

METHOD OF STUDY

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RESEARCH PROBLEM

The problem selected for the study is role conflict among the working women: a comparative study of blue collar and white collar women. Recent years have brought about tremendous change in the life of women all over the world, influencing their attitudes, values, inspirations and ways of feelings. One of the main enduring consequences of the recent social evolution for women has been their emancipation from their tradition bound ethos both legally and politically by virtue of various acts and statutes (Kapur, 1972).

By coming out of their homes and taking up gainful employment women have broken the traditional notion that working outside is derogatory. Today, by and large even married women take up a gainful employment. To their old roles of mother and wife, the new role as earner has been added.

Being subjected to the dual demands of home and work, which are often antagonistic in nature, the working mother is liable to experience role conflict. In addition to the biological function, she has to perform because of

her sex and culturally defined woman's roles in which she has to act, she is confronted sometimes with the responsibilities and duties connected with her employment (Kapur 1972). Tradition still makes housework less acceptable for a man than wage earning is for a woman. The wage earning wife has thus dual responsibilities which not only overload her but may be so incompatible that they cannot be performed properly. Having less time and more incongruent demands of dual roles the working woman is experiencing more and more role conflict.

The present study has made an attempt to explore the above said phenomenon and the sources which are responsible for role conflict in working woman.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- 1) To know the levels of role conflict among working women in general
- 2) To see if there is any difference between blue collar and white collar working women in their perception of role conflict
- 3) To identify the reasons of role conflict.
- 4) To discover whether the following have any impact on role conflict.
 - a) Demographic characteristics of respondents.
 - b) Social characteristics of the respondents
 - c) Motivation to work.
 - d) Goal attainment with reference to motivation

- e) Job satisfaction
- f) Expectation of help from other family members
- g) Actual help from other family members
- h) Expectation of understanding from others concerned
- i) Perception of dissatisfaction shown by others concerned
- j) The values the working women hold.

Hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses formulated for the present study :

1. Employed housewives whose primary motivation to work is economic are likely to perceive higher degree of role conflict.
2. Employed housewives whose motivation is non-economic face lower degree of role conflict.
3. High economic motivation coupled with high economic goal attainment results in low role conflict.
4. High economic motivation coupled with low economic goal attainment results in high role conflict.
5. Low economic motivation coupled with high economic goal attainment results in low role conflict.
6. Low economic motivation coupled with low economic goal attainment results in low role conflict.
7. High non-economic motivation coupled with high non-economic goal attainment results in low role conflict.

8. High non-economic motivation coupled with low non-economic goal attainment results in high role conflict.
9. Low non-economic motivation coupled with high non-economic goal attainment results in low role conflict.
10. Low non-economic motivation coupled with low non-economic goal attainment results in low role conflict.
11. Job satisfaction is inversely related to role conflict.
12. Getting actual help coupled with expectation of help results in low role conflict.
13. Getting actual help coupled with no expectation of help results in low role conflict.
14. Getting no help coupled with expectation of help results in high role conflict.
15. Getting no help coupled with no expectation of help results in low role conflict.
16. Dissatisfaction from others coupled with expectation of understanding results in high role conflict.
17. Dissatisfaction from others coupled with no expectation of understanding results in low role conflict.
18. No dissatisfaction from others coupled with expectation of understanding results in low role conflict.
19. No dissatisfaction from others coupled with no expectation of understanding results in low role conflict.

20. Role conflict is less among those who hold modern values.
21. A woman who holds more traditional values is likely to perceive high role conflict.
22. Role conflict is more likely to emerge in joint families.
23. A greater length of service will lead to lesser role conflict.
24. Longer duration of marriage results in low role conflict.
25. Somewhat older age, greater family income and lesser dependency load on the family will be associated with lesser role conflict.

OPERATIONALIZATION OF THE CONCEPTS:

Economic motivation

It is the motivation of the working women to have taken up employment which is instrumental i.e oriented to the economic gains.

Non-Economic motivation

It is the motivation which is non-instrumental i.e oriented mainly to the personal intrinsic satisfaction that can be obtained through employment outside home.

Job satisfaction

Satisfaction of the working women with the characteristics and environment of their job.

Goal attainment -Economic

It is the fulfilment of the economic aspiration with which the working women have taken up employment.

Goal attainment-non Economic

It is the fullfilment oftheir non-economic intrinsic aspirations with which they have taken up employment.

Role Conflict

The difficulty experienced by working woman with family responsibilities and maladjustment to her role as housewife and a sense of guilty feeling for not performing the same role perfectly and/or for letting other family members to do what she is traditionally supposed to do.

Expectation of help

It is the expectation of the working women from other family members that they should help her in performing her housewife role.

Actual help

It is the help that the working women get from their family members in performing housewife role.

Expectation of understanding

The working women's expectation that others should understand her difficulties in performing her housewife role.

Perceived dissatisfaction of others

The working women's perception of dissatisfaction about her poor role performance shown by others concerned.

Traditional value

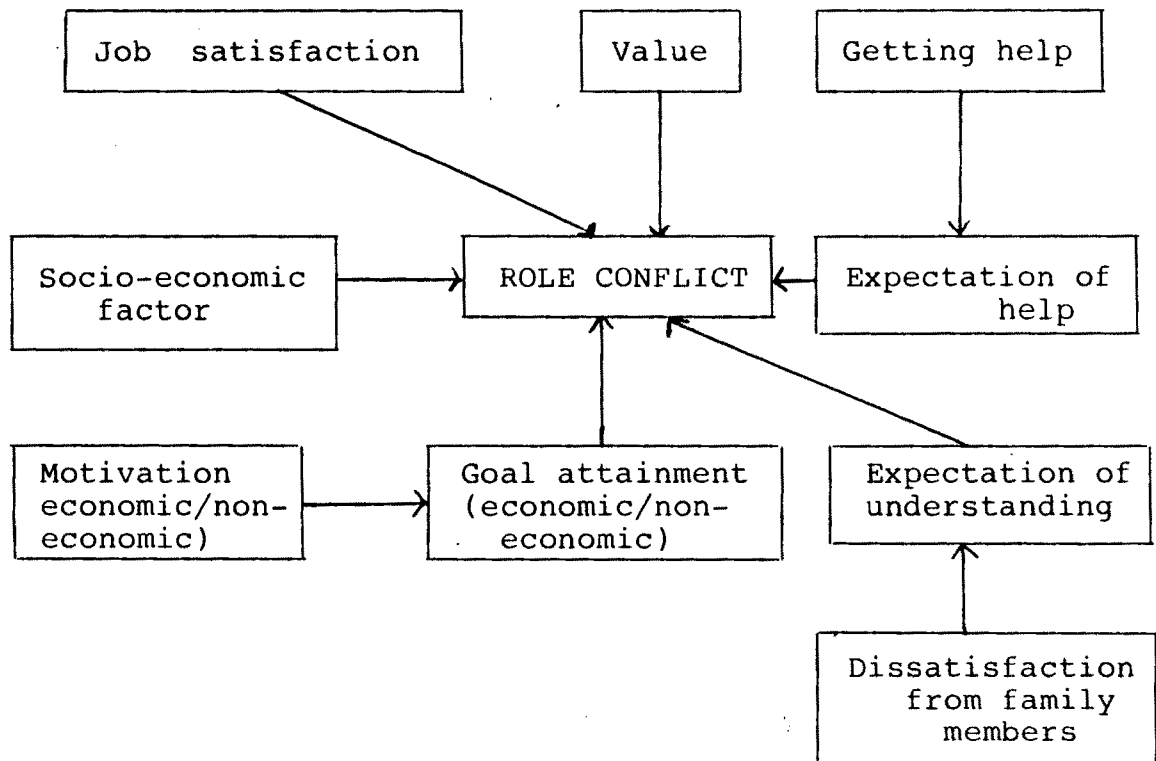
The working women's belief in the traditional sexual division of labour i.e men are to earn and women are to look after the household.

Modern value

Working women's disbelief in the traditional sexual division of labour with overtones of equality.

RESEARCH DESIGN

<u>Independent variable</u>	<u>Moderator</u>	<u>Dependent variable</u>
Socio-economic factors	-	Role conflict
Motivation (economic/non-economic)	Goal attainment (economic/non economic)	Role conflict
Getting help from family members	Expectation of help	Role conflict
Dissatisfaction by family members	Expectation of understanding	Role conflict
Job satisfaction	-	Role conflict
Values(traditional/modern)	-	Role conflict



SELECTION OF THE SAMPLE:

Selection of the sample was based on the following criteria.

Married working women having at least one child and one year experience in job are included in the sample frame.

Since the present study had its aim to compare the white collar and blue collar women workers with respect to their role conflict, the first thing was to select the appropriate population for both, on the basis of the above mentioned three criteria.

For blue collar, women employed in the organized sector, textile mills was found feasible in Coimbatore. For white collar population bank employees were taken.

Blue collar population

Among the textile mills in Coimbatore city two were found to have employed relatively more women workers and hence these were selected. There was no list available in these two mills regarding the workers marital and mothers status. Hence a first hand enumeration was undertaken by the researcher herself and it was found that 218 married women fulfilling the three criteria were available for the purpose of the present study.

White collar population

All the nationalized banks within the city limits of Coimbatore were selected for the study. In this case also a preliminary enumeration was to be made to ascertain the sampling frame fulfilling the three criteria. This task was also carried out by the researcher herself and a list was prepared. There were a total of 187 such women employees in 33 banks and they constituted the sample frame for 115 white collar workers.

Sampling-first stage

The sample size was decided to be 300, -150 blue collar and 150 white collar workers.

Sampling-second stage

In the second stage of sampling, the desired 150 respondents each were to be selected from the already prepared lists. Among the 218 blue collar workers, elderly women who were having married sons and daughters and young women having only a child below 6 or 9 months age, were left out. And from the rest, those were available when the investigator visited the factories were contacted and data was collected. The investigator stopped collection of data, when 150 schedules were filled in, from amongst the blue collar workers.

The white collar population was totally 187 from whom 150 were selected. Likewise in the bank also, women who were having only a child below 6 or 9 months were also left out. The rest were contacted and those available and willing to co-operate, were contacted and when it reached 150 data collection was stopped.

TOOL OF DATA COLLECTION:

An interview schedule was prepared keeping in mind that part of the potential respondents were to be textile workers who were supposed to have different levels of education. Before preparing the interview schedule the researcher had a detailed discussion with some women workers of textile mills, women bank employees, teachers and lectures in schools and colleges. This enabled the researcher to identify the relevent areas of enquiry pertaining to the problem. Then the interview schedule was formulated.

The schedule includes questions pertaining to Personal and social characteristics, work history, statements indicating motivation for work, goal attainment, job satisfaction, traditional modern values, role conflict, husband's attitude towards wife's employment and respondent's life satisfaction.

PRE TESTING

The tentative schedule was pretested among 40 women workers of both the textile mills and bank employees on the basis of the pre-test necessary changes, deletion and changes were made and thus the schedule was finalised.

FIELD WORK

Field work was conducted during the months of April - June of 1987. The researcher was given permission to interview the workers in the textile mills at the work spot itself. The bank employees were also contacted at the workplace but during specific time (2 p.m to 5 p.m). Initial rapport with respondents was established by exchanging friendly greetings. The nature of the study and the purpose were explained to them. Time taken for each interview ranged from 40 to 45 minutes on an average.

METHOD OF ANALYSIS

After the data collection all the completed schedules were again checked to ensure completeness of the data. Coding was done and then transferred to master sheets. Necessary tables were drawn from these sheets for analysis.

In the present study role conflict is the major dependent variable. The following are treated as the major independent variables which are supposed to have a bearing on role conflict.

Independent variables

1. Personal and social characteristics.
2. Length of service in the present occupation
3. Motivation (economic) for taking employment
4. Motivation (non-economic) for taking employment
5. Job satisfaction
6. Actual help from family members
7. Dissatisfaction shown by others concerned
8. Values - traditional and modern

Moderator variables:

1. Goal- attainment - economic
(As to act as a moderator in the relationship between economic motivation and role conflict)
2. Goal - attainment - non-economic
(As a moderator in the relationship between non-economic motivation and role conflict)
3. Expectation of help from family members
(As a moderator in the relationship between actual help got from family members and role conflict)
4. Expectation of understanding from family members
(As a moderator in the relationship between dissatisfaction among family members and role conflict).

There are eight statements regarding motivation, four statements for economic motivation and four for non-economic motivation. Each statement entails a five point scale-strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, strongly disagree and scores are assigned as

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Positive statement	2	1	0	-1	-2
Negative statement	-2	-1	0	1	2

These very same items were given weightage according to their ranking by the respondents. The resulting score on the scale of motivation is weighted rank order score.

The items indicating goal attainment and traditional modern values entail a five point Likert type scale (as stated above) - where a particular response is to be placed. There are both positive and negative statements (i.e positive and negative to the concerned concept)

Thus having a high score denotes high possession of a particular attribute and low score, low possession of the attribute.

For measuring job satisfaction, the items entails a three point scale- the scoring is as

Satisfied very much	Satisfied to some extent	not satisfied
2	1	0

These items are also ranked by the respondents and weightage is given according to the ranks. The resulting score on the scale of job satisfaction is weighted rank order score.

The items indicating role conflict, perceived dissatisfaction, expectation of help and expectation of understanding entails five point scale and scores are assigned accordingly.

Role Conflict

Difficult - Very difficult, difficult, undecided, easy
very easy

Guilt - Feeling guilty very much, some extent,
undecided, not feeling guilty, don't
bother at all

Dissatisfaction- Highly dissatisfied, dissatisfied,
undecided, satisfied, highly satisfied.

Expectation of help Expectation of understanding.	Expect very much, some extent, undecided don't expect, don't bother at all
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The 16 items of role conflict are regarding

1. Cooking
2. Washing utencils
3. Washing clothes
4. Sweeping and swabbing
5. Serving food for husband
6. Arranging things intact for husband
7. Bathing the child(ren)
8. Feeding the child(ren)
9. Looking after in times of illness
10. Supervision of education of child(ren)
11. Shopping
12. Fetching and storing water
13. Attending to guests
14. Visiting relatives
15. Attending social functions
16. Taking part in religious ceremonies

Among the 16 items, for 44 respondents the item of supervision of education was not applicable because they had either small children or grownup ones. So for analysing role conflict all the items are added for the particular respondent(s) and then divided by the applicable item numbers. The average scores are obtained for role conflict items.

Here strict classification method was followed. A continuum is segmented into three possibly equal categories that would denote high, moderate and low possession of a particular attribute. With this continuum a respondent could be easily said as to have high, moderate or low level of an attribute. The continua so prepared are

	<u>High</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Low</u>
Motivation	30 to 21	20 to 10	9 to 0
Goal attainment	20 to 7	6 to -6	-7 to -20
Job satisfaction	450 to 301	300 to 151	150 to 0
Traditional modern value	30 to 1 (Modern)	0 to -30 (traditional)	
Role conflict	2 to .64	.63 to -.63	-.64 to -2
Dissatisfaction	32 to 11	10 to -10	-11 to -32
Expectation of help	24 to 9	8 to -8	-9 to -24
Expectation of understanding	32 to 11	10 to -10	-11 to -32

Actual help and expectation of help are applicable only to first 12 items of role conflict. So wherever these two variables are tested against role conflict only the corresponding/respective twelve items of role conflict are taken into account.

STATISTICAL TESTS

Percent distribution has been used in stating personal, social characteristics and other mono variable description.

Chi-square test has been used to know the significance of relationship using the formula

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where

O= observed frequency

and

E= expected frequency

The level of significance has been chosen as 0.05.

To know the strength of the relationship, contingency coefficient has also been calculated using the formula

$$C = \sqrt{\frac{X^2}{X^2 + N}}$$

Where N is the total frequency.

Unlike correlation and association for which the maximum value is 1, the maximum value for contingency coefficient is not 1. The maximum contingency is calculated using the formula

$$C_{\max} = \sqrt{\frac{K - 1}{K}}$$

Where K is the number of categories of that attribute which has fewer categories.

As for as this present study is concerned

$$C_{\max 1} = \sqrt{\frac{3-1}{3}} \quad \text{i.e.} \quad 0.82$$

$$C_{\max 2} = \sqrt{\frac{2-1}{2}} \quad \text{i.e.} \quad 0.71$$

So the strength of a particular relationship is compared not with 1, but with 0.82 or 0.71. However, comparison with a decimal fraction such as 0.82 or 0.71 is not so conspicuous as comparison with a round number 1. For this, the contingency coefficient is adjusted to 1 using the formula

$$C_{\text{adjusted}} = \frac{C_{\text{original}}}{C_{\text{maximum}}}$$

Where C_{original} is the originally calculated C Value.

The adjusted value of C has a maximum value of 1 regardless of the dimension of the table.

Besides these the Gamma test of association, a statistic analogous to Yule's Q is used. Unlike Yule's that can be applied to 2×2 tables only. Gamma can be applied to $R \times C$ tables. The formula is

$$Y = \frac{F_a - F_n}{F_a + F_n}$$

Where

F_a is the frequency of agreements

and

F_n is the frequency of inventions.

DIFFICULTIES EXPERIENCED BY THE RESEARCHER:

Though the co-operation received from the interviewers was commendable, some difficulties has to be faced during the process of interviewing. Personal assurance was given to them, that their personal data would be treated as strictly confidential and under no circumstances would their identity be revealed. Since the blue collar workers earn wages on production rate hasty answers were given by some of them, and some felt it to be a waste of time to answer. But the researcher was able to pacify them and made them answer all the questions. Some of the bank employees refused to co-operate. They were left out. Since because the bank accounts are settled in the afternoons i.e between 2 to 5 p.m, some of the women employees were very busy so the researcher has to approach them several times to get the data.