# INTRODUCTION

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"A wife is half the man, the best of friends,

The root of the family and its perpetuity,

The source of well-being ........

Wives    are   friends,    in   the   wildnerness".

Vatsayayana.

India has always been known for its close approxima-
tion  to  the pure form of caste system.  The  traditional
Indian  caste system was of immense complexity and  varied
greatly  in different parts of India.  The life styles  of
the people were determined basically by  ascription rather
than achievement.

The residential location , nature of work, religious
rites,  socail and cultural activities,  economic indepen-
dence,  hierarchy of relations,  aspirations and  expecta-
tions  and value systems were determined  (Betelle,  1965;
Gore,  1965; Karve,1968; Ross,  1961; and Srinivas, 1966).

At  present  new styles of life are emerging on  the
basis of achievement of an individual rather than  ascrip-
tion.  Like most of the developing countries of the world,
India  is  also caught up in a fundamental  and  inclusive
process  of change.  To a considerable extent every aspect
of life is being affected by numerous factors. Aileen Ross

(1961), Ginsberg (1966) and others have identified urbani-
ation, industrialization and education as the leading
forces.

Women the better halves, the fragile among God's
creations are honoured in books and harassed in practical
life. No doubt India the land of Buddha and Gandhi regar-
ded women as female Gods. The praise on women in vedic
literature and puranas add gloary to their status in
society. When we turn the pages of history, there had been
ups and downs in the status of women.

The prevalent attitude towards women suffers from an
uncomfortable paradox. The official jargon and idiom of
the articulabe elite gives the impression that emancipa-
tion is round the corner, but the position, status and
condition of the mass of Indian women, however, remains
unchanged in the reality of their daily lives. There is a
great hiatus indeed an untruth that divides the political
vocobulary from the beliefs, customs and traditions of
most Indians (Kamala Bhasin, 1972)

Although Indian society has been largely characte-
rised by an attachment to traditional things, women's
status and role have witnessed rapid transformation in
recent years. The bulk of Indian womanhood is still back-
ward as compared to women in the west as regards education

and participation in social and national life. Since Independence, however they have gained an accession of status, both legal and social.

One of the most important developments after independence has been an unprecedentedly rapid and sweeping entrance of women into the occupational structure. M.N. Srinivas observes that " it is a fact that a large number of women are employed today in the cities as teachers, clerks, doctors, nurses, welfare workers and from the point of view of the traditional society, this is indeed revolutionary (1966). The traditional Indian system is being profoundly shaken and the women's life style is being rewritten. Social values are changing and the normative structures are practically loosing their force and grip in stustaining the traditional system.

· The working women however is not a new addition to the Indian scene. Women in the lower strata of society have been working since long for wages in factories, as menial servants or as unskilled labourers and on construction sites. It is only the women of middle or upper classes who were confined to homes and taking up jobs was considered derogatory for them. Various socio-economic and politico-legal factors have brought about a newly emerging middle class of working women in India. To women work is a necessity particularly in these days of spirall-

ing prices, when even a simple meal and shelter cannot most often be assured for a whole family with the earning of a single member.

Working women! the term has a special `connotation' - although we might say all women who work are working women. For instance we do not speak of `working men' in the same sense because all men are supposed to work. "Out of the sweat of the brow thou shalt earn thy bread", was addressed to Adam we might say. Generally women's toil in the home is not recognized as work. These jobs are alluded to as household chores. Therefore women who are gainfully employed outside the home are considered as working women.

Ever since the second world war in most countries of the west, there has been a large turn out of married women in the labour market. This was made possible by new labour saving machinery in the home, new inventions and distributive techniques in industry and trade, smaller families and the spread of equialitarian family ideology.The Indian working women's lot is much harder than that of her counterpart in many other countries where entire industries are geared to take in drudgery out of housework. She cannot pick up ready-made food packets to eat on her way home from work, and has few gadgets to depend on. Wholetime servants are no longer within the reach of middle

income families. A part-time sweeper is all they can afford unless they are lucky enough to be in areas where maid servants are available to wash up kitchen utensils once a day.

On the other hand she does not carry out efficiently her work as a mother and wife, apart from being accused of being inefficient and vain she suffers from `guilty' conscience and finds herself torn between home and work. In such circumstances where the husband and other members of the family do not co-operate and change their attitudes and behaviour pattern of working wifes' life and the wife insists on their accepting this change, marital frictions and family tensions arise and create social and psychological as well as inter and intra personal problems at home.

The family can be pictured as a system of roles. Who gets what roles, how they are distributed and the functions of the roles are to a great extent influenced by sex, age, kinship, occupation structure and the level of technolog y . For the existence and suvrival of the family unit, its functions are divided and grouped into roles and each member is cast in a particular set of roles. These roles are interdependent and mutually affected. As Turner posits "each family member then depends on the others playing their roles to make it possible for him to

play his role or else he must induce others to change their roles so that he can change his"(1970).

An important characteristic of the developing and modern complex societies is the differentiation of functions in the family system. The differentiation will enable the members of a group to define and redefine their roles and activities so that they do not overlap into the functions of the other roles. In fact Turner acknowledges that division of labour between husband and wife differed greatly from time to time and from society to society (1970). An integrated system of roles would justify the imposition of obligations on other members of the unit and at the same time acknowledge his right to demand fulfilment of their obligations toward him. This principle also demands that the roles as reflected in the duties and rights somehow be balanced in the mind of the actors.

The social norms and values are the basic components of "role" and due to the process of change the norms and values that define the role of women in society are at present a mixture of traditional and modern elements. The traditional values enjoyed upon women to confine her role to the family, to be subordinate to her parents and usband and to find lifes fulfilment by serving them. Modern values stress that women should follow a career of

her choice   as man does and find the fulfilment   of   her
life in extra-domestic roles if so desired.

A woman who holds more traditional values is   likely
to perceive her family roles of mother,   wife,   housewife,
etc,   in   more or less within the four walls of the house.
But   if   she   is involved in another   social   system   with
inalienable role expectations,   she is likely to find   the
performance of the various familial and professional roles
difficult.

All   structures   are inter-related and so   influence
each other,   the family and occupational system are parti-
cularly interdependent.   The   findings   of   a   number   of
studies   suggest   that the mother's participation   in   the
world  of work has brought about structural and   functional
alterations   in the   family that are appropriate to a   new
division   of   labour between the family and   other   social
institutions.

Sociologists   have been actively concerned with   the
conflict   between the new role embraced by women as provi-
der and their traditional role as housekeeper,   supervisor
of   children etc.   They have arrived at different   evalua-
tions of this emerging phenomenon, ranging from its consi-
deration   as   dysfunctional   in the   Mertonian   sense   by
Bossard   (1954),   through   Parsons   and   Bales   (1955)   who

regard it as non-functional in the family to Komarovsky (1953) and Landis(1960) who view it as functional. Nadel(1957) who views it as behavioural attributes.

Conflict is seen in terms of basic disharmony between the essential commitments of particular roles and the culture of ethos in which they are performed (Grace,1972). It is claimed that roles having a moral and ethical orientation and which are concerned with the transmission of values, are exposed to considerable con- flict in the cultures of advanced industrial societies (Reisman et.al 1950; Floud, 1962; Wilson 1962) Sometimes social evoluation gives rise to new roles the expectation of which are not clear. In such a situation strain is produced by an individuals uncertainty about what is expected and by the vague interpretations of which role behaviour is appropriate (Secord & Backman,1964)

In assuming role for the self there is a tendency to select and emphasis certain wants and goals on the basis of their relevance for the self-image held by the indivi- dual (Young, 1948). Rotter(1970) maintained that the potentiality of a given behaviour or set of behaviour to occur in some specific situation is dependent on an indi- vidual's expectancy that behaviour will lead to a particu- lar goal or satisfaction in comparision to the relative

strength of other behaviour potentials in the same situation. Thus an individual develops an ideal level of expectancy in relation to a particular role which may not tally with his actual level of expectancy. When the discrepancy between ideal expectation and actual expectation is large, individual experiences more conflict .

From a social view point, it is usually assumed, if not always accepted, that one of the primary aims in encouraging women to go in far higher education is to equip them for obtaining a job so that they can be self-sufficient.(Ramachandran,1970). A highly educated women is more likely to get a white collar job than a less educated woman. National committee on Status of Woman(1975) has reported that "It is true in particular for the upper strata of the lower class and for the middle strata of the entire society in which education has been taken up as a mark of social respectability and also an instrument of economic gain". This has been supported by many other researchers (Hate,1969; Rande & Ramachandran,1970; Sullerote, 1971; Nye & Hoffman,1963; Y.M.C.A. Study,1971). New trend of small family and earlier completion of parity has pushed up the participation rates of married women in the gainful employment (Nye &Hoffman,1963). The study of age group is relevant for idenitfying the age group of working mothers at which they feel highest degree of role conflict. This has been upported by researchers like

Nevill and Demico (1977); Myrdal and Klein(1968), and may others. Age and marital status are highly interrelated attributes (Rande & Ramachandran 1970).

Indian joint family system is changing and today there is constant change towards nuclear kind of family system which is said to be a better fit to the urban way of living (Gore,1968; Kapadia, 1958; Sudha Kaldate 1961; Srivastava 1978; Y.M.C.A. Study, 1971) Hate(1969), Kulkarni (1960), Khanna and Varghese (1978), Rapoportand Rapoport (1969,1971), Rande and Ramachandran (1970), and Srivastava (1978) have found that nuclear families were prevalent amongworking women. The studies of Kapadia (1965) Desai (1964), Lakshminarayana (1968) and a few others discussed that though the joint family has experienced some structural alterations, functually it is joint. This help the working women in many ways. Another characteristic trend of the modern times is that the size of the family, in general has been reduced i.e. from an estimated number of eight to two. Today, working women have fewer childern than non-working women (Hall & Gordon, 1973; Khanna & Varghese, 1978; Nye &Hoffman, 1963; Nevila Demico, 1977; Rande & Ramachanran, 1970; Ridker & Nordberg, 1976; and Srivastava, 1978)

The attitudes, beliefs and values of the Indian

women have changed very much (Akhtar & others,1969; Arora

Bhattacharya & others, 1963; Baig,1976; Cormark,1961;

Desai,1957; Desai 1975; Sengupta,1960; Hate,1969;

Kapur,1974; Raja Gopalan,1963, Ramachandran,1970). The

ideas attitudes and values of Indian working women are

different from housewives (Kapur,1974; Khanna & Varghese,

1978; Srivastava,1978; and others)

There is a solid evidence to indicate that economic

necessity is one of the strong motives behind the work

force of the women (Arora, Brattachary & others, 1963;

Brown, 1964; Beyon & Blackburn, 1972; Cunnison, 1966;

Chakraborty,1977; Dhingra, 1972; Jephcott et al.1962;

Kapur, 1974; Kalarani, 1976; Khanna & Varghese, 1978;

Orden & Bradburn, 1968; Nye & Hoffman, 1963; Varma, 1964;

and others).

To earn money is not the only motive behind the

employment of women. The others were socio-psychological

and situational factors. Studies showed that these socio-

psychological motives were to have independent status of

their own, to satisfy their intellectual need and needs

of achievement, to get recognition and fame(Kapur,1974),

to get happiness and satisfaction,(Arora, Bhattacharya &

Others, 1963) to get intellectual and emotional satisfac-

tion, (Chakroborty,1977), to emphasise self-expression,

personal development and to reward inter - personalship

(Rapoport and Rapoport, 1969).

Employment of middle class women is a new thing, no fixed pattern or redefinition of role of women in terms of the changed context have yet been achieved. Neither working wives, nor their husbands or other relatives, nor society in general are clear and definite about their roles. Women's role and positions at present are, therefore, not clearly defined and thus this situation leads to role conflict (Chakraborty, 1977; Menon,1964; Mahajan,1966; McKinnon,1964; Nevill & Demico,1975; Raja Gopalan, 1963; Wardwell, 1952).

In the role relationship term, a married working woman is a wife, mother daughter-in-law neighbour, worker, subordinate, peers and so on. She has to play all these roles i.e. traditional roles and modern role of worker, simultaneously and expectations of these roles and demands might lead her to conflicting situations because of their built-in-antagonism . Holahan and Gilbert(1979) in their study made following appraisal of the situations which lead to role conflict: `One would anticipate that the women in dual-career marriage are experiencing higher role conflict than their spouses since they are now actively involved in adding a role of earner which may require attitude and behaviour that are inconsistent with those of

their more traditional roles.

In the inter-role situation, family relation is of significance (Dahlstrom,1967; Powell, 1963; Hoffman,1961; Sullerot,1971; D'Souza,1968; Kalarani,1976; Singh,1972; Nevill &Demico 1975a, 1975b). Since married women are a member of a family, their decision to work or refrain from work depends upon the views and the needs of their husband and other family members and presuppose a series of practical adjustment, some degree of co-operation and support for the role ideal by the husband and the family members (Dohlstrom, 1967). Kapur(1974) found that presence of in-laws was a source of conflict Singh (1972) reported that size of family was the contributing factor in role conflict among working women.

The attitude of husband is often a decisive factor in his wifes' decision to take up a job. Whereas a favourable attitude of husband towards his wife's employment facilitates her career choice, unfavourable attitude of husband hinders her employment. Husband's attitude is the factor that covaries most closely with the role conflict in a working wife.(Blood & Hamblin 1958; Blood, 1963; Bailyn,1970) Wife's work participation can create a potential status problem for husband. Husbands can feel threatened by the fact that they are no longer solely responsible for the support of their families, that their

wives are no longer economically dependent upon them
(Dahlstrom, 1967; Kapur, 1970; Kalarani,1976; Nischol,
1975; Rapoport & Rapoport, 1965,1969). Nischol(1975) has
reported that "in fact the male co-partners have not yet
reconciled themselves to some inconvenience resulting from
their wive's gainful employment outside the home, their
expectations continue to be traditional.

This attitude of husband heightened the existing
tension of the working mothers". Dhingra (1972) found that
husbands were inconsiderate and often demanded a tradi-
tional subjugation of the female and her confined perfor-
mance of the household chores by herself. Inaddition to
her job demands. Arora et al (1963) concluded that tradi-
tional attitudes of husbands, always produce role conflict
among working wives. Gordon and Hall (1974) reported that
the more the male dominated environment found outside the
home, the more diffculity would be created for women.

Powell (1963) has stated that "Students if family
have assumed that adding to the role of an employee to the
woman's role of wife and mother often necessitates
a redefinition of the role of family members in terms of
duties and responsibilities". A working wife cannot
manage effectively the household job and employment if
her husband does not extend his help in the household
work.

Dhingra(1972) found that almost half of the married women of his sample were experiencing substantial difficulty in carrying out their household duties of their wife role adequately including the care and attention given to the husband, along with their jobs.

Arora, Bhattacharya and others (1963) found that the strain was felt all the more because by and large, husbands do not help in the house keeping even in the families where there was no domestic servant or no elderly ladies to look after the household chores. Kapur (1970) observed hat though many of the working wives accepted their dual roles, they normally received little help from husband in carrying out their two-fold duties and thus experiencing role conflict.

The number and age of children are directly related to role conflict in working women(Bhatty & Bhatty,1971; Desai,1963; D'Souza, 1968; Yogendra singh 1973; Dahlstrom, 1967; Hoff man,1961; Orden & Bradburn, 1968; Sachdev, 1974; Singh, 1972; Weller,1968). According to Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) family life in general and children in particular are highly salient factor in producing role conflict.

Singh (1972) found that among the factors generating

role conflict, age and number of the children were quite important because mother's personal attention was most essential to the children when they were small. The number of children is obviously relevant because fewer children means less work (Hoffman,1963) and subsequently less role conflict among working mothers. Role strain increased with the increase in the number of children (Kalarani,1976; Orden & Bradburn, 1968; Siegal and Hass, 1963; Sachdeve, 1974). According to Hoffman (1963) working mothers experienced more conflict when there were pre-school children in home. Nevil and Demico(1975) found that there appeared to be most stressful period of adjustment when a female became a mother and another stress period when she had fairy large member of children. Holahan and Gilbert (1979) and Johnson and Johnson(1976) found that the greatest strain was in the maternal role with overload of large number of children. The physical and mental health of the children is another factor which produces role conflict in the maternal roles of working women (Hoffman,1963) Rapoport and Rapoport(1969) found that it was important for working mother's children to be healthy because there was little room for illness in the system of dual career family.

As a traditional rule, the married woman is responsible for the large share of house work. A married woman has to manage in terms of time both the household and the

job responsibilities. Different activities attached to different roles require definite amount of time in a day. The limitation of time always produces role conflict among working women.

Goode(1960) had maintained that while meeting different expectations and obligations attached with different roles, woman experienced conflict due to time, place, or resources. Time of a working woman is related to the type of household and job responsibilities, the distribution of housework task among the members of family, number of paid assistances, the services available, and the other use of work-saving devices(Dahlstrom 1967; Homna 1963)

Vasantha Kumar (1964) has found that strain of work at home and office coupled with lack of household amenities and vanishing domestic help, have contributed to the experience of role conflict among working women. Rapoport and Rapoport (1969) have used work load in place of time limitation as work load is directly related with time. According to them, work load is related with role conflict.

Bhatty and Bhatty(1971) have pointed out that ousehold work load has become the problem for working women as the joint family is dying out and servants are not available today Singh (1972) has confirmed that the

amount of time spent outside home was an important factor which was associated to role conflict. Kapur's study (1974) indicated that the women who choose to combine marriage with career face almost a situation of normlessness and they hardly know how to apportion time and resources between these two major responsibilities. This ade them face and experience great conflict, tension, and strain. Chakraborty(1977) found that the role conflict was related to time in term of non-availability or high cost of various labour and time saving devices, tremendous transport problem which took much of the time of the working women, and scarcity of day care centres for young children.

Following Rotter's (1970) expectancy theory, we can assume that working women develop certain expectations of help from job and family. These expectancies from job may ᵤe of economic or personal gain. Similarly, while playing different roles of a wife or mother, a woman may expect help from other members of family likly helping in cooking, child care, supervision of education of children, shopping and like. When the fulfilment of her expectancies are not achieved she feels frustrated which leads to role conflict. The above fact has been supported by Hall and Gordon (1973) and Kapur(1974). With the multiplicity of roles, her behaviour become complex in terms of expected

and actual conduct (Kalarani, 1976)

Grace (1972) has outlined potential role conflict situations for the teacher which also hold true for working women. The extent to which working woman actually perceives these situations as problem or feels personally troubled by them, will depend upon three mediating variables 1) Characteristics of the conflict including the nature and intensity of the conflict 2) characteristis of the working woman including her age; personal qualification, family structure, residence of working woman, household mechanization modern kitchen aid, number of house helper, length of service or marriage and so on. 3) characteristic of organisation. These include the type and nature of organizatns where woman is employed. All these can contribute to the role conflict of working women (Chakraborty,1977; Grace, 1972; Kapur,1974; Kalarani,1976)

The studies on role conflict and role strain lend support to the fact that tolerence level of the strain might bear some relationship with personality of the role players (Sinha,1973). If the conflict is deeply felt, it may be reflected in lack of adjustment either in family, in social and emotional life (Burchand, 1954; Cousin, 1951) or in job setting (Khan, 1964). Kapur (1970) has indicated that working women manage household responsibility less effectively than housewives. Chakraborthy (1977),

Nevill and Demico (1974, 1975), Myrdal and Kelin (1968) Nye & Hoffman(1963) have reported that working women suffered from 'guilt feeling' due to non-fulfilment of their legitimate duties. Chakraborty (1977) and Kapur (1969) found that highest number of working mothers experienced role conflict because of their limited physical capacity and energy and stigma.

The Indian scene has many conflict resolving factors also. The fact that some parents-in-law or other relatives live with them relives the working women from the anxiety of looking after their children. The middle-class husband has traditionally handles certain household chores such as buying vegetables, bringing milk from milk booth, taking the children to the doctor and payment of bills or other matters. But as women comes out of four walls and take up job outside home, these responsibilities are added to her role itself. '

The present study deals with role conflict among working women - a comparitive study of blue collar workers and white collar workers. No specific theory guided the formulation of the problem but the theoretical framework is drawn from Bates' (1962,1956) discussion of position, role and role conflict.

Given the wife-mother positon a focal one, some of her principle roles within the traditional perspective are that of keeping a house, supervising and teaching children, playing with them, cooking for family, cleaning the house, entertaining the guests and taking care of the aged in the house. All these roles are governed by their corresponding norms. In this model is added the new role of earner or provider whose structural distance from other roles is relatively great, involving extramural and omni-lateral roles. As the two roles of a housewife and wage earner are active, there is `strain toward consistency'. The role of an employee being rigid, it modifies other flexible or indeterminate roles that of housewife and mother.

Keeping in mind all these considerations the present study has been undertaken with a view to examine the role conflict among the working woman focusing the mother-wife role.