CHAPTER III
PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS AND VOCATIONAL ROLES

Several are the studies found in literature that attempt to identify the individual dimensions contributing to roles in general and vocational roles in particular. An attempt is made in this chapter to review them with the view to deriving cues, hunches and hypotheses relating to the differences possible between housewives and career women, and women entrepreneurs.

Interrelation between personality and role is a recurring theme in literature. An integrative review of literature (Cooper, 1984) is attempted in the following pages. The review attempts to summarize past research by drawing overall conclusions from many separate studies that have a bearing on problem of the present investigation. The objective of the review is to estimate the strength as well as the direction of the plausible relation between personality and different roles herein investigated. The variations in setting that appear to influence the relations' strength are also dealt with in this review. The sources of the review include Astin (1971) Theodore (1971) Fogarty et al. (1971).
Both the English words personality and role are terms borrowed from Latin words *persona* and *rotula*. They denote the mask owned by actor and parts (Positions) to be adhered to by the actor respectively. The etymology of the terms suggests the plausible interrelation and interconnection between the terms. Metaphorically the persona stands for personality of the part enacted and the rotula-sheet of parchment conveniently turned around a small wooden roller carrying the written script of parts from which the actor recited—connotes to the role. The disposition of the character is essentially integrated by the positions of the character and the context of the play. The dramaturgical metaphor of persona and rotula have been systematically extracted by anthropologists like Malinowski (1927) and Mead (1934) to explain the concept of personality and role. It is held in folk psychology that a role is performed better if its requirements are in consonance with one's 'natural inclinations' (Sarbin, 1954).

Evidence for existence of a skill, aptitude or competence that facilitates role enactment is available in the work of Gough (1957) Sarbin (1954) and Cameron (1947) Klien and Richard (1960). Role taking aptitudes refer to either the ease with which a person enacts a number of roles on the facility with which a person adopts and enacts a role on the basis of limited information.
The aptitude presumably is acquired early in life through subtle experiences. Individuals are found to be better applying roles which are congruent with their personalities (Borgatte, 1961). It is also found that individuals find it easy to fit a role which matches their personality characteristics or participate effectively in an area of group activity which uses their special skills (Watson, 1971).

Subjects high on authoritarism are relatively more efficient in the centralized group structure as revealed by the studies on communication networks for decision making tasks (Shaw, 1959).

When subjects classified on the basis of their possessing the trait dominance and placed in co-operative work situation and are systematically assigned roles calling for dominant or submissive role enactments, the most productive pairs are found to be of those where dominant subjects had been assigned the dominant role and non dominant subjects the submissive role; consistently, the least productive pairs are found to be of those where the self characteristics and role characteristics had been reversed (Samelser, 1961).
Differences in ego strength are reported to be associated with plans for marriage and career (Gump, 1972). High ego strength subject pursue both the objectives of marriage and career. Gump (1972) observes that ego strength may be negatively related to conformity to a narrowly defined traditional female sex-role.

In another study on catholic women college students the findings reveal that, those who perceive themselves as more competent plan to combine employment with children, where as women who perceive themselves as less competent indicate that they plan to stop working when they become mothers (Broverman, et al., 1972). Those with high competency self-concepts also have a smaller ideal family size than those with lower competency self-concepts.

Traditional sex role attitudes are reported to be significantly correlated with factor analytically defined 'religiosity'. Traditional attitudes and opposition to social change in the area of sex-role behavior are also found to be positively correlated with less trust in people, feelings of self-deprecation and powerlessness, and a need for order and predictability (Davis, 1979).

The traits and attitude of women of themselves are reported to partly contribute to career patterns of female party leaders at high level political party leadership.
The career style and motivational differences between men and women politicians are reported to resemble typical sex role patterns in the family (expressive-internal versus instrumental-external) (Constantini and Craik, 1972).

The personality characteristics of women participating in women liberation movement have been extensively investigated in recent time. Women liberation supporters are found to be characterized by autonomy (Tangri, 1970; Chermiss, 1972; O'keefe, 1972; Van de Reit, 1972; Stoloff, 1973), increased risk-taking, creativity and originality (Joesting, 1971); healthier self concept and higher regard for women in general (Broverman et al., 1972; Gump, 1972; Nielson and Doyle, 1975), more assertive (Chermiss, 1972) greater achievement orientation and less abasement (O'keefe, 1972) greater self-actualization, self confidence and aggression (Fowler and Van-de-Reit, 1972), more internal Locus of control (Ryckman et al., 1972) greater feelings of control over their environment (Almquist, 1973), greater tolerance of ambiguity (Pawlicki and Almquist, 1973; Worell and Worell 1973), greater humanitarianism (Stoloff, 1973) and less religiosity (Welch, 1975).

A few studies are focused on personality characteristics of women in different careers and also entrepreneurs.
The findings of these studies suggest the possible relationship between personality characteristics and accepting a career or entrepreneurship by women. They are reviewed in the following pages.

Personality characteristics of career oriented women in terms of the propositions of Stewert (1978) have been investigated by Stewert and Winter (1974;1977). and Winter (1977), Stewert (1978) proposes self definition and social definitions as two contrasting patterns of organization of experience relating to intra sex differences in women and men (Stewert, 1977). The TAT stories of career oriented women are marked by a clear causally organized plot and instrumentally active and inactive characters, in contrast with the stories written by non career oriented women. Stewert and Winter (1974) interpret the results in terms of underlying personality characteristics of women compared. They argue the career oriented women are relatively different to sex-role norms (and perhaps to norms associated with other roles) capable of emotional "distance" and objectivity in the context of a small number of intense, personal relationships, active and interested in broad social movements and issues; and capable of vigorous instrumental activity.

Personality characteristics are reported to distinguish women employed in typical occupations.
Women in female typical occupations viz., nurses, hair stylists, secretaries are found to differ from women in male typical occupations viz., Police Officers and Crafts women on femininity, communality, self-control, capacity for status and dominance. They are identified with a set of attributes that includes helping others, working and meeting with people, fulfilment and caring for family and children as most desirable work outcomes (Mazen, 1982).

Coping styles more often used by professional working women seem to be defensiveness (to avoid or justify the situation) followed by intra persistive style (to deal with the problem by one's own self). The reversed pattern is found in women entrepreneurs (Surti, 1982).

Women in male dominated occupations are reported to be most masculine and least feminine and to share the personality characteristics such as assertiveness, androgyny, high self acceptance with men in similar jobs. They also are reported to have retained many of the positive characteristics associated with femininity in their culture. Few statistical differences have been obtained among the five groups, male and female in male dominated fields, both females and males in female-
dominated fields, and housewives. Core gender identity appears to be preserved intact in all the groups studied (Hirshberg, 1983).

Professionally oriented women who view themselves as highly instrumental seem to experience relatively low success anxiety. Further, fear of success in them seems to be associated with their perception that the instrumentality is inadequate; not that their instrumentality is excessive or carry the meaning of disavowal of femininity (Herron, 1984).

A few theorists have postulated differences between the vocational needs of career-oriented and home-maker oriented women (Borgent, et al., 1968; Bardwick, 1971; Oliver, 1974). Yuen et al. (1980) have adduced evidence to show that the length of time a worker remains on a job depends on the extent to which the worker's vocational needs are being satisfied by the job. Findings of other studies however suggest that needs do not seem to distinguish career-oriented from others. Aspirations are found to be a stronger predictor than aptitudes among managerial women and working women. The career choices made based on their aspirations distinguish managerial women from working women (Finch, 1981).
No systematic relationship could be discerned between achievement motivation and career patterns among college educated women. The trend of results suggesting a temporal cycle in the level of achievement motive \( n_{\text{Ach}} \) associated with a women's age and family situation, and association between high \( n_{\text{Ach}} \) and returning to paid employment failed to replicate itself when the study is extended to a national level from that of a regional level (Baruch, 1967).

Factor analytically identified 'competence' and 'nurturance' factors in self perception among women are reported to contribute to involvement in a male dominated high level occupation. Further, involvement in a non-traditional occupation is found to be associated with work role salience—a trait stereotypically associated with male work Ethic. The self perception of working mother reveals that she perceives herself more competent and less nurturant than mothers working part time schedules (Luchow, 1982).

Personal characteristics are reported to distinguish women executives. Women who succeed in the professional hierarchy of management are found to be unique, not too emotional, capable of handling the pressures of managerial role, serious about a career and are capable of achieving in traditionally male dominated professions. They also
have "strong motivation to manage" and "sensetivity and/or concern for people" and long term commitments (Hughes, 1981).

Successful women managers in mid-career regard job both as a source of satisfaction and tension. The results stress the fact that when women have made specific choices about their jobs, careers, and/or personal lines were more satisfied, experienced less stress and were more successful than those women who had not. Both women and men managers have similar major life structure components but different minor life structure components (Schlesinger, 1981).

Nurse managers in traditionally feminine vocations and business women in traditionally masculine vocations endorse same feminine and masculine characteristics and coping strategies (reactive role behavior, and structural role redefinition). But, the androgynous nurse managers are reported to make greater use of personal role redefinition. This is interpreted as due to the women managers' involvement in the feminine vocation of nursing where polarization of masculine and feminine characteristics reflects an inability to fully integrate those characteristics. The androgynous business women managers involvement in masculine, non traditional vocation is considered to
facilitate the integration of the masculine and feminine characteristics in a more flexible and situationally adoptive manner (Garrett, 1982).

Self employed women tend to attribute causes of success and failure incidents which result in a cycle of "Positive expectation". Agentic and communal meanings are balanced for success incidents while whole failure incidents carry heavier agentic meanings among them. Success is attributed to effort, ability, and information or experience, confidence and intelligence and failure is attributed to information or experience, powerful people and others help. The least attributed causes of success remain to be accident, powerful people and ease of the task and the least attributed causes for failure are religious faith, accident 'who you know' and lack of intelligence among self-employed women (Flexman, 1980).

Typical coping styles to role stress have been identified among women entrepreneurs. Intrapersistive style is found dominating style of coping with various role stresses among the women entrepreneurs. Externality is found to be positively and significantly related to various types of role stress. Fear of success was positively and significantly related to result in adequacy and role inadequacy dimensions of role stress (Surti and Sarupria, 1981).
The self ratings of the majority of nursing students are found to be higher than those of other students on hardworking and submissive characteristics and lower on leadership and originality. Girls training for various career other than nursing rate themselves highest on the characteristics they view as most necessary for their specific fields, medical students on IQ and educational majors on originality (White, 1971).

Women entering medical profession are reported to be characterized by a desire for independence and a need to perceive a challenging vocation (Williams, 1971).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This chapter has attempted to summarize previous researches relating to personality and role, drawing overall conclusions relating to possible link between personality and vocational roles. A role has certain individual dimensions. Typical personality differences are found to be associated with plans for marriage and career. Typical personality characteristics are found to characterize traditional as well as liberation oriented women. A variety of personality traits have been identified to describe the personality of women in a variety of careers as well as entrepreneurship. These characteristics include self-definition and social definition, agentic and
communal meaning, masculinity and femininity and androgyny coping style, assertiveness, self acceptance, fear of success, aspiration, competence, nurturance, role salience, strong motivation to manage and sensitivity and/or concern for people, IQ and originality, independence and attitude of themselves. The upshot of the review emphasizes that a variety of personality characteristics characterize women in different walks of life. The review impresses that orientation of women has a crucial role in determining the vocational role among women. Further the pattern of attitudes that has a bearing on vocational roles seem to play a role in vocational choice among women. The review also impresses that there is a dearth of studies that approach the problem of the personality vocational roles relationship applying a comprehensive personality theory of vocational choice. These conclusions provide a pointer for choosing the variables studied in this investigation.