The interface between work and family life has become a topic of considerable interest to social scientists in recent years. This has been caused by an increasing number of married women entering the work force during the last few decades. The dual earner pattern of family has become more firmly established in the recent years. A direct consequence of this change in employment patterns is that many married men and women combine substantial work and family obligations. Combining these two roles is considered a source of conflict for the spouses. Many studies in the past have revealed high prevalence of work-family conflict among dual earner couples.

Many factors have been attributed to the increasing incidence of female employment in different societies. The explanations vary from economic necessities of families to the psychological needs of women. Studies in the past have revealed that the state of balance of family system has been affected by women's involvement in work outside home. These studies have addressed four major issues surrounding dual earner families. These issues include, (1) whether employment has positive or negative effects on the psychological well-being of both spouses, (2) whether maternal employment affects the development of children, (3) whether marital relationship changes due to the effects that female employment bring in, and (4) whether the functioning of the family system gets affected due to the occupational commitment of women. All these studies have produced disparate findings while addressing these issues.
This empirical study is undertaken to measure the personal, marital, and family functioning, to understand the mental health of dual earner families in comparison with the traditional single earner families. The design of the study has been set to provide a gestalt of family functioning by understanding the functioning of different subsystems of families. Dual earner families of two different types are compared with traditional single earner families to understand the differences between these three family groups on different dimensions of psychological functioning of families. Based on the findings, few suggestions to strengthen the dual earner family systems are made. The necessity of devising mental health programmes for the working couples under the umbrella of community mental health is examined in the study.

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