Participation of women in remunerative employment, of late has become a matter of debate – particularly in the context of its consequences on the family. One school of thought considered it as a significant asset in improving the levels of social well being, while the other school of thought considered it as a set back in view of the negatives consequences on the family. Both of these contentions were contingent on particular situations. However, the win-win situation could be one with proper balancing of the working and a better managed home.

Mother’s working was found affecting herself and her adolescents in different ways depending on their age (primarily), their nature and personality type, their understanding of mother figure, mother’s work hours, nature of job etc. This made it exciting to undertake investigation in which the present perceptions of mothers and adolescents both were included.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Work status of mother made a difference in the perception of family characteristics, and in the psychological well-being of herself and her adolescent children.

OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the differences between working/non-working mothers and their adolescent children on family characteristics, stress and adjustment.

2. To explore the differences among working mothers in different work categories and their adolescents on the family characteristics, stress and adjustment.
3. To analyze the relationship among family characteristics, stress and adjustment for working/non-working mothers and their adolescent children.

4. To assess the impact of the various dimensions of family characteristics on the psychological well-being of working/non-working mothers and their adolescents.

5. To identify the differences in perception of family characteristics and psychological well-being of working mothers and her adolescent children by the span of work.

6. To assess the differences in perception of family characteristics and psychological well-being by the adolescent’s age category.

7. To delineate the differences in the perceptions of the role of husband/father in relation to involvement in the family, for working and non-working mothers and also mothers in different work categories and their adolescent children.

8. To identify the differential time distribution pattern for the daily activities of working and non-working mothers and their adolescent children.

HYPOTHESIS

1. a) Working and non-working mothers and their adolescents will differ significantly in their perceptions of the existing family characteristics.

   b) Mothers in different work categories and their adolescents will differ significantly in their perceptions of the existing family characteristics.

2. a) Working and non-working mothers and their adolescents will differ significantly in various areas of stress.

   b) Mothers in different work categories and their adolescents will differ significantly in their perceptions of stress in different areas.
3. a) Working and non-working mothers and their adolescents will differ significantly in different domains.

       b) Mothers in different work categories and their adolescents will differ significantly in different domains.

4. Different dimensions of family characteristics, stress and adjustment will relate to each other differently for working and non-working mothers and their adolescents.

5. Family characteristics dimensions will have varied impact on psychological well-being of working and non-working mothers and their adolescents.

6. Perceptions of family characteristics and psychological well-being of the working mothers and their adolescents will differ by the span of mother's work.

7. Perceptions of family characteristics and psychological well-being of the adolescents (boys and girls) of working mothers will differ by the adolescent age category.

8. a) Working mothers and their adolescents will differ from non-working mothers in their perceptions of the role of husband/father in family involvement.

       b) Mothers in different work categories and their adolescents will differ in their perceptions of the role of husband/father in family involvement

9. a) Time distribution on daily activities will differ for the working and non-working mothers and their adolescents.

       b) Time distribution on daily activities will be different for the mothers in different work categories and their adolescents.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The problem was investigated using the conceptual framework of Moos's (1973) "family environment" for understanding family characteristic dimensions. Lazarus and Folkman's
(1984) theoretical construct and Pestonjee's (1983) "bounce model" of stress, and Shaffer and Shoben’s concept of adjustment were used to identify the areas, sources and the process of individual’s psychological well-being. Further Descartes’ (1965) and Rapoport and Rapoport’s (1976) theoretical explanation of role perception were used to understand wife’s/children’s perception of husband’s/father’s role in family involvement. Also used was Csikszentmihalye and Larson’s (1984) understanding of time to see how the mothers and her adolescent children spent their time.

**RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this study using a correlational design, an attempt was made to study the differences on different variables at two time periods. The paired comparisons were made between working and non-working mothers and their adolescents. As the analysis did not indicate significant differences between Time 1 and Time 2, the data were merged in the final analysis.

**SAMPLE**

The total sample for final study included 1408 individuals tested at two time periods (early 90’s and late 90’s), with 682 mothers and 726 adolescents. Out of 682 mothers, 432 were working mothers and 250 non-working mothers. Out of 726 adolescents, 546 belonged to working mothers (273 girls and 273 boys) and 180 belonged to non-working mothers, with 90 boys and 90 girls.

**VARIABLES**

**Control Variables:**

- age
- nuclear family
- children - two or more
Explanatory Variables:

- Work status of the mother
- Work categories
  (executives, doctors, business women, university teachers, school teachers and clerks/stenos).
- Family characteristics
- Sex of the child
- Span of work
- Perceptions of the Role of Husband/Father in home management.
- Time distribution

Dependent Variables:

- Psychological well-being
  (i) Stress level
  (ii) Adjustment pattern

TOOLS

Modified version of Family Environment Scale by Moos and Moos was administered to measure the family characteristic dimensions. In order to measure the stress level a self designed Stress Inventory was used. For the adjustment patterns Saxena’s Adjustment Inventory was used. For perceiving husband’s and father’s role subjects were asked to write a paragraph for which a brief outline was given. And for the time distribution a tabular format with daily activities already mentioned were used, on which the subjects had to indicate the time spent on each activity.
STATISTICAL METHODS

- Percentages
- Means, Standard Deviations, t values
- Correlation Analysis
- Regression Analysis
- Graphical presentation

RESULTS

Inter-Group Differences

*Working and Non-Working Mothers*

It was observed that working and non-working mothers differed significantly in perceiving some family characteristic dimensions, namely; the expressiveness, achievement orientation, conflict, independence, and control. On all these dimensions, working mothers scored higher than the non-working mothers. They also differed significantly on stress in home, social and emotional areas, with working mother's scores being higher than the non-working mother's. The same areas of adjustment also showed significant differences between working and non-working mothers, with working mothers scoring higher than the non-working mothers. They also differed significantly on perceiving stress in home, social and emotional areas, with working mother's scores being higher than the non-working mother's. As expected working mothers were found experiencing greater stress, possibly because of the broad two-fold roles that they had to perform. In managing home as well as work, they underwent more stress.

The same areas of adjustment also showed significant differences between working and non-working mothers, with working mother scoring more than the non-working mothers. Experiencing stress as well as adjustment on the same areas indicated that working mothers could effectively minimize their stress and achieve better adjustment.
Mothers in Different Work Categories

There weren't many significant differences between the work categories on family characteristic dimensions. Dimensions that showed significant differences between mothers in different work categories were cohesiveness, expressiveness, independence and organization. Particularly when clerks were compared with other work categories, significant differences were observed in the family. Clerks/stenos scoring higher on these dimensions indicated that they could wash out the stereotype perception of downgrading clerks/stenos. They could also perceive a better positive family environment.

Significant differences were observed between the work categories on home, social, emotional and occupational stress areas, home and occupational stress having significant difference in more pairs. Mothers in different work categories differed in their work nature and responsibilities and also the time and energy they could/supposed to spent. This affected their psychological well-being.

More paired categories had significant differences on adjustment in home and social areas than on emotional and occupational. Health adjustment, similar to health stress, did not show any significant difference between the paired groups. With social and occupational life mothers could make reconciliation, but their roles in the home front had to be tackled with very little or no compromises. This affected their home adjustment most.

Children of Working and Non-working Mothers

Significant differences were observed between children of working and non-working mothers on family characteristic dimensions of expressiveness, independence, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation, organization and control. Scores were in favor of children of working mothers, i.e. working mothers could imbibe the positive family environment characteristic features among their children also. Further, boys and girls of working and non-working mothers differed significantly on expressiveness, independence, achievement orientation. Boys and girls of non-working mothers also differed significantly on intellectual cultural orientation and organization. Boys (for working as well as non-working mothers) scored higher than girls. There were significant differences observed between girls of working and non-working mothers on expressiveness, independence,
achievement orientation, organization and control, where girls of working mothers scored higher. Only on control in the family, boys of working and non-working mothers showed significant differences.

**Children of Mothers in Different Work Categories**

Significant differences were observed between children of mothers in different work categories, on cohesion, expressiveness, organization and control, work categories varying in time and social value, particularly between children of mothers as clerks/stenos were compared with others. Children of clerks/stenos scoring higher than others (the pattern being similar to that of mothers), indicated that their mothers could effectively bring in the positive characteristic features of family environment among their children.

**Relationship of Family Characteristics to Stress And Adjustment**

**Working and Non-working Mothers**

In case of working mothers stress and adjustment at home and emotional areas showed significant relationship with quite a few family characteristic dimensions, particularly cohesion, conflict, achievement orientation, organization and control. Stress could have been a cause of perceived conflict and control at home, the organization pattern within, and also a strong need for achievement orientation. Any kind of disturbance or imbalance in the family could have also caused stress, and thus affected the working mothers adjustment patterns simultaneously. Stress and adjustment had one to one correlations, no doubt, but particularly home and emotional areas were showing significant relationship with other stress and adjustment areas.

For the non-working mothers, particularly emotional and miscellaneous areas showed significant relationship with some of the family characteristic dimensions, particularly conflict and active recreational orientation. For these mothers active recreational orientation was an important dimension that could show their worth and prominence and thus influence and be influenced by stress and corresponding adjustment. Other that the one to one
relations, it was only home and emotional areas that showed indicated significant relationship with each other.

Interestingly moral religious emphasis and physical dimension did not reveal any significant relationship for the working and non-working mothers.

**Children of Working and Non-working Mothers**

Children of working mothers showed significant relationship between perceived conflict in the family and stress, whereas cohesion, active recreational orientation, organization and control had significant relationship with home as well as social stress. The degree of conflict in the family was bound to influence their psychological well-being. There were significant relationships observed between stress and adjustment in home, emotional and school areas. Stress at any area effects the emotional set up, particularly for the adolescent age group, when children undergo a transition where attitudes, ideas, understanding, everything is oscillating and nothing is static, leading to greater confusion. Adjustment areas had negative relationship with conflict, and positive relationship with cohesion and organization in the family. A protective family could emotionally support their children, where well organized system could bring in them a disciplined life pattern, in a way helping them for better adjustment.

Children of non-working mothers showed significant relationship between emotional stress area and family characteristic dimensions, particularly achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation and active recreational orientation. With a good emotional set up these children could concentrate better on their efforts to achieve. In addition to these dimensions, cohesion, conflict, independence and control showed significant relationship, particularly with home, social and school adjustments. For these children also, stress and adjustment did indicate a one to one relationship, where home and emotional areas were particularly focused.
Regression Analysis

Working and Non-working Mothers

In case of working mothers, few of family characteristic dimensions, that were cohesion, conflict, achievement orientation and organization had significant impact on all stress areas except health. Independence and control impacted on social and emotional stress respectively in addition to occupational area. Cohesion and conflict were significant contributors of adjustment areas, whereas independence, achievement orientation, active recreational orientation and organization impacted on adjustment areas only partially.

For the non-working mothers, expressiveness, conflict and intellectual cultural orientation had significant negative impact on stress areas, and cohesiveness, independence, achievement orientation, active recreational orientation and organization contributed significantly but partially the stress areas. Expressiveness and conflict showed significant impact on majority of adjustment areas, whereas cohesiveness, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation and active recreational orientation predicted only partially. Organization and control in the family showed significant impact on miscellaneous and social adjustment area respectively.

Children of Working and Non-working Mothers

In case of boys of working mothers, the achievement orientation and control showed significant impact on stress as well as adjustment areas. But cohesion, expressiveness, conflict, independence, intellectual cultural orientation and active recreational orientation were significant predictors of their psychological well-being only partially. For these boys family characteristic dimensions predicted significantly their social well-being, followed by school and at home.

For girls of working mothers, conflict in the family showed significant impact on stress and adjustment. But cohesiveness, expressiveness, independence, achievement orientation, active recreational orientation, organization and control predicted significantly their psychological well-being only partially. Thus the family characteristic dimensions showed significant impact particularly on emotional area followed by home.
For boys of non-working mothers conflict, achievement orientation, active recreational orientation and control showed significant impact on their psychological well-being, and that cohesion, independence and intellectual cultural orientation impacted only on either social or school area. For these boys family characteristic dimensions were found impacting only very few areas of psychological well-being.

For girls of non-working mothers, cohesion, conflict, independence, organization and control showed significant impact on stress, whereas adjustment was predicted by conflict, followed by cohesion, expressiveness, independence and organization. Expressiveness and achievement orientation were significant predictors only for stress at school, whereas active recreational orientation, organization and control significantly predicted emotional and home adjustment. For these girls family characteristic dimensions showed significant impact particularly on emotional well-being followed by home and social area.

The moral religious emphasis and physical dimension did not show any significant impact.

**Working Mothers Classified By Span Of Work**

By the span of work, mothers showed variations on the family characteristics. With longer work span they perceived more cohesion, expressiveness, moral religious emphasis, organization and control at home, whereas mothers with work span of 5 years scored more on conflict, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation and active recreational orientation. Mothers working for 10 years indicated to be in the middle of the extremes. On stress areas, except health, mothers working for 5 years indicated higher stress, followed by 10 and 15 years. With less experience of managing and adjusting within the given situation these mothers showed higher stress, correspondingly for adjustment except the health and social areas, mothers working for 15 years showed more adjustment, followed by 10 and 5 years. Mothers working for 10 years showed better social and occupational adjustment.

**Children of Mothers Classified by Span of Work**

The mean differences were found only on conflict, organization and control. Mothers varying work span did not influence their children's perception of family characteristic dimensions much, as their mean scores were very close to each other. Experienced stress
was least for those with mothers working for 15 years, followed by 10 and 5 years. This was probably due to learning to adjust over the periods. These children scored higher on the adjustment, indicating an acceptance of mother's working irrespective of her work span. Their scores on adjustment areas were (as well) very close to each other. All these children being in the adolescent age group, the treatment they got at home or their experiences otherwise were not significantly different even with mothers varying work span.

**Children of Working Mothers in Different Adolescent Categories**

Children in the late adolescent age group had higher mean scores on the family characteristic dimensions, particularly cohesiveness, expressiveness, conflict, achievement orientation, intellectual cultural orientation, organization, control and physical set up in the family. These perceptions came up with age maturity, understanding and reasoning. More children of this category perceived conflict because of added responsibility of sharing in the home activities. Stress was experienced more by middle adolescents, followed by late and early adolescents. Probably the demand was more on this category, and that early adolescents were beginning to learn and late adolescents had already overcame this learning. Higher mean scores for adjustment areas were indicated by late and early adolescents (in one or the other areas), followed by middle adolescents.

**Perceptions of Working And Non-Working Mothers About Role of Husband in Family Involvement**

Working mothers used more positive and less negative characteristics in perceiving their husband’s role. But a significant percentage of non-working mothers perceived their husband more negatively. A low percent of working mothers indicated negative characteristics of their husbands. The difference was not much in case of non-working mothers. Working mothers scored particularly high on attributes like encouraging type, calm/cool, balanced, concerned, farsighted, affectionate, and few others. Differences did exist between working and non-working mothers. Differences were observable on perceiving husband as concerned, farsighted, understanding, affectionate, helpful, calm/cool, encouraging, balanced, expectations, disagreeable, dominating and critical.
The differences among mothers in different work categories were not significant. Almost all rated their husbands more positively. The most commonly indicated positive characteristics were concerned, farsighted, understanding, calm/cool, encouraging, balanced, liberal and organized. Perception of school teachers and clerks/stenos were less positive than other work categories. The significant differences were visible between the categories mainly on perceiving husbands as helpful, sharing, adjustable, attentive, organized, social and office work at home.

Perceptions of Children of Working and Non-Working Mothers about Role of Father in Family Involvement

Children of working mothers perceived their father more positively than children of non-working mothers. There was very little difference between boys and girls of working and non-working mothers. Percentages on average basis were higher on positive attributes than negative. Significant differences were observed in case of boys and girls of working mothers only on disagreeable, and in case of boys and girls of working mothers on sharing, encouraging, organized, expectations and critical, whereas, girls of working and non-working mothers indicated significant difference on attentive, sharing, encouraging, organized, social and expectations. There were no significant differences between boys of working and non-working mothers.

Children of mothers in all working categories perceived their father having more positive than negative characteristic. Differences in mean scores were visible between extreme categories. The characteristics on which the differences were observed were helpful, calm-cool, attentive, sharing, organized and social.

Time Distribution

Distribution of Time by Working and Non-Working Mothers

Working mothers enjoyed fewer sleeping hours than non-working mothers. They spent less than half the time than non-working mothers on personal work. On household chores and market work there wasn’t much difference between holidays and working days, but working
mothers seemed to be covering a lot on holidays. Leisure time at home was remarkably low for working mothers.

**Distribution of Time by Mothers in Different Work Categories**

Mothers working as doctors and in business spent little more time on sleep than mothers in other work categories. On other daily activities there were hardly any differences. There were category difference on working hours (as expected), and the differences were more on holidays.

**Distribution of Time by Children of Working and Non-Working Mothers**

Children of non-working mothers spent more time in sleeping. Children of working mothers spent more time on household chores, particularly on holidays. They also spent more time on school work at home. There was very little difference on leisure time.

Boys of working and non-working mothers enjoyed more sleeping hours. Girls spent more time on personal work and household chores than boys. They spent more time on school work at home. Boys of non-working mothers indicated more time on leisure and market work than girls, whereas girls of working mothers spent more time on market work than boys.

**Distribution of Time by Children of Mothers in Different Work Categories**

Very low mean differences were observed between children of mothers in different work categories very low mean hour difference was observed between children of mothers in different work categories.

**CONCLUSION**

There were significant differences between working and non-working mothers as well as their adolescent children. Differences were also observed when mothers of different work categories and their adolescents were compared, in their perception of the family characteristics dimensions and psychological well-being. Significant relationships were
observed between family characteristics dimensions and areas of psychological well-being, for working and non-working mothers and their children. Family characteristics dimensions showed significant impact on the areas of psychological well-being for working, non-working mothers and their adolescent children. The perception of family characteristics dimensions and areas of psychological well-being of working mothers and their adolescent children differed by the span of mother's work. Also, the perception of family characteristics dimensions and areas of psychological well-being differed by the adolescent age category. Working and non-working mothers as well as their children differed in their perceptions of the role of husband's/father's in family involvement. Mother in different work categories differed in their perceptions of the role of husband in family involvement. A similar pattern was observed for their children. Mothers and their adolescent children differed in their time distribution on daily activities. The differences were observed in case of mothers in different work categories and their children in their time distribution on daily activities.

IMPLICATIONS

Implications for Theory

This study used family environment scale of Moos and Moos which was based on the concept of ‘Behavior Setting’ by Barker, the premise being that the individual and environment were the key determinants of behaviour setting. This framework in the context of this study did not capture the existing reality. Differences in the family characteristics of working and non-working mothers now extended beyond individual and family ecology to other social contexts; like friends and work places. In fact, not even the physical infrastructure and facilities made a difference, as the inclusion of this dimension failed to validate it.

The fact that only expressiveness, independence and achievement emerged as significant family environment dimensions for the most paired groups, indicated that probably the issue of family environment should be approached differently and through a different set of questions. Like family as a primary social unit was embedded in other secondary and tertiary context and there was lot of interconnectedness among them.
The finding that the dimension which were significant for mothers were so for children as well, indicated that mothers could successfully inculcate values in their children. This congruence in perceptions supported the Moos conceptualization of human environments in which persons accommodated themselves into environments they inhabited and grew.

The result also supported the person-environment perspective which argued that the mental health effects of role loss and gain were related to the discrepancy between such changes and the person's preferred role situation. According to this idea those mothers whom were working but did not want to work were in greater stress. Those who were not working but wanted to work were also under stress.

The results also supported the cognitive relational theory of stress by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which emphasized the continuous reciprocal nature of the interaction between the person and the environment. It was observed that the working mother were stressed but also indicated greater adjustment because of conducive environment. This was in conformity with the primary and secondary appraisals of the meta-theoretical system approach.

Pestonjee's theory of stress proposed that stress led to low adjustment that resulted in stress again. This suggested that the situations of high stress would lead to low adjustment. This was found true in this study, as the high level of stress was accompanied by low level of adjustment.

Pestonjee's theory relied on role of individual in stress processes, but here the family relations emerged more important in stress. As observed in the analysis of the perception of husband/fathers, mother and children had different perceptions in different settings. These perceptions determined the behavior patterns as well as interpersonal relations in the family, and the extent to which these would be used in coming to terms with stress.

**Implications for Policy**

Results despite the fewer differences than expected illustrated that the working and non-working women remained two distinct categories, each having different potential to provide parental supervision and monitoring to their adolescents. Shramshakti (1988), the report of
the National Commission on Self Employed Women and Women in the Informal Sector made significant recommendations to ameliorate the lives of women in these categories. A policy perspective was needed however, for the women in organized sector and in full employment. These groups of women suffered from dual role conflicts, which ought to be through some policy and programmes. Legislation may try to ensure good working conditions for women at the place of work, so that they could spend some quality time with their adolescent children. Provision of flexible working hours, occupational health and safety, freedom from workplace harassment need to be made part of policy framework. National Perspective Plan for Women (1988) attempted a broad framework for women, but it paid greater attention to women in rural areas than to for women in urban areas, who suffered greater stress. A comprehensive plan for this sector of women was thus needed.

As far as adolescents were concerned, there was no policy framework for young adults to take note of their age specific pressures and growth potential, and to provide the constructive guidance. Education was only one component of life. How they were to be moulded into useful citizens there was no policy framework. What kind of life skills need to be taught to them, how to be taught, used and continually reinforced, needed attention. We needed a National perspective plan for the young adults to grow into responsible citizen. This was particularly significant, because of the added stress they go through as a consequence of mother’s working.

Education Policy failed to imbibe in children core values. Education system produced children with ego hassles, conscious of their family status. The curriculum should provide on some national core values.

The fact that the boys and girls differed significantly on some dimensions, indicate the need for policy that would eliminate sexist bias. National Policy on Education (1986) stressed the need for education for equality, as well as gender bias free curriculum. It was believed that children imbibed value system from the schools and therefore schools could inculcate equality through curriculum and other extra curricular activities, to reduce the difference between boys and girls. It had been observed that the moral religious emphasis did not emerge significant in the entire analysis. This was rather critical, as it implied that this aspect was not considered important in life either by children or mothers. Since children of today
would be adults tomorrow, it was desirable that that the education curriculum had some moral values to focus on. Neither the adults, nor adolescents having it did not mean that they were all moral, but that pulls of reality like corruption and consumerism etc. could easily attract them.

There was also the need for some good counseling of children because of the stress, some of which did not even get expressed parents and teachers should work together to ensure that counseling was not taken only negatively and confined to very few schools. There was a need for policy to make counseling mandatory in all schools, and then for all children in small groups or as individuals to have some routine but healthy growth oriented counseling.

**Intervention Strategies**

There was need to organize programmes for families and couples than women alone, which would focus on family relations and efficient management of the family as a whole. These could be organized in informal settings incorporating day to day experiences, a platform for families to interact, share, learn and help to understand each others difficulties. As seen from the results the stress in working and non working mothers continued to find manifestation in many areas, programmes could be of help. The results had particularly highlighted stress in home and emotional areas, and learning from each other’s experiences could help in empowering themselves to cope with the problems.

Some programs on confidence building could be needed by, non-working mothers, as it had been found that stress had negative impact of expressiveness and intellectual cultural orientation. This was supported by the fact that expressiveness and intellectual cultural orientation had positive impact on adjustment.

**General Implications**

The results implied that working and non-working mothers need to be treated as separate categories in terms of perceived family characteristics. The issue was not of better or worse, but of interplay of a set of variables that led to particular perceptions of family characteristics. It implied that the search for improved family environment should be based
on the interplay with other contextual variables. The differences in stress and adjustment areas implied that more adjusted families had stress but different coping mechanisms than others. Both groups developed their own strategies of adjustment and all these need to be recognized.

Further, family characteristics dimensions which were important for stress were not necessarily important for adjustment indicated that appraisal of stress and acting for adjustment were shaped by different cognitive and affective processes. In behavioral terms this was significant as it implied that conceptually adjustment was not to considered opposite to stress.

An important implication of the results on family characteristics was that important was that more than the nature of work, the mother was working was important. It showed that mothers in different work categories developed their individualized strategies to come to terms with demands of work.

The significant differences between children of working and non-working mothers on family characteristics implied that the contexts of their growth were different. While attempting to find ways and means to make family environment better for children, these contexts will have to be seen as whole units of socialization, where strengths need to be reinforced and weaknesses need to be contained. Further boys and girls tended to be different as they lived and functioned under different contextual variables and generated different web of relationships. This confirmed the old social divides, which also extended to children of different work categories. It was important that while these divides diminished for mothers in different work categories, these were very much present in their children. Educational programmes and counseling should consider ways and means of reducing these divides at the school stage itself.

When mothers started working, they needed time to come to terms with work demands. Therefore in the initial years they were more stressed. With the passage of time, they developed better appreciation for work environment and coped with stress. It was therefore necessary that when women entered work, the employers paid attention to create an environment at the place of work, which facilitated their adjustment.
The children of working mother attached more positive value to characteristics of their fathers, as compared to the children of non-working mothers. This implied that in families with working mothers, there was a better appreciation for role of other family members. Sex differences within the group were of little consequence, but girls across working and non-working mothers emerged as distinct categories, indicating a differential environmental context.

An interesting implication of the study was that while working and non working mothers paid equal attention to domestic chores, as indicated in terms of time distribution, working mothers were not able to get enough time for personal care like sleeping and leisure, which made life stressful having implications for a range of other domains of functioning.

LIMITATIONS

- This study was based on data collected in 1992 and 1997. Respondents in both these years were not the same. Respondents in later year had been used as a proxy for the respondents in earlier year. It could have been useful to use the same respondents to make it a true longitudinal study.

- Fathers being primary members in a family and their contributions being equally important should have also been included in the study.

- The study was limited to six categories of working mothers. More work categories of mothers could have been included to cover a wide range of occupations.

- The study was confined to adolescents of public school. Children in these schools by and large have a high degree of social homogeneity. It should have been better to cover children from Government schools and Government Aided School too, to see differences in family environment.

- Questions on physical dimension of Family Characteristic Scale should have tried to capture material aspects of home through more direct questions.

- Time management activities should be more elaborate.
• The category of non-working mothers consisted of typical housewives as well as those in ad-hoc, irregular employment. These should have been desegregated as it is likely that this clubbing together had subdued differences and overall findings.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A longitudinal study of the same target group would be desirable in order to assess the changes in the behavior/attitudinal changes caused by family characteristics and other associated variables.

A study would be desirable which would consider a wide range of work categories of mothers in order to capture nuances of different work environments. Such a study should consider different types of schools so that impact of different socio-economic situation is taken cognizance of.

Father being central to the family, future studies should also include father as an independent and/or control variable.

Dis-aggregation of activities in relation to time needs to be attempted in future studies, so that the infirmities of the life pattern is captured adequately.

Miscellaneous areas of stress and adjustment in relation to non-working mothers need to be elaborated in more details.