CHAPTER IV
THE WOMAN EXECUTIVE’S ROLE AT HOME AND
IN THE FAMILY
As explained in Chapter II the nature of the study was such that in-depth probing and open-ended questions were essential in order to get as true, unbiased responses as possible, from which conclusions regarding the dual roles of women executives could be drawn. In this aim it is hoped that this research has achieved reasonable success.

The process of socialisation of the individual, the formation of attitudes and the evaluation of psychic characteristics, play a major role in determining the status, self-perception and evaluation of the individual in society. In an achievement oriented society, like our modern one, new types of status symbols and identities have arisen. The term "social status" is a structural concept and is, even today, vague and ambiguous. As Jain has pointed out, traditionally, the social status of women has been determined by many objective factors such as rituals, age, marital status, family conditions, etc. In modern times, however, it has been affected by several new social factors such as educational attainments, learned skills, job and employment status, income, the status of husband, etc. There is no doubt that legal privileges, economic independence, democratic rights,
and marital and legal reforms, among others, have contributed greatly to the changed status of women today. (Jain, 1988, p.22). Also, the democratic ideas of individual independence in marriage, (largely borrowed from the West) and the conception of wife as an equal partner in life seem to influence our modern educated youth.

While social status is a structural concept, as stated above, social role is a functional concept; i.e. status indicates the individual’s location in a given framework of hierarchy, while social role indicates how the individual is expected to actualise his/her status in the form of behaviour. Every status has its role connotations.

Dual Career Families

The economic cooperation in families by the contribution of income by both partners has, today, set a new pattern of assigned responsibilities and attitudes towards each individual's share in home and family life and, therefore, an understanding of dual role is very important.
Family is a primary institution, particularly in the Indian ethos where marriage and family are considered vital and of paramount importance, especially for women. Even today, marriage is looked upon as a sacrament. According to Jain, "For a Hindu woman marriage comes to be regarded as the actual commencement of life." However, she goes on to state that in modern society with the waning influence of religious and social values, a change in attitude towards marriage is occurring. A woman now does not view marriage as the only goal in life. The effect of liberal education, the value attached to the development of personality and the urge for economic independence are, according to her, some of the main causes responsible for generating this new outlook. Also, the fact that many women can afford to remain unmarried, itself proves that a change has come about in their subjective attitude as well as in the objective environment. (Jain, 1988, pp 76-77).

Another important aspect to be considered is that woman as mother has a unique place in Hindu society. Her position as mother is traditionally considered of supreme importance and child-care is one of her most
important roles. Is it possible that, today, in modern families where women have diverse roles to perform, the responsibility of child-care is increasingly being shared by their husbands and other members of the family?

Today, with more and more women entering the managerial world, it would be interesting and useful to know how women executives perceive their status and role, and how they perform or cope with their dual responsibilities of family and a demanding career.

The current chapter deals entirely with the respondent's family role.

A large majority of married women executives in the sample (83.8%) had started working before marriage. Therefore, it appears that despite marriage, women were able to continue with their careers. Only 1.5% had given up work when the child was small and resumed when the child was six years old. However, it is extremely important to note that some (15.4%) of the single women executives had chosen to remain single because they felt that marriage and children might hamper their careers. "Getting right to the top is all important
to me and finding a husband who understands that, is nearly impossible," said one. Therefore, it appears that rather than make the adjustments that balancing home with career demands, some women opt to remain single and uncommitted in order to be able to pursue their career goals. One reason for the female high achiever not to marry is the time required to have a meaningful relationship versus the time required to be successful in one's career. Companionship is further affected by such career variables as travel and transfers. This decision to remain single is, no doubt, a sacrifice, especially since marriage has so far, traditionally, been the aim and requirement for most Indian women.

This observation seems to be corroborated by the statements of some of the divorced women executives in the sample who numbered six. (Refer Diagram in Chapter III). 33.3% stated that their marriages broke up due to their careers. Some of the remarks they have made are very pertinent: "It was certainly aggravated by the career—professional jealousy;" "We were in the same profession and I was doing better and earning more;" "He wanted me to compromise on hours of work and be the typical Indian housewife, coming home and doing
all the housework." Here too, a significant percentage of divorced women have made a sacrifice and opted for divorce, rather than give up their career goals.

The study seemed to reveal that having fewer children or small families might have been a contributing factor towards the success or achievement of those married respondents who had reached and were holding senior executive positions. As is evident from Table 3 in the previous chapter, 78.3% of the married women executives had two or less number of children, only 2.7% had three children, with no one having more than three; while the balance (19.0%) had no children. Also significant is the fact that the majority (52.0%) had children who were eleven years of age and above, i.e., not needing child care. (Refer Table 4).

Another interesting and rather surprising finding of the study is that of those married women executives without children, 21.2% had opted not to have children as it would interfere with their careers and, hence, not be fair either to their careers or to their families. In 21.4% cases this was a decision jointly taken by husband and wife. Only 7.2% are facing pressure from husband and particularly from in-laws to
have a child. Another 21.2% had initially put off having a child for career, but would like one now.

For instance, in the case of Sheila and Farokh, the decision not to have children was agreed upon by them early in the marriage and they "have never regretted it," said Sheila. "I have achieved all that I ever wanted to and am at the top in my career. If we had children, I could not have done justice to both my work and my children. At best, I would have been mediocre in both. If you want to make it to the top you have to make sacrifices," she said.

Melinda and Pranab, however, do often disagree on this issue, with Melinda feeling very strongly against having children, as both she and Pranab travel a lot and are doing well, with ambitious career plans for both. Pranab sometimes does feel that he is missing out on "fatherhood" but "the bond" between Melinda and himself is so strong that he understands and appreciates her point of view too. "He still hopes it is not too late," said Melinda. (Refer to Case 2 in Appendix 1).

Note: All names have been changed to ensure anonymity and maintain confidentiality.
There seems to be an undercurrent of some conflict and as a student of social relationship, one must bring this out. It does appear from the above that some couples have had to make a really tough choice and the supreme sacrifice of opting not to have any children in order to be able to pursue their chosen path of being dual-career couples as there is no doubt that most women are brought up to believe that their ultimate aim in life is marriage and motherhood. This is particularly so for our Indian women who view motherhood as something that every woman should experience in order to be fulfilled or complete. In spite of this supreme sacrifice on their part, most of them seem to have come to grips with the situation and "have never regretted it," as Sheila succinctly put it.

Quite contrary to popular belief, there was hardly any preference for sons among the respondents in the sample. Of the sixty married, widowed and divorced women executives with children in the sample, 76.7% did not have any preference, while 15.0% preferred daughters as "they are more affectionate and in the long run, stay attached to their parents," "are family centred and more caring." Only 3.3% preferred sons. (5.0% replied that they "did not know" or were "not
Duties and Responsibilities of a Wife/Mother and the Performance of These Roles

A. Wife:

It has already been stated earlier that marriage is a very important event in the life of a woman and as a social and biological necessity was given sanctity even in the Vedic ages. Woman as wife enjoyed a religiously sanctioned high status almost equal to that of her husband and performed both social as well as biological functions, satisfying the sexual and emotional needs of her husband. In the words of Altekar, "Though supreme authority was clearly vested in the husband, the wife's position was one of honourable subordination." (Altekar, 1956, p.93).

The wife had to perform certain duties and obligations and be true to her husband in her marriage vows, leading the life of an ideal 'pativrata'. Her real happiness centred in her husband and she followed him in prosperity and adversity. The average Hindu wife lived up to the ideal. Kapadia has described this very lucidly: "As a river merging itself in the ocean loses
its identity, so a wife was supposed to merge her individuality with that of her husband. Her only concern in life was to see that all services needed by her husband were properly performed by her, the satisfaction of her husband being her sole joy in life." (Kapadia, 1956, p. 169).

Altekar has given a vivid and clear description of the duties of the housewife in the Hindu society in the book, "The Position of Woman in Hindu Civilisation":

"The household management is primarily her duty, to be discharged in consultation with her husband. She is to frame a proper annual budget and regulate the daily expenditure according to it. If the husband is a spendthrift, it is her duty to put a gentle check on his extravagance. She is to make purchases when provisions are cheap, and to store them properly for consumption throughout the year. She is to be the paymaster of the household. She is to look after the general needs and comforts of the servants by giving them old clothes and articles. General supervision over cattle and agriculture comes within her jurisdiction, if the family is an agriculturist one. If it is poor, she is to help her husband by taking her own share in the manual labour of the household.
management. Spinning, weaving and rope-making are to occupy her spare time. If the family is well to do, knitting, embroidery, kitchen-garden and household decorations are to engage her leisure hours. If the husband is away, she is to shoulder the whole responsibility of the household, and discharge it with due regard to any instructions that he may have left behind." (Altekar, 1956, pp 98-99).

In today’s society, Indian girls are still, by and large, brought up to believe in the qualities of selflessness, self-denial and sacrifice in the performance of their wifely duties. However, the husband-wife relationship is not only governed by the traditional norms and values but the desire for mutual love and affection. The relationship tends to become a more equal and companionable one in character with both participating in decision making in family matters.

One of the aims of the present chapter is to ascertain how women executives in the city of Bombay, today, view their duties and responsibilities as wives.

It is significant to note that of the 66 married women executives in the sample, 97.0% felt that they
were performing their role as 'wife' efficiently or satisfactorily. Only 3.0% felt that they were "not so efficiently" performing their role as 'wife'.

Of the married, widowed and divorced respondents, a large number (48.6%) felt that it was most essential for a wife to "be a companion and friend to her husband, to share his problems, give and take, communicate, share ideas, be supportive in times of crisis whether moral, emotional, physical, financial or concerning job; have a team relationship."

40.5% stressed that it was the wife's duty to ensure that the home is clean, comfortable and running smoothly; not necessarily doing the housework herself but having the ultimate responsibility for it. The actual housework could easily be tackled by good hired help, modern gadgets, live-in relatives and supportive husband and children. "In fact, the woman shouldn't cook. The entire success depends on having somebody to do the basic work in the kitchen/house," remarked one respondent.

However, 24.3% felt that it was the wife's duty to cook a nourishing diet for the family; again, not necessarily
cooking herself but ensuring that the family is getting a good quality, wholesome and balanced diet. This supervisory role is possible for those who are well off.

It was important to spend time with husband and family members, making a happy and comfortable environment, felt 23.0% of the respondents, while 25.7% said giving love and affection and fulfilling a husband's sexual needs were wifely duties.

13.5% of these respondents were of the opinion that a wife's duty also included supporting her husband in his career, while a small number (4.1%) stated that these days it was "necessary to supplement the husband's income to be able to afford luxuries/frills and a good standard of living."

It appeared that some women executives objected to the word 'duties' used in relation to the husband but did not react that way when talking about the 'duties' of a
mother. 27% stated that they did not like the word 'duties' as it implied subordination. It should be an equal role with 'duties' of husband and wife being the same towards each other. Both should be equally interested in a happy and comfortable home. 6.8% categorically replied "None" to the question of a wife's duty towards her husband.

Problems Faced By Career Women In Bringing Up Their Children

Caring for and nurturing children, along with the strains of a demanding career, are not easy. While on the issue of nurturing/socialising agents for the children, giving the lie to the common opinion that working mothers neglected their children or left them in the care of maids or others, an overwhelming majority (96.0%) stated that parents were best able to care for the child and help his/her development, not necessarily alone, but along with the help of other agents. 20.3% stated that schools were important; while 16.2% felt that other relatives, like grandparents and in-laws, also played a vital role in the nurture and socialisation of the child.
Although modern women have come to attach greater importance to their wife's role, it seems that they are very concerned about the proper performance of the mother's role (Ramanamma, 1979). The insistence by women on equality in daily life is mounting and is not without its stress and strain.

Burton, in her book, "What's A Smart Woman Like You Doing At Home?", an excerpt of which appeared in the Reader's Digest of August, 1988, has given a first person account of why she had to give up her interesting job as a fundraiser at a public-interest law firm and writing for a television station. She says, "I came to see that the raising of children does not represent simple custodial upkeep. Rather, my children were learning lessons, making choices and being guided by the repetition of small human interchanges. Here, I began to worry, indelible impressions might be implanted about their place in the world, their relation to other people, and their own value." (Burton, 1988, p. 92). She has summed it up very lucidly: "In time, my search for child care taught me a critical lesson: no matter how many licences we issue, how many guidelines we establish or how much money we pay, it is impossible to have quality controls over the capacity of one human being to love and care for
another".

"I had wanted someone who was loving and tender, with a sense of humour and an alert, lively manner - somebody who would encourage my children's creativity, take them on interesting outings, answer all their little questions, and rock them to sleep. Slowly, painfully, I came to a stunning realisation: the person I was looking for was right under my nose. I had desperately been trying to hire me."

"And that's what a smart woman like me is doing at home." (Burton, 1988, p. 94).

On the other side of the picture, however, is the view that "the neglectful mother is not the one who works but the one who is too lazy or indifferent to take advantage of today's opportunities to raise her family's standard...." This was stated in the advance report, "Woman : Wife And Worker" on the basis of a survey of employment position of women at Peck Frean Ltd., a biscuit manufacturing concern, predominantly staffed by women workers. The survey was undertaken at the initiative of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and in accordance with the Resolution of the Economic Aid in 1960 (Hate, 1969, pp 204-205).
In the light of the above, it was necessary to ascertain what problems the women executives in the sample of this study faced in bringing up their children along with devoting time to their demanding careers.

27.0% of the respondents felt that they did not face any real problems as when the children were small they had lots of time, (i.e., they either worked when the child was older or they were not in such senior positions then); the tutor looked after the child’s studies and this left the parents with plenty of time for play and fun (in the constructive sense), when they came home from work. 13.5% said it did not apply to them as they had no children or the children lived away with grandparents mostly.

Of the balance (59.5%) who did face problems in bringing up their children while pursuing their careers, (refer Table 18), the most common problem was a shortage of time or lack of contact with the children which was felt by 47.7% of the respondents.

The next most commonly faced problem was that the studies of the children were somewhat neglected. This
was the response of 31.8% of the respondents who felt that, probably, their children would have done better academically if they had been able to receive more assistance from them.

15.9% felt that their multiple responsibilities at home and work left them with not enough time for their children's extra-curricular activities.

15.9% also felt that the children were left in the care of the maid a little more than they would have liked and feared whether this would have repercussions on their upbringing; children show some signs of emotional/behavioural problems like refusing to listen to the servant, scattering things around the house, refusing to have their baths until the mother came home; or, as one mother stated, she found it difficult to get along with her teenage daughter who contradicted her in everything, refused to do any work and was slow in learning.

These women, however, were quick to point out that such emotional or behavioural problems probably also existed among children whose mothers did not work and, yet, they sometimes wondered whether their leaving the
children to go to the workplace had a part to play in it.

6.8% stated that when the children were ill and they could not stay at home it was a real problem; one respondent recalled the time her son was seriously ill and twice operated. She faced a really tough time and remembers that if it was not for her mother-in-law who stood like a "solid pillar" to support her and give her all help and encouragement, she might not have been able to continue with her job at that time.

The problems described by the respondents are real and, probably, also faced by mothers who do not work as was mentioned by some of the respondents. There is no doubt that balancing career and the demands of motherhood is extremely difficult and stressful; but, there is a silver lining in the cloud and it appears that somehow these women have resolved their conflicts and taken their problems in stride to continue their chosen career path in spite of the odds they face. The support and encouragement, physical and emotional, of loving family members as was mentioned by the respondent who spoke of her mother-in-law, is part of the silver lining.
Time Spent With The Children

After discussing the problems faced by the respondents in bringing up their children, this researcher was naturally led to the question of the amount of time spent with them, especially since the shortage of time with the children was the most commonly mentioned problem they faced.

On a working day 76.7% of the respondents spent three or more than three waking hours with the children on an average; while on weekends and holidays, 95.0% spent all the time or most of the time with the children. Hence, it appears to be a fallacy that dual career families spend hardly any time together although they would prefer more time. With planning and organisation, these career women, along with the support and assistance of their husbands, have successfully managed their time to devote attention to their families. In spite of this, many women (40.0%) felt that they would prefer to spend a little more time with their children on working days; 45.0% felt that the time they were spending with the children on working days was sufficient; while 5.0% were "not
sure." On weekends and holidays, however, the majority (78.3%) felt that the time spent with their children was sufficient.

Since lack of time with the children seemed to be a problem for many of the respondents, it was decided to ascertain how they spent the available time with them. Quality time together is an important factor in building healthy and wholesome parent-child relationships. Quality time is characterised by more than constant interaction; the key factor is continuing interest. It may involve a noisy family celebration; a quiet evening at home listening to a child practice for her recital - correcting her when necessary; a sleepless night nursing a feverish child; a holiday spent cleaning up the rooms; or an hour spent in animated discussion of a family problem. As Kuzma puts it, "Whatever the activity, quality time together should convey several all-important messages: 'I love you,' 'I want to be close to you,' 'I enjoy you,' 'You're fun to be with.' Time spent this way fosters a child's self-esteem and encourages a healthy family bond." (Kuzma, 1981, p. 5).

85.5% of the respondents felt that quality time spent
with the children was more important than the number of hours or 'quantity' spent with them. Another 13.3% stated that both quality and quantity were equally important.

Of those respondents who said that quality time was more important than number of hours or quantity of time spent with the children, responses as to what constituted quality time were varied. However, the majority (72.5%) of them felt that quality time was to be spent in fulfilling more emotional needs than physical, i.e., showing how much one loves, being sensitive to children's needs, being supportive, talking, sympathising, listening to and helping in solving problems, guiding, counselling and advising.

68.6% replied that the children should be made aware of the parents' presence by parents and children doing things together, or being actively involved in the children's activities.

Also very important, felt 62.7% of the respondents, was doing / playing constructive / creative work / games,
(e.g., helping in crafts, brain teasers, etc.) together and encouraging out-door activities or activating the imagination of the child. 35.3% felt that quality time would mean spending the available time together in teaching children to distinguish right from wrong, good from bad; teaching them good values, learning moral lessons or deriving knowledge.

Introducing the child to new experiences or to something new like some new fruit, book, story, song, place or travel by a new mode of transport, would constitute quality time responded 13.7% of the sample.

19.6% said that while it is commonly felt that mothers who stay at home with their children spend "better time" with the children, this was not true. It may be more but not better, because a working mother was more relaxed to enjoy her child in the evenings as looking after a child for twenty-four hours is a taxing process. When a mother had less time to spend with the child she naturally became more conscious about creating a programme. It was also felt that a mother working in a dynamic office atmosphere has more to offer or bring home to the child, "her personality comes out well,"
"She shows a better side and this is transferred to the child and has its advantages."

13.3% of the respondents had stated that quantity was also important because in order to provide quality you have to be present and, hence, quantity also mattered. They felt that when they were less with the children they tended to spoil them and gave a more rational input when they spent longer hours with them; also when children return home from school, they need parents around to talk about their experiences and if parents are not present at such times, it causes confusion in the minds of the children.

Although it is only a small percentage (13.3%) who felt that quality of time provided to the children was not more important than quantity, it is significant to note that all of them were fairly young, i.e., not exceeding forty years of age and all, except one, had either one or two children between the ages of one - ten years and, therefore, still small enough to be needing more attention which demands time. The data is presented below in the form of tables:
### TABLE 13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Age of Respondent</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>26 - 30 years</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>31 - 35 years</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>36 - 40 years</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Ages of Children</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Below 1 year</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 - 5 years</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>6 - 10 years</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>11 - 15 years</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1. Of these respondents, three had two children each, between 1 - 10 years of age.

2. Since this is a multiple answer question, the total exceeds 100.0%
From what has preceded above in this section of the Chapter, it seems fairly clear that women take their family role, especially that of mother very seriously, making up for the lack of time by providing "quality" in the available time. No doubt, the struggle to maintain a balance between her role in the family and her role at the workplace is continuous and ongoing, but it is one she takes on willingly, relying constantly on the support of her close family members.

Hopes and Expectations for Sons and Daughters

It is interesting to note that the hopes and expectations of these executive women for their sons and daughters were absolutely the same (although they were asked as two different questions), except for one respondent who stated that her hopes and expectations for her daughter were "a good marriage - I don't care if she does not work. I am basically traditional in my thinking." Interestingly, this respondent was a widow.

The hopes and expectations for sons and daughters expressed by the respondents is presented below in
the form of a table:

### TABLE 15
RESPONDENTS' HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS FOR THEIR SONS AND DAUGHTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Hopes and Expectations</th>
<th>Sons %</th>
<th>Daughters %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Well settled with good career and standard of living/independent and able to stand on own feet.</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>To be a person with good values, kind, helpful, affectionate, responsible and courteous to others.</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>To be a happy and contented person.</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Should get a good education/be academically successful</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>It is for them to decide on their goals. I am there to guide him/her to achieve them.</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>He/she has fulfilled my hopes.</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>She should fully utilise her talents, education and basic skills to lead a satisfying and fulfilled life.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interestingly, a majority (55.0%) of the respondents
felt that the future generation in their families, like children, nieces, nephews, etc., looked up to them as role models. 20.0% were not sure but thought so; while 17.0% said they were not thought of as role models or that the children in the family were too small yet.

It is significant to note that almost all (94.0%) stated clearly that they would certainly like their daughters/nieces to be career women, independent and self-sufficient, but the choice of career would depend on what they wanted. Of these, 2.0% who were unmarried, stated that along with career they would definitely like them to be married too and "not remain a spinster like me, as marriage must be very fulfilling."

Only a few respondents (6.0%) were of the opinion that their daughters/nieces should not follow in their footsteps: I would not like my own daughter-in-law to pursue a career, so how can I encourage my daughter; home comes first, unless she has cooperative in-laws and good domestic help, she should not have a career.
The Woman Executive's Perception of her Relationship with her Husband

Almost all the respondents (93.9%) stated that they perceived their relationship with their husbands to be that of equality. Only 3.1% stated that their relationships with their husbands were that of inferiority, as "we have to keep husbands superior," "he is superior - his needs are more important than mine, and his job/career is more important than mine." Hence, it appears that this small percentage of women actually believed, as was traditionally perceived, that husbands were superior and their careers/needs, etc., were more important.

Another 3.0% said their relations with their husbands were "close to equality, but not quite equal," in the sense that while professionally they were equal, personally the husband had a superior attitude.

While ascertaining whether the careers of the respondents affected their relationship with their husbands, the majority (56.1%) stated that this was never the case. 21.2% said that their careers did sometimes affect their relationship with their spouses; but of these respondents, 6.1% clarified that what they
meant by "affected" was "in a positive way," "has a positive effect on the relationship," "I can discuss issues with him and his friends," "He would have found me boring otherwise." Only one respondent said her career adversely affected her relationship with her husband "more after a child."

On discussing the woman executive's agreement or disagreement with her husband on various issues, the following findings emerged:

**TABLE 16**

**AGREEMENT/DISAGREEMENT ON VARIOUS ISSUES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Did not answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Wife's employment</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Values of life</td>
<td>93.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ways of dealing with in-laws</td>
<td>80.3</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Role/duties of spouses</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Status of spouses</td>
<td>84.8</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Handling family income</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Use of wife's income</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Ways of bringing up the children</td>
<td>74.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>16.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The question was not applicable to 13.6% of these respondents as they did not have children.
The above table indicates that most respondents are in agreement with their husbands on major issues like their employment, their income, ways of bringing up the children, etc. However, of those who disagree, it is pertinent to note that a sizeable number (25.7%) disagree or are uncertain about handling family income.

The responses also indicate that the trials and tribulations that a dual career household faces because of lack of time together and the physical drain on energy, etc., do not diminish the amount of affection that such couples have for each other. 89.4% of the respondents were extremely satisfied with the amount of affection they received from their husbands, while 87.9% felt that their husbands were "extremely satisfied" or "satisfied" with the amount of affection they gave them. 7.6% of the respondents stated that they were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" with the amount of affection they received from their husbands, while 4.5% felt that their husbands were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" with the amount of affection they gave them. Only a small percentage of the women executives in the sample (3.0%) stated that they were dissatisfied with the amount of affection they received from their husbands, with one of these
respondents stating that she would prefer to replace the word "affection" with "attention." 7.6% in the sample were of the opinion that their husbands were dissatisfied with the amount of affection they gave them, and of them, one respondent again stated that she would like to replace the word "affection" with "attention." This is not surprising since some (17.9%) felt their professional work was more demanding than their husbands' (Refer table 18).

Households of dual career couples also seemed to be running quite satisfactorily, in spite of the fact that both the wife and husband had to spend long and demanding hours in the office.

Since it was felt that the woman executive's dual role may cause tension in her marriage, the respondents were asked if until now their marriage had been at all unhappy, how confident were they that things would work out right in the future. While 43.9% felt that their marriages had not been at all unhappy, 53.0% were "very confident" or "confident" that they could resolve their differences and marriage would work out right. Only one respondent stated that she was "indifferent" and did not wish to answer.
Almost all the respondents (92.4%) stated that their marriages had been "extremely happy" or "happy" for them, while the balance 7.6% stated that their marriages had been "neither happy nor unhappy."

In spite of the odds against dual career couples, it appears from the responses that there was a great deal of trust and confidence in each other. The majority (89.7%) stated that they confided in their husbands about "everything" or "most things including office matters. The balance 10.3% replied that they confided in their husbands about "some things" or "few things." Most of the respondents (82.4%) also stated that their husbands confided in them about "everything" or "most things," including office matters, while the balance 17.6% stated that their husbands confided in them about "some things" or "few things."

74.2% stated that their husbands were satisfied with the running of the home, while 18.2% said their husbands were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Only one respondent said her husband was dissatisfied, while another one lived in a five star hotel and, hence, everything was taken care of. Hence, it appears that, by and large, most couples seem quite happy with the
way things were working out for them.

Also, the leisure time activities of the respondents, in almost all cases (80.9%), matched with that of their husbands, with 60.0% of them stating that they "both liked staying at home as much as they liked going out," 29.1% stating that they "both prefer to stay at home," and 10.9% stating that they "both prefer to be out." Only 19.1% of the respondents' leisure time activities did not match with their husbands'. 69.2% of these respondents preferred to stay at home and their husbands to go out. The balance 30.8% preferred to go out while their husbands preferred to stay at home.

Although the respondents stated the above mentioned preferences for staying at home or going out, 57.4% stated that they engaged in "all" or "most" outside interests together with their spouses, 29.4% replied "some of them," while the balance 13.2% engaged in "few" or "none" with their spouses.

Respondents' Relationship With Their In-laws

Also corroborating the statement on support of relatives as an important conducive factor for the
success of women executives in their multiple roles, were the immense majority of women who liked their in-laws a great deal (82.4%). Only 2.9% disliked them, while 11.8% were indifferent towards them.

This is again, contrary to the common opinion that mothers-in-law vs. daughters-in-law problems exist in most households especially where the women are pursuing careers to satisfy their own personal need for fulfilment, as the conflict of interests is minimised here due to the supportive role played by the in-laws in most households where there are dual career couples. This can be seen from the responses stated below.

The reason for liking in-laws which was most commonly stated by those respondents who liked them (42.9%) was that they were very supportive in all ways; helped in the house and with the children, especially when the children were small; were understanding and accommodating. As one respondent said, "I would not have been able to continue my career if it was not for their help."

The next most common reason (41.1%) was that they (the
in-laws) respected freedom of the individual and did not interfere or meddle in the affairs of their son and daughter-in-law.

25.0% stated that their in-laws were good natured, loving, understanding and affectionate. 7.2% said they respected them as husband's parents, while another 7.2% said they "do not know them well enough; we rarely meet."

Only 10.7% stated that their in-laws were difficult to get along with; or paid heed to gossip; or were "conservative in their values and viewed women as traditionally inferior to men with old-fashioned ideas about career, housework and education of women."

After determining the respondent's relationship with her family members, it was decided to ascertain her style of operating within the home, whether independent, dependent, or any other. Many of the respondents (47.0%) considered their styles at home to be "independent" or (42.0%) "interdependent." 14.0% said they were "supportive" and 58.0% said they were "dominating." 80% never felt superior to their husbands or other members of the family on account of
their occupation, position or economic independence. 34.0% replied that they felt so "rarely" or "occasionally". Only 4.0% (2.0% were married and 2.0% were single/divorced) felt superior to family members "frequently", and another 2.0% (single/divorced) felt so "always."

Thus, it seems that while their occupational positions and economic independence do give these women confidence and a sense of well deserved pride, the majority do not allow it to make them feel or act superior towards their family members.

When asked what they would choose if they were free to, an overwhelming majority (65.0%) chose "job combined with marriage even after children are born." The next highest response, although low compared to the earlier response, (22.0%), was "job combined with marriage till children are born." Of these respondents, 8.0% said they would like to resume work after the children were in school or work independently from the house after the child was born.

5.0% would have liked "job without marriage." It is significant to note that of these only 1.0% was a
married respondent; the balance were single or divorced. 4.0% preferred "marriage with job and no children." "Marriage without job" was the choice of 3.0% of the respondents. From the above data it seems, therefore, that marriage and children do not seem to deter or inhibit these women who had reached executive levels from wanting a career. This could only be possible if they had managed to find some effective strategies for striking a balance between career and family. This is fully dealt with in the following section of this Chapter.

Factors Within The Family Conducive To A Woman Executive's Success In Her Multiple Roles

It has already been mentioned earlier that in the Indian ethos, marriage and children play a very vital role, particularly in the life of a woman, whatever be her occupation. In this context, it is important to know and understand how the woman executive manages her demanding dual roles, or what are the factors she believes are conducive to her success in both. In this section of the Chapter, attention has been given to those conducive factors within the family which enable a woman executive to cope successfully as a wife-mother and as a career woman. Attention has also been
focused on the inconducive factors or problems which a woman executive faces, within her home and family.

This has been done with a view to focus attention on the type of factors that have helped these women to remain in senior executive positions and in their marriages, running their homes and raising their children as well; on the problems and negative factors that they have experienced and are experiencing in doing so, and on how they have managed to balance work and family life.

Interestingly, an overwhelming majority of the respondents (80.0%) clearly believed that this success or balance between her dual roles is possible. Only a few (8.0%) disbelieved it, while 12.0% said they were not sure.

The terms "conducive factors" and "inconducive factors" have been explained in the footnote and in the glossary.

1. "Conducive Factor": A circumstance, fact, or influence derived from a positive statement, leading or contributing to success

2. "Inconducive Factor": A circumstance, fact, or influence derived from a negative statement, indicating failure.
From the various responses, those responses that indicate certain factors which are either conducive or inconducive, as defined in the study, were selected to arrive at conclusions regarding what has made these women achieve career success, helped them to remain on top in their careers, and yet not miss out on their familial/personal responsibilities, whether married or single; and to understand the problems that they have faced and are facing both at the work place and at home. Then, the number of respondents who made these responses was ascertained. (All figures are shown in percentages). These are all multiple answer questions, hence the totals exceed 100.0%.

Positive statements are treated as "conducive factors" and negative statements as "inconducive factors." It may be mentioned here that there are no grades of intensity assigned to these statements and all are treated equally. (The terms "positive statements" and "negative statements" are explained in the footnote on the next page and in the glossary).

The data reveals that certain factors or conditions
are vital and necessary for a woman executive to be able to achieve a fair measure of success in fulfilling her multiple responsibilities. Here, we are dealing with factors within her home and family. These are presented below in the form of a table.

1. "Positive Statement": A response which indicates unquestionable, constructive feelings, attitudes or behaviour on the part of the woman executive herself and those closely associated with her at home and at work, signifying success.

2. "Negative Statement": A response which indicates contradictory feelings, attitudes or behaviour on the part of the woman executive herself and those closely associated with her at home and at work, signifying failure.
### TABLE 17

**HOME/FAMILY RELATED "CONDUICIVE" FACTORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Small families (with not more than two children).</td>
<td>97.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Husband's/family's support and cooperation, both emotional and physical.</td>
<td>92.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Good and fairly reliable domestic help.</td>
<td>99.0*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Making the most of time together, like on holidays, etc., to provide &quot;quality.&quot;</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Finance - to afford the infrastructure at home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Earning above Rs. 5000/-p.m. + perquisites).</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Earning above Rs. 4000/-p.m. to Rs. 5000/-p.m. + perquisites).</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Compatibility of goals /leisure time activities with husband.</td>
<td>80.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Trust and confidence in each other by the spouses</td>
<td>89.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The woman should be capable, systematic and well organised, planning her time.</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Proximity to the place of work</td>
<td>11.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*1.0% lived as paying guest and, hence, did not need hired help.
It, therefore, appears that there are certain factors or conditions which are necessary for a woman executive to be successful in her marriage, in raising her children and in her career simultaneously, as revealed by the large majority who believed success was possible and who felt that they themselves had been able to strike a successful balance in their multiple roles. Their success may, therefore, be attributed to the following factors:

1. **Physical and Emotional Support from Husband, Children and Other Family Members**

The most important factor conducive for the success of career women at home and at the work place is family support and cooperation, both emotional and physical, as revealed by the respondents. Of those who believed success was possible, 75.0% stated the above to be a necessary factor, i.e. support from the entire family, husband, children, in-laws or other live-in relatives, but support from husband was considered most important. The fact that they have had overwhelming support from the husband and family members, i.e., children, in-laws
and other live-in relatives, particularly the husbands is interesting. While 92.6% of the married respondents mentioned that their husbands were very supportive of their careers, 50.0% said their children were supportive and 42.0% said in-laws, parents and other relatives were very supportive. For instance, 60.6% of the respondents said that apart from giving emotional support, their husbands shared or helped with the workload at home to a great extent; 9.1% said their husbands helped, but not enough; 34.8% said that although their husbands helped with household work only a little or not at all, they received a tremendous amount of support and encouragement from them. 6.1% mentioned that there was really no need for any physical help from the husbands as they had good domestic help to manage the housework and ate out when the hired help was absent.

As far as children are concerned, 41.7% mentioned that their children were understanding and had adjusted themselves to seeing their mothers leave the home for office; they were getting into the habit of taking care of themselves, doing their own homework, helping each other with it, running errands, making tea and lending
a generally helpful hand around the house. They felt that their children actually benefitted as they learned to be independent earlier, and they were proud of their mothers' achievements once they reached understanding ages. 31.7% said their children were either too small or lived away.

Of those who had live-in relatives or relatives living nearby, the majority (82.0%) said they had received wholehearted support, encouragement and help from them.

2. Small Families

Since almost all (97.3%) of the married respondents had either two or less children (or no children at all), it appears that this factor contributed greatly to their career success.

3. Hired Domestic Help

Although it is common information that domestic help is not easily available in metropolitan cities, especially places like Bombay, in the sample of this study it was
found that all have domestic help (excepting one who lived as a paying guest and, hence, did not have any responsibilities of housework), with 74.0% of the women executives having two or more servants. Thus, we can safely conclude that all normal household chores are taken care of. This is probably due to the fact that they are in an earning bracket where they can afford such help. It was, in fact, stated by many respondents who mentioned that finance was essential to maintain the infrastructure at home that will support and aid the woman to continue with her career.

4. Finance

According to most respondents (78.0%), finance is important so that one could afford the infrastructure at home for its efficient running, like modern gadgets, transport, telephone, other appliances like washing machines, etc., good domestic help, and convenience foods, for daily accessibility to the home, particularly in times of crisis. Interestingly, 87.0% were drawing a monthly salary ranging from Rs. 4,000/- to over Rs.5,000/-, plus perquisites which often included car and company accommodation.
5. Determination, Capability and Organisation

40.0% of the respondents also stated that it was important for the woman to be confident, determined, systematic, efficient, well organised, planning her time for both, home and the workplace, applying her management techniques to running the home too.

One can, therefore, safely conclude that the first four factors are conducive to bringing about harmony between a woman executive's role at home and work, apart from other factors like her own conviction, determination, motivation and efficiency.

HOME/FAMILY RELATED "INCONDUCTIVE" FACTORS OR PROBLEMS

The data also reveals various problems or factors that are inconducive to a woman executive's success in her multiple roles. These factors are presented below in the form of a table:
TABLE 18
HOME/FAMILY RELATED "INCONDUCTIVE" FACTORS OR PROBLEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Role conflict, due to:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. Work overload</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. Variability of role demands at different times/periods</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. Small children who need care</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>d. Professional work more demanding than husbands'</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e. Absence of sufficient outside help</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f. Discrepancy between personal and social norms</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>g. Not enough time for self - has to sacrifice personal needs</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Shortage of time or lack of contact with children</td>
<td>47.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Studies of children somewhat neglected</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Illness of children; being unable to stay at home</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Insufficient time for children's extra curricular activities</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Children left in the care of maids a little more than desirable</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Professional jealousy between spouses</td>
<td>2.7*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:* This 2.7% were divorcees.
The data reveals that one of the most common reasons for role conflict in women executives is an overload of work with 51.8% of the respondents stating this to be so. Among other things as mentioned in the table the next most commonly expressed reason for role conflict is the variable nature of role demands at different times or periods in her life; now a mother, now a wife, and now a senior executive, each role demanding varying types of behaviour and emotions from her. While 39.3% felt this to be one of the reasons for role conflict, 30.4% stated that having small children who need care is the problem that they face.

It seems that shortage of time with the children or lack of contact with them due to a shortage of time was a problem faced by many respondents (47.7%). Some respondents felt that either the studies of the child are neglected or time was insufficient for encouraging the child's extra curricular activities. A few respondents faced the problem of "guilty feelings" at not staying home with a sick child; while some worried about how much time they were forced to leave the children in the care of hired help.
Another interesting problem which was, however, faced by 2.7% of the respondents who were divorcees, (constituting 33.3% of the divorcees) was "professional jealousy" on the part of the husbands who were in the same fields of work and were drawing a salary slightly lower.

These seem to be some of the genuine problems that women in demanding careers have faced or are facing in running their homes and bringing up their children along with successfully managing their career roles. Undoubtedly, caring for children when they are small is time consuming and drains the woman of her energy. Once the children are older and able to take care of most of their own little chores it is easier on the mother. As was mentioned earlier in the chapter, the fact that most respondents had children who were eleven years of age and above must have afforded them some relief, along with the other conducive factors mentioned. Also, the equal commitment with which both parents enter into parenting today is an extremely important factor.

Balancing two roles, so diverse in nature is nerve racking and strenuous, particularly when societies,
globally lay so much stress on the woman's family role and are not ready to accept women who neglect their families for their career. However, with effort, the career woman can expand the best of both the new and the old worlds of home and work: the joy of marriage and motherhood need not be lessened by having a successful career. Today, she is finding that she can indeed utilize her full potential with success in many ways. This has been very lucidly put by Collins, Gilbert and Nycum in their book, "Women Leading" in these words: "She is coming to know what men have known all along: that work is of great psychological importance and is a powerful vehicle for fulfillment." (Collins, et. al., 1988, p.1). The women in the study conducted by these authors were one hundred and sixty high achievers throughout the United States listed in Who's Who of American Women. Central to their research was the single issue: Was their success worth the price? These women, and the authors who are themselves successful business women, seem to feel that "indeed the success that they and the other women in this book experience, and the rewards that follow, are well worth the sacrifices and personal life-style required to attain these goals." However, they go on to say that "this balancing act is a struggle that will probably be
ongoing for as long as we work." (Collins, et.al., 1988 p.xi, p.12). For Collins, "There is a huge price to pay for success. Any woman who tells you that she can hold down a high level professional position (not a job but a career), raise children, be a good wife with a home and social life, and not suffer for it is not telling the truth. It just isn't possible." (Collins, et.al. 1988. p. 163).

It is necessary to repeat here for clarity that the sample under study in this research, who have reached and are in executive positions, are happily placed in terms of number of children, help from the family, finance, good domestic help, etc., apart from being restricted to the city of Bombay which is on a higher economic plane than the rest of the country, being accepted as the commercial and business capital of India. In order to be able to achieve success, all these factors are very important and play an essential role. This is probably one of the reasons why one does not as yet see too many women occupying the topmost positions as these favourable conditions are not readily available to all women; but, then again, it seems a vicious cycle, for being on top does often bring about many favourable conditions like the finance
to afford good domestic help, modern gadgets and conveniences, transport and, to some extent, the support of other relatives as one can afford to have them live-in; or with one's own mode of transport, telephone, etc., make communication between relatives easier.

To conclude, it would appear that this hotly debated issue of career women versus their home and children is really one that cannot be generalised. It is a problem of a group of women made up of individuals who innovate, experiment and come up with their individual solutions to coping with their stress and strain, their problems, and their dual responsibilities and, all the while, enjoying the recognition and benefits that a successful career brings along with it.