CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of the Problem
1.2 Purpose of the Study
In the behavioural and medical sciences, theoretical and empirical interest in anxiety parallels the popular concern. Every alert citizen of our society realizes, on the basis of his own experience as well as his observation of those around him that, anxiety is a pervasive and profound phenomenon. It is regarded as a principal causative agent for such diverse behavioural consequences as insomnia, immoral acts, instances of creative self expression, debilitating psychological and psychosomatic symptoms, and idiosyncratic mannerisms of endless variety. While fear and covert anxiety have perhaps always been a part of man's lot, apparently not until the twentieth century did anxiety emerge as an explicit and pervasive problem.

Freud (1920) singled out anxiety as the crucial problem of emotional and behavioural disorders. Not only in psychopathology, in the actions of 'normal' people as well as 'abnormal', it is recognized that anxiety is much more prevalent than was suspected several decades ago.

The pressure of social change, attendant upon rapid scientific and technological advances, the social estrangement and alienation of individuals in an urban, competitive society are a few of the sorts of stresses
that serve to induce feelings of helplessness. Less obvious, deeper and more personal sources of anxiety are namely the inner confusion, psychological disorientation, uncertainty with respect to values and acceptable standards of conduct. To the extent that social and cultural factors undermine personal security and create problems for the individual in establishing his psychological identity, there will be heightened vulnerability to and increased manifestations of anxiety.

The immediate, outward occasion of anxiety in our country could be economic problems, but it would be an error to conclude that the inclusive cause of the emerging anxiety is economic insecurity. Individuals are often caught in the chaos of conflicting patterns, none of them wholly condemned, but no one of them clearly approved and free from a confusion, or, where the group sanctions are clear in demanding a certain role of a man or woman, the individual encounters cultural requirements with no immediate means of meeting them.

Sex differences in socialization experiences reflect adult role expectations that females will be mothers and males will be workers. Traditionally, a married woman's world is her home and she is primarily required to look after the welfare of her husband and family. The sphere
of her life is strictly limited and confined to home under the protection of man. The husband's field of work is outside the home and he is the breadwinner, while the wife looks after domestic chores, where no job is too mean to do and no hour or work is too long. She asks for no wages and her hours of work are neither fixed nor even counted.

However, because of longer life expectancy, smaller family size, higher education and increasing cost of living, woman prompted by the tediousness and monotony of house work, need for personal fulfillment, or need to be recognized as independent personalities and not just the extensions of their husbands' identity, have come out of the four walls of the house and have entered the field of work outside the home. In a country where the growth, development and inner experiences of women are inextricably tied to the socio-economic factors (Kakar 1978), it would be logical to expect that any effort to secure gainful employment is likely to bring a change in the quality of life.

Moreover, economic independence of women is commonly advocated as a solution to many problems considered under the rubric of women's issue and employment of women outside the home is widely regarded as a key to secure equality, autonomy and self-fulfillment.
The combinations of chores at home and at work has changed the entire concept of the feminine role in society. But the change however, is not completely and harmoniously accepted with the changing social life. Traditional beliefs still dominate in emphasizing the role of women as primarily housekeepers. This is the basic role which she cannot give up under any set of conditions or in preference to any other role which she may accept. Men on other hand, are quite unwilling to sacrifice some of their traditional, age old privileges. They are not against women working, as long as she is able to cope with the demands of energy and time, made by the two roles, one of a house wife and the other as a wage earner.

Bloustein (1968) points out that on the one hand the modern woman is told that she can combine marriage and family life with a career, on the other hand, she encounters at every turn obstacles of prejudice, discriminations and lack of institutional support. The working woman feels that if she shared with her husband the strains and stresses of a wage earner, taking an active role as a working woman, the husband should also be able to share with her, her duties as a wife and mother.
Usually, man is not prepared to share household chores with his wife. He considers it below his dignity because in terms of social traditions, this type of a role has a low status value. Justifications are often made in this connection, that the husband might be willing and ready to help the woman in the household duties, but the attitudes of the other members of the family and society cannot be overlooked, he is ridiculed by his fellow men, rather than being followed as an example.

But what should be noted is that working woman are no less ridiculed by all around them, though they try their best and fulfill both the roles quite appreciably. And quite often man is not accustomed to accept an inferior status or defeat. The ego of the husband is particularly hurt when the wife occupies a superior job or a working status.

The discussion points towards the other important and interesting issue.

Indian woman find themselves at different levels of psychological readiness to face the world of work. Even though on the whole, working woman faced considerable exploitation and discrimination in the male world, yet these woman were differentially prepared to mobilize their
resources to face these. The effectiveness of skills used to cope with the discrimination of the external world depends on the degree of discrimination which existed against themselves in their own minds. Many working women deeply empathize with the apprehension on the part of men as to what might happen if woman really did take part in all those activities that men have considered their privilege and preserve and from which most men seek refuge by returning to women (Erikson, 1966). Prejudice of men against expansion of women's role in certain fields reinforced what women already felt about themselves.

Hence, apart from the external resistance, gender identity of the women is an all pervasive factor. Gender identity for a woman is her enduring perception of herself as feminine. This enduring perception better called a schema, is a cognitive structure, a network of association that guides individual's perceptions.

Masculinity is considered to be the mark of psychologically healthy male and femininity to be the mark of a psychologically healthy female. According to the traditional sex role stereotypes, males are expected to have qualities such as independence, aggression, competitiveness, leadership, task oriented, outward discipline, objectivity, analytic mindedness, courage, unsentimentality, rationality,
confidence and emotional control. While females are expected to have qualities such as, dependence, passivity, fragility, low pain tolerance, non-aggressiveness, non-competiveness, nurturance, subjectivity, yieldingness and emotionality.

From the developmental perspective, psychological processes required for successful execution of work are at variance with what the female child is taught as preparation for her adult life, thus making her development discontinuous. Growth process in characterized by both continuity and discontinuity in behaviours. Even though discontinuities are considered to be 'natural' in the development of the individual, this may not be without considerable stress to the individual. All cultures deal one way or another, with the cycle of growth from infancy to old age. Benedict (1938) observed that the transitional bridges provided by cultures for discontinuous development determined the coping capabilities of individuals. For instance, the discontinuity of dependence-independance dimension is noteworthy because of its universal relevance. Usually child's dependency is encouraged in the early years with the expectation that independence will be somehow acquired later in life. The transition in such reversals brings with it a degree of strain to the concerned individual. The stress experienced in these discontinuities
depends upon the culturally available supportive techniques. Cultures vary in their facilitative role in providing transitions. The implicit assumption here is that the Indian woman does not receive, the necessary support when faced with this discontinuity in the development of her identity (Kumar, 1982).

Until puberty both sexes are rewarded for most of the masculine and feminine qualities. But with the onset of physical changes of puberty, definitions of normalcy and femininity change and come precipitately closer to the stereotype. Hence psychological dimensions change or remain constant depending on whether individual inclinations threaten idealized cultural concepts of masculinity and femininity. Recently, it has been recognized that our current system of sex role differentiation has long since out-lived its usefulness and that it now serves only to prevent both men and women from developing as full and complete human beings.

Bem (1974) asserted that an individual could be both masculine and feminine, assertive and yielding, instrumental and expressive, depending upon the situational appropriateness of these various behaviours. Such individuals she called 'androgynous'. Androgynous individuals develop
characteristics whether good or bad regardless of whether those characteristics are conventionally labelled 'male' or 'female'. Such individuals could adapt better to situational demands than sex-typed individuals, because of their rich repertoire of behavioural responses. Consequently, androgynous individuals may have a lower level of anxiety as compared to sex-typed individuals. Hence sex role stereotyping may be one of the reasons for increasing level of anxiety.

Whether or not a stressful situation arouses an anxiety reaction depends on how a person sees or interprets that situation. Thus, some people react to hard work and responsibility with worry and anxiety, while the same amount and types of work can be challenging and rewarding for others. Married working women have high rates of psychological distress – including anxiety, depression, worry and demoralization. (Gove and Tudor, 1973; Pearlin, 1975; Radloff, 1975). A leading explanation for this finding is the role stress theory developed by Gove and his colleagues (Gove and Tudor, 1973; Gove and Greeken, 1977). The theory focusses on the stressfull aspects of female roles, arguing that women whose roles are least traditional are least distressed.
In particular, married women who are employed and do not have children or do not have the primary responsibility for the housework are expected to be less distressed than women who are married, who stay home taking care of the children and doing household chores. Employed women are expected to be less psychologically distressed than housewives because they have two sources of potential gratification, work and family, instead of one.

Women with children, especially young children are expected to be more psychologically distressed than those without, because children place demands and burdens on mothers and isolate them from adult social support. Women who have primary responsibility for the housework and cooking are expected to be more distressed than women whose husbands share these chores with them or who live in joint families where work may be shared by other members of the family. Furthermore, employed women who also have the primary responsibility for the home may experience work overload.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The present investigation is an attempt to study the relationship between sex-role orientation and anxiety in working women.
There is a lot of research done on working women in the past few years. Most of them concentrated on how employment of married women is related to various psycho-social variables such as their marriage, happiness and family adjustment (Bhattacharjee and Bhatt, 1983); role conflict (Rani, 1976; Surti, 1982) various reasons for taking up the job and family reactions to work (Ramanamma and Bambawale, 1984) and adjustment of their children (Seth and Bhatnagar, 1979).

However, not much attention has been focused on aspects of women's personality which exert determinative influence on the women's mental health, particularly her level of anxiety. Anxiety, in this century, seems to have emerged as an explicit and pervasive problem. It is regarded as the principal causative agent for diverse behavioural consequences and at the nucleus of most negative psychological affect.

The personality aspect which might contribute to anxiety, considered in this study is sex-role orientation, that is, the anxiety level of masculine, feminine, androgynous and undifferentiated women are compared. Androgynous women are expected to have the least anxiety as compared to the masculine, feminine and undifferentiated women. Their rich
repertoire of behavioural responses, enable them to adapt better to situational demands, of both masculine and feminine nature. A non-androgynous sex-role can seriously restrict the individual as she moves from situation to situation, since she is motivated to maintain a self image as feminine or masculine, a goal which she presumably accomplishes by suppressing any behaviour that might be considered undesirable or inappropriate for her sex or her self-image.

The level of anxiety of women with different sex-role orientations in relation to some demographic and socio-economic variables like age, occupational status, family types, income level and number of children is studied. An attempt is also made to study the effect of these demographic and socio-economic variables, individually and in relation to one another on the anxiety level of women.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to analyse the effect of sex-role orientation on anxiety.
2. To study anxiety in relation to:
   a. Age and occupational status.
   b. Age and number of children.
   c. Age and family types.
   d. Age and income level.
   e. Occupational status and number of children.
   f. Occupational status and family types.
   g. Occupational status and income level.
   h. Number of children and family types.
   i. Number of children and income level.
   j. Family types and income level.

3. To study the relationship between anxiety and sex-role orientation in relation to:
   a. Age.
   b. Occupational status.
   c. Number of children.
   d. Family types.
   e. Income level.