being positively related to psychological well being, adjustment, and mental health. Employed and unemployed women have been compared on various mental health variables but there has been scanty research comparing the two groups on self-efficacy and hardiness.
Kobasa (1982) has argued that all sub-scales of hardiness such as commitment, control, and challenge are related to self-esteem and self-consciousness. Persons high on hardiness are also expected to be high on self-esteem and sociability and low on shyness, social anxiety and public self-consciousness.

The surveys of scientists reveal two views or theories about the consequences of women playing dual role on their mental health. First view focused on positive consequences of career and mentioned an increase in self-esteem, socio-economic status, and self-fulfillment of women. In addition to this, career had positive effect on women's mental health. But the second view highlighted that career developed a feeling of independence on one side but on the other hand it exposed them to more mental stress because some elements such as career discrimination as compared to men, doing stressful jobs, such as nursing, obstetricians, doing low income jobs with more responsibilities, limited authority and combining it with housework, taking care of children and grandparents and duties as a wife caused role conflicts and family conflicts that led them to psychological and mental problems (Arkin, 1995; Remennick, 1999; Enjezab et al. 2003).

If the mental pressure arising from career is high in the organization, it can aggravate mental, physical and behavioral problems and reduce the quality of personal activities.

What is the relationship between having multiple roles and psychological well-being? This question has become increasingly significant for women. Because so many women are enacting roles simultaneously which demand responsibility and commitment? It is important to understand whether holding multiple roles increases or reduces psychological risks.

Contradictory studies in the field of quality of life, hardiness, self-efficacy and self-esteem among working and non-working married women motivated the researcher to take up this study.

Keeping in view the above, the investigator proposed to compare employed (professional and non-professional) and unemployed women in Iran on Quality of Life, Hardiness, Self-Efficacy, and Self-Esteem.