CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION
The main objective of the present study was to determine the relationship between a working woman's socio-economic status and her clothing.

The working women were classified into various socio-economic status categories on the basis of their occupation, income, and education. The relationship between their socio-economic status and clothing was determined by eliciting information through an interview schedule. Apart from this, the position of working women in their home and family, place of work and in the society was examined. The practice of wearing burqa was examined by questioning Muslim respondents only.

The main hypothesis of this study sought to examine the relationship between a woman's employment status and clothing habits. It was hypothesized that clothing habits and attitudes towards clothing would vary according to one's employment and socio-economic status.

The hypothesis was verified by comparing the working women group with the non-working women group in terms of their socio-economic status. Since the level
of age, education and income are expected to influence one's position and attitudes of women, the data was again analyzed by controlling each of these factors to determine whether any one of these factors is more significant than the other.

It was found that whereas a majority of both working and non-working women preferred to wear sari, yet the working women showed greater inclination towards sari than the non-working women (See Table 3.1 where chi-square is significant). Among the working women, the higher SES group preferred to wear sari at their work place (See Table 3.15). But non-working women and working women of the low SES group preferred to wear shalwar suit. This difference between the working and non-working samples indicated that as compared with the non-working group, sari was preferred by working women and especially working women of high SES group. The working women of low SES preferred shalwar kameez like those of the non-working women. But the question is, why should the working women and women of high SES group prefer sari to shalwar kameez when the shalwar kameez is a more practical dress? Is it because of the
regional association of *shalwar kameez* with Punjab and the respondent sample of this study was composed of non-Punjabis? Or, alternatively, is the *sari* more acceptable as it has been proclaimed as a national dress for women? Or, is it because *sari* is considered more graceful? Or perhaps simply the fact that the *sari* is India’s national dress for women and symbolizes graceful maturity, and so, working women prefer *sari* to *shalwar kameez*.

As far as preference of fabric was concerned, while majority of working women preferred cotton, non-working women preferred synthetic material (Table 3.2). This trend was also seen in both the high and low SES groups where the high SES group preferred cotton to synthetic (Table 3.16). It is quite possible that cotton fabric is preferred because it is more suitable for the long summer days. At the same time, cotton requires proper washing, starching and ironing care, and is thus more expensive to maintain than the synthetic fabrics. Apart from this, compared to cotton, synthetic fabrics are also more durable, and these are perhaps some of the reasons why non-working and working
women of the low SES group of working women preferred synthetics whereas high SES working women group preferred cotton. In order to explain why the high SES working women did not regard the advantage of synthetic over cotton, one would have to examine the various circumstances under which the women work.

It can be argued that since working women have to spend six to eight hours at work, they feel more comfortable in cotton wear which is cooler. Synthetic fabrics have the disadvantage of low absorbency and can be very uncomfortable under extreme hot climatic conditions.

This striking similarity in choice of material between non-working women and low SES working women group on the one hand, and the difference between working and non-working women on the other, is rather interesting. It appears that apart from the practical aspect of clothing, the difference of clothing preferences between working and non-working women can be explained in terms of the glamour associated with synthetic material.

It should be recalled that synthetic fabrics came
into vogue with the boon in the western synthetic fabric industry. Synthetic materials revolutionized the world of fabric and replaced the yearning for silk. Its glaze and shine, its durability, feather weight and easy-to-maintain quality ushered in a new fashion in clothing. Because of import restrictions, 'nylon' and other 'synthetic' saris were smuggled from Hong Kong, Japan, the Gulf countries, Singapore, Nepal and Pakistan, where customs charges were exempted and these saris were sold like hot cakes. The cost was, then, comparatively higher than cotton but much less than silk. Middle class women soon started showing-off their "foreign" acquisitions and 'nylon' saris acquired a new social prestige. This style was emulated by the lower SES group. It has often been observed and reported that styles of life set by the upper echelons of society are emulated by the lower strata, and as the latter acquire sufficient economic means, the style gains new momentum (Weber, 1950; Klein, 1950). Thus, synthetics percolated downwards and lower-SES group women adorned themselves with this new finery. With the mass production of synthetics in India, the cost of
synthetics fell and became easily affordable for the lower income group.

It is a well-known fact that when the masses emulate certain life styles, the elite soon begin to discard these and rapidly find new ways and means to differentiate themselves and set themselves apart from the crowd. The results of the present study tend to indicate this trend.

The results also indicate that the non-working and lower SES working women group are comparatively more conscious about fashion trends than the high SES working women group (See Table 3.3 and 3.17, respectively). This trend can again be explained in terms of the desire of the non-working and low SES working women group to appear smarter and become more "acceptable" in the "respectable" circles of society. This is an obvious desire especially when great importance is attached to clothing and when clothing is believed to indicate social prestige. The upper SES groups make their mark and gain importance not because of their clothing but because of their already established position as the "elite". They can, in fact, afford to get
away with anything because what they wear is regarded as a "new trend" in fashion -- they are the pace-setters of fashion.

The results show that as far as income and clothing expenditure are concerned, both the working and the non-working groups felt that clothing expenditure should increase according to the increase in one's income (Table 3.4). But when the data was again analyzed and comparison was made between high SES and low SES groups (on expenditure on clothing), it was found that majority of the low SES group spent more on clothing than the high SES group (Table 3.18). It follows that in order to maintain a "prestigious" position in society, the low SES group of working women spend a larger percentage of their income on their clothing, even though a majority of both the groups considered clothing as a "status symbol" (Table 3.5). However, among the working women, the low SES group appeared more conscious about the status factor of clothing than the high SES group (Table 3.19). While the working women as a group agreed that clothing helped in social mobility (Table 3.6), the low SES
working women group was more conscious about this aspect of clothing (Table 3.20).

As far as clothing and social approval was concerned, the difference between working and non-working women was not significant (Table 3.7). However, surprisingly, a majority of the low SES group of the working women considered that their dress helped in gaining social approval (Table 3.21). Similarly, while a majority of the working women fully agreed with the statement that clothing helped to develop self-confidence (Table 3.8), the low SES working women group was more conscious about "clothing and self-confidence" (Table 3.22). Other studies have shown that individuals are judged by their appearance and this finding is supported by the results of this present study (Table 3.9). The low SES group considered clothing as an important means of gaining social goals. In this case difference of opinion between working and non-working women group did not exist. Among the working women, the same opinion prevailed in both high and low SES groups (Table 3.23). It is believed that since "individuals are often judged by their appearance."
therefore clothes are important in gaining social goals." Majority of non-working women have agreed that clothing gave a feeling of security (Table 3.10). Among the working women, low SES group was more conscious about this aspect of clothing (Table 3.24). It appears that clothing is considered as a vehicle for expressing conformity. Table 3.11 shows that majority of the working women considered clothing as a vehicle for expressing their conformity with other members of the same class. But in the case of non-working women, the trend was reversed. Among the working women, the high SES group was more conscious than the low SES group about this aspect of clothing (Table 3.25).

As far as relationship between one's job and clothing were concerned, both the groups fully agreed with the statement (Table 3.12). Among the working women also, both low SES and high SES groups fully agreed with the statement that there is a definite relationship between one's job and her clothing (Table 3.26).

Since majority of women in the sample were Muslim (65 per cent), it was considered important to examine
the practice of wearing *burqa*. It is generally believed that the practice of wearing *burqa* is fast disappearing. It was hypothesized that employment outside the home would help to discard the practice of wearing *burqa*.

The results show that 27 per cent of 200 working Muslim respondents and 66.7 per cent of 60 non-working Muslim respondents wear *burqa* (Table 3.13). This shows that comparatively few working respondents wear *burqa*. Among the working women group, 7.07 percent of low SES group and 3 percent of high SES group wear *burqa* all the time, and 24 percent of the low SES group and 2 percent of high SES group wear *burqa* sometimes (Table 3.27). This shows that wearing *burqa* is more common in the low SES working women group. This is a significant finding and shows that perhaps employment outside the home has helped the Muslim women to give up *burqa*. But it should be noted that among the working women, the incidence of *burqa* among the high SES group is much less as compared to the low SES group. The results also show that the working women who wear *burqa*, majority wear *burqa* willingly. But in the case of non-
working respondents who wear burqa, a majority are forced to wear it against their will. The respondents complained that if they did not wear burqa they would be ostracized by their neighbours and by their family members. This shows that the working women have more freedom in taking decisions of their own regarding burqa (Table 3.14). Thus, while a majority of the non-working group and 31 per cent of the low SES working women group wear burqa, the incident is low among the high SES working women. But it is interesting to note that women of the low SES group are forced to wear burqa while the women of the high SES group willingly and on their own accord. That the low SES group should wear the burqa unwillingly indicates that these women are made to wear burqa under pressure. The practice of observing purdah is traditionally associated with upper class women as it symbolized respectability. The upper class women spent all their time at home and were protected by the male members. The lower class women, on the other hand, had to work for a living, either in the fields or at manual household jobs -- hence observance of purdah was mostly ruled out
(Bhatty, 1975). With the passage of time and the rapid socio-economic change, the upper class women who entered educational institutions and other professions gave up *purdah* and *burqa*. Gradually the lower class women took to the practice of wearing *burqa* in a bid to gain respectability. (This has also been reported by Ahmed, 1978; 1980, Bhatty, 1975; Steurs, 1978.)

The results of the present study show that the same trend is prevalent among the low SES group -- though the women themselves donot wish to wear *burqa* as they go to other places to work, they are forced to do so by their family members. The latter perhaps allow their women to work because of economic needs, but either for fear of adverse public opinion or for establishing their "respectability" in society, they force them to wear *burqa*. These women wear the *burqa* while leaving their home and take it off once they reach their place of work. (This has also been reported by Steurs, 1978.) Most of these women work side by side with men and during the course of their work and have to deal with them. It is obvious then that the spirit of *purdah* and seclusion is absent. If
this were not so, then they would not have been allowed to take up employment in male establishments.

The foregoing results and discussion clearly indicate that clothing habits and attitudes towards clothing largely vary according to the employment and socio-economic status of women. If employment and socio-economic differences affect clothing habits and attitudes, could these differences also influence a woman's role and position in the family, in the place of work and in society?

The hypotheses concerning these aspects were examined and the results indicate that employment of women outside the home affects her position in the family. A working woman has greater freedom in spending family income, and more equal opportunity in interpersonal relationship within the family. She bears a lesser burden of household chores than the non-working woman. Though the working woman performs roles outside her home, yet the family and the home still demand her attention. She thus has dual focal roles -- one as the bread winner and as the pivot around whom household activities revolve. Any change in the role and status
of a woman is thus reflected in her activities within the family and it will subsequently affect all other members of the family. Thus the family provides one of the most suitable situations for examining the changes in woman's position.

In order to verify the hypothesis that working women as compared to non-working women wield greater decision-making power within the family, four variables were considered:

1) Extent of power in decision-making in the family (money-centered and children-centered).
2) Extent of freedom in spending the family income.
3) Extent of help received from other members of the family in household chores.
4) Extent of deviation from observing traditional customs and practices.

The results tabulated in Table 4.1 indicate a clear association between employment and decision-making power. There is a significant difference between working and non-working women at all the three levels. These results show that the employed women have greater say in decision-making as far as money
matters are concerned.

Table 4.2 shows that the differences in the level of income are not significant in decision-making. The scores of all the three income groups did not illustrate variation.

The working women group was divided according to age and the results show that level of age is not significant in determining power in decision-making (Table 4.3). There was no significant difference between women below 35 years of age and those above 36 years. However, in the case of non-working women, the analysis of the available data indicated that the lower age group had a higher score on decision-making than the upper age group (Table 4.4). When the data was again analyzed controlling the age factor, it was seen that working women have more decision-making power on money matters than the non-working women (Tables 4.5 and 4.6). These results support the hypothesis that working women have greater power of decision-making in her family, irrespective of her age group. It is believed that an educated woman has greater decision-making power than an uneducated woman. But as far as
working women are concerned it was found that their level of education did not affect this aspect (Table 4.7). But in the case of non-working women, the trend is different (Table 4.8). The analysis showed that higher education was associated with higher score on decision-making power. But again when the data was analyzed by controlling education, it was found that working women exercised more power than their non-working counterparts in decision-making in the family.

In a traditional society like ours, women are not allowed to involve themselves in decision-making on important matters concerning children. The results of the present study show that the working women obtained higher scores on decision-making centered around children (Table 4.11). These results indicated that working women had more power of decision-making in their family. When the data was analyzed on the basis of levels of income, no association between level of income and decision-making power was indicated (Table 4.12). It is believed that level of age and extent of power in decision-making on children-centered matters are positively related. It was found that while in the
case of working women the upper age group had comparatively higher scores (Table 4.13), in the case of non-working women such association did not exist (Table 4.14). Again the data was analyzed by controlling the age factor and it was found that employment was positively associated with the score on decision-making power in both the age groups (Tables 4.15 and 4.16).

It can be deduced that level of education affects decision-making. It was found that women in the higher educated group scored more in decision-making on children-centered matters in both working and non-working groups. But, when the data was analyzed by controlling the education factor, the analysis clearly indicated that employment was the major factor which gave more power in decision-making on children-centered matters (Tables 4.19 and 4.20). The results clearly indicate that participation of women in employment has brought about various changes in family life. One of the most important changes is the economic independence attained by working women. Since the salary income of a working woman was a substantial contribution to the family income, it gave her a right to assert her
decision in financial matters. The unemployed woman who was wholly dependent on her husband/other male members, could not assert herself especially in financial matters.

Working outside the home provides women greater opportunities for social interaction, and this helps in the development of their social skills and self-confidence. This experience enables them to use their money more judiciously and they can handle the family finances more efficiently. The results show that a majority of the employed respondents enjoyed an equal or greater freedom than men in the family. On the other hand, a majority of the non-working women had little or no say in matters concerning family expenditure (Table 4.21). When the data was analyzed on the basis of level of income, a significant association between level of income and freedom in spending the family income was established. In other words, the higher the level of income the more the power did the women wield in matters concerning family expenditure (Table 4.22). These results reiterate the hypothesis that employment plays a decisive role in obtaining
greater power for women in their family.

It was expected that level of age and education would also have an impact on the freedom of spending. The analysis of the data indicated that the higher age group of working women scored more than the lower age group (Table 4.23). But this age factor was not applicable in this case of non-working women (Table 4.24). The influence of employment on freedom in spending the family income again emerged when the data was re-analyzed by controlling the age factor (Tables 4.25 and 4.26). Thus the results show that employment, rather than age, is the main factor which affects the spending modes. It was expected that level of education of women would influence freedom of spending. The analysis of the available data clearly supports this assumption (Tables 4.27 and 4.28). But it was evident from the further analysis (Tables 4.29 and 4.30) that though women in higher level of education spend family income freely, the major factor was employment.

In a developing society, roles continue to be sex linked and all women including working women are expected to be home makers. This concept, it seems, is
gradually changing in view of the fact that women have entered the job market and a new partnership is expected to evolve. When women were fully dependent on their husbands the entire burden of household responsibilities fell on women. But when the women share the economic burden, logically the share of their household responsibilities should also decrease. The results of the present study indicate this trend rather clearly. It is seen that the working women now share household chores with their husbands or other family members. Or, since they are economically better off they can afford employing servants. In this way the burden of household chores is reduced (Table 4.31).

Differences in the levels of income show that the women of higher income group scored more than the women of lower income group in matters concerning household responsibility (Table 4.32).

Further analysis of the data revealed that age has no influence on the pattern of sharing household responsibilities (Tables 4.33, 4.34, 4.35 and 4.35). The relationship of employment and sharing of household responsibilities was further established when the data
was analyzed on the basis of levels of education (Tables 4.37, 4.38, 4.39 and 4.40). This changed pattern of behaviour again indicates that working women enjoy greater freedom.

It was assumed that the working women would be less likely to observe the traditional behavioural rules as compared to the non-working women. The results have substantiated this hypothesis (Table 4.41). Further analysis of the data (Table 4.42) based on levels of income of the working women reiterate this hypothesis. When the data was again analyzed in terms of age, it was found that though higher age group of working women had more freedom than the lower age group, the age level of differences of non-working women was not significant. When the age factor was controlled the results revealed a significant association between employment and freedom in observing traditional customs (Tables 4.45 and 4.46).

The results also show that working and non-working women in higher education group have more freedom than the women of the lesser educated group (Tables 4.47 and 4.48). But employment outside the home is the major
contributing factor rather than the level of education (Tables 4.49 and 4.50).

The attitudes of women toward various aspects of life would change under different situations. It was assumed that employment outside the home could bring about a change in the attitudes of women. It was hypothesized that the working women would have secured a higher position than their non-working counterparts in the wider society. It was also assumed that the working women would participate in social activities outside the home. The experience so gained would influence their social life. Thus a marked difference was expected between the working and the non-working respondents in their participation in their social activities. The results of the available data clearly established that working women were more involved than the non-working women in the professional, social and cultural activities (Tables 5.1 and 5.2). Apart from this, a majority of the working women respondents believed that participation in such organizational activities had increased their status in the society. But the non-working women did not consider that any
outside activities would increase their status (Table 5.3). While the working women did not require any escort when they left their home, majority of the non-working women required an escort (Table 5.4). Employment outside the home seems to have provided opportunities for increasing the freedom of movement.

Further analysis of the data revealed that majority of the respondents, both working and non-working, believed in the idea of equal status. But it was the working women who displayed this attitude (Table 5.5). As far as the effect of employment of women on their status in the society is concerned 97 percent of the working women and 66 percent of non-working women gave positive answers. This difference in the attitude also seems to be associated with employment outside the home (Table 5.6).

Having analyzed various aspects of the life of women, the analysis of the position of women in their work situation was undertaken. It was assumed that the treatment accorded to women by their male superiors, male colleagues and male subordinates would indicate their rating in the place of work. It was hypothesized
that women in the higher level income group/employment will be accorded an egalitarian position. This hypothesis was examined by eliciting information of the extent of recognition, cooperation and respect received by the respondents. The respondents were asked to record their own feelings in this matter. Analysis of data (Table 6.1) shows that women in high income bracket received more recognition from their male superiors. In other words, the extent of recognition from their male superiors is clearly associated with their level of income. Further analysis of the data on the basis of age showed that though lower age group also received almost equal recognition, it was the women in the higher age group who received more recognition from their male superiors (Table 6.2).

The data was again examined by controlling the age factor to determine the effect of level of income and it was found that the women in high income group of the lower age group scored more than the women in the low income group (Table 6.3). But in the case of women in higher age group, the association between level of income and the extent of recognition from male supe-
riors was not significant. In other words, higher age was a factor which attracted recognition from male superiors and thus provided equal status with their male colleagues (Table 6.4). Thus while position of working women differed according to level of age, the cadre position of women in the employment hierarchy was more important in securing an equal treatment from their male superiors.

It was further assumed that level of education might also be another factor. The results show that the women who had higher education level attracted more recognition in comparison to women in the lower level of education (Table 6.5). The data was again examined by controlling the variable education to determine the impact of position in the employment hierarchy on the status level. The analysis clearly validated the hypothesis that women placed at higher level of employment were accorded greater recognition from their male superiors (Table 6.6). In other words, even among the higher educated group, the level of income determined recognition accorded by the male superiors. The same trend can be seen in the less educated group also (Table
6.7). This situation led us to believe that level of income was the major factor in gaining greater recognition for working women from their male superiors. It can be concluded that generally level of income and cadre position, rather than the level of age and education, are more important contributing factors.

It was assumed that the extent of cooperation from male colleagues is another indicator of equal status, and level of income was positively associated with it. The analysis of the data indicated that the extent of cooperation was higher when the working women approached higher level of income (Table 6.8). Further examination of the data on the basis of age showed that age level influences the extent of cooperation received from male colleagues (Table 6.9). The data was examined by controlling the age variable to determine the extent of influence of level of income in obtaining cooperation of male colleagues. It was found that the association between level of income and extent of cooperation from male colleagues was very strong at both lower and higher age level (Tables 6.10 and 6.11). In other words, working women received equal cooperation
without any sex discrimination when they occupied higher cadre positions.

It was assumed that the level of education also had an impact on the extent of cooperation. The results show that women with higher education received more cooperation (Table 6.12). But when the data was analyzed by controlling the variable education, the strong association between the level of income and the extent of cooperation clearly emerged in the case of higher education group (Table 6.13). But in the case of the lower educated group, this association was not significant (Table 6.14). Thus it can be stated that the level of employment of women is the major factor in getting cooperation from male colleagues, rather than the level of age and education.

The extent of respect shown by male subordinates could also be considered as an indicator for equal status for women in their place of work. It was hypothesized that the working women placed in the higher level of income group were shown more respect than those in the low income level group. The analysis of the data revealed that this hypothesis was valid (Table
It was assumed that level of age and education might also influence this. But when the data was examined on the basis of age it was found that the women in higher age group were accorded more respect than those in the lower age group. This finding revealed that with the increase in age the experience also increased, and women themselves were able to create an understanding with their male colleagues. Alternatively, it is quite possible that in India, men traditionally respect older women and therefore women in the higher age group were accorded more respect. But counter data, involving men in different cadres education groups, income groups and the like, would prove fruitfull in making comparisons between men and women. It is quite possible that there is no difference between men and women in this respect.

The data was further analyzed by controlling the variable, age, to determine the influence of income level. It was found that in the case of younger women belonging to high income level, attracted more respect from their male subordinates (Table 6.17). But in the case of older women this association was not signifi-
cant. In other words, in the case of older women their male subordinates were more respectful regardless of the level of income (Table 6.18).

When the data was examined on the basis of education it was observed that higher level of education attracted more respect from male subordinates. The data was again examined by controlling the education variable to ascertain the impact of level of income, and it was found that the level of income was more important than the level of education as far as respect was concerned in both higher and lower educated group (Tables 6.20 and 6.21). The results show that working women placed at comparatively higher level are accorded more respect. These findings also validate the hypothesis that working women have more egalitarian position than the non-working women (Table 6.19).

It can then be concluded that the main hypothesis that clothing habits and attitudes toward clothing vary according to employment and economic status of women not only in terms of the type of clothes, jewelry, shoes and "make-up" that they wear, but also the type of fabric used. Their attitudes towards clothing
including practice of wearing burqa also vary according to their socio-economic status. This shows that employment has increased women's freedom of choice in their clothing habits.

The second hypothesis regarding the change in the position of women in the family also stands validated. Due to employment outside the home, it appears that women now have a voice in making money-centered as well as children-centered decisions. They have obtained more freedom in spending family income. The traditional pattern of subservient position in the area of household chores and in observation of traditional customs, has also been affected. Though level of age and education affect the position of women, it appears that employment was more decisive in bringing about change in the position of women. To establish the importance of employment in providing higher socio-economic status the variables, age and education, were controlled and data was tested to check the influence of employment. It was found that employment was the major contributing factor. However, the role of age cannot be undermined, as in some cases, the level of
age was seen to be important in providing promotion opportunities.

Likewise, in the case of children-centered decision-making we found that the level of education has its influence but employment stands as the major decisive factor. Significant differences were found between the working and non-working women irrespective of their level of age and level of education. There was a positive association between employment and freedom in spending the family income. The same situation is again noticed in other areas, i.e., extent of help received in household chores and in observing traditional customs. It cannot be claimed that these changes were affected only by employment outside the home. However, it can be argued that the results of the available data lead to the conclusion that employment was the decisive factor for this change. Thus, it may be concluded that the hypothesis that working women as compared with non-working women, would wield greater power within their families was validated. It is interesting to note that the findings of the present study are contradictory to the results obtained by Ramu
(1989) in his study of Bangalore based women. Ramu has argued (on the basis of data generated from his field work) that the status of married women in the domestic sphere is not particularly enhanced if she earns an income. He believes that social and cultural contexts preclude Indian women from using their economic status to alter the domestic order. For a more in-depth analysis of this problem, it would be fruitful to make a comparative study of working women (using similar parameters and indexes) in different regions of India.

This non-traditional choice of economic roles for the women would naturally lead to women to play several other roles in the wider society. So, the improvement in her position in the society was examined. It was found that her position improved through the performance of new roles and establishment of new contacts. It was found that employment has enabled women to enroll as members of professional, cultural and voluntary organizations. This provides them more chances for interaction with a wider circle of people. These social activities help them to develop their faculties and leadership qualities, create a new confi-
dence, and to provide them an opportunity to establish that they are "as good as men" in these matters.

The results showed a significant difference between working and non-working women in organizational membership and in degree of participation in social activities. Freedom of movement outside the home also is an indicator of higher position of women in society. In this aspect as well, employment was found to be the major factor which provided more freedom of movement. An important feature about the attitude of women on equal status with men, and employment as an important indicator of status was that almost all working and non-working women shared the same opinion. This indicates that the majority of women wish to have equal status with men. It also reveals that they believe that employment outside the home is an important instrument for gaining this equal status. This finding also validates the hypothesis that working women have greater freedom of participation in social activities. Thus it can be concluded that employment provides women comparatively higher status in the wider society. This is mainly because of their active participation in the
activities of professional, cultural and voluntary organizations. Employment has caused a change in their attitude towards the participation in such organizational activities.

It is generally believed that resistance of the male employees in giving recognition, cooperation and respect is a major problem faced by a woman in her institution/office. This type of resistance is the result of a common belief that women are inferior and as such will not be able to perform their duties as efficiently as men. But the present study shows that problems such as mentioned above are absent from the study sample. The working women group of varying SES groups, reported that they received recognition, appreciation and cooperation and respect from their superiors and male colleagues. It was also found that the higher the level of their employment the more recognition, cooperation and respect they received. This study establishes the relationship between the level of cadre position and the higher status accorded to women.

Thus, in conclusion, we can state that working women have, in comparison with non-working women, two
kinds of opportunities -- direct and indirect -- which improve their status, both social and economic situations. The first and the direct opportunity open to them is to share the responsibilities, play new roles, interact with new people and to face new situations. The working women group has established that they are equally able to perform their roles and aspire for equal status. Secondly, the indirect opportunity is provided by their income and the experiences from their employment. This helps them to improve their position in their family and in society, and thus to achieve equal status with men. It cannot be claimed that only working women have these opportunities, but the present study establishes that working women are more appropriately geared to achieve higher status than their non-working counterparts. Another important aspect of this indirect opportunity is the freedom of movement and participation in social activities. This dimension of their indirect opportunity also shows that there is strong association between women's employment and their clothing. Employment necessitates changes in their clothing habits and attitudes towards clothing.
While this study indicates that there is a strong association between women's employment, socio-economic status and their clothing habits, and attitudes towards clothing, the results pertaining to status and employment of women are in contravention to other studies (see, for example, Ramu, 1990 and Sethi, 1987). The results of Ramu's study of Bangalore City and Sethi's study of Punjab and Himachal indicate that employment does not necessarily lead to change in the work pattern at home, and, nor does financial contribution lead to any change in the family role and power structure. One important reason for this difference could be attributed to the differences in the universe and sample population. Ramu's study deals with women in the labour force while Sethi's study pertains to the rural women in agricultural employment. On the contrary, the present study is confined to professionally employed women such as teachers, doctors, nurses, administrators, bankers and the like. It is quite likely that further research that the type of employment (i.e., whether professional/agricultural/labour force) may emerge as a more important factor.
affecting changes in the family role and power structure. Or, alternatively, we can analyze cultural factors which are likely to affect the family structure.

The present study was a preliminary attempt to identify and delineate the factors which affect the clothing habits, attitudes and life styles of working women. It was hypothesized that these styles, attitudes, role and power structure within the family, place of employment and society, would vary according to the socio-economic status of women.

This study has enabled us to understand the comparative differences in attitudes and clothing habits of the employed and unemployed women. It has brought into focus the fact that employment acts as an emancipating force and stimulates change in the family role and power structure, as well as in the position of women in society and place of work.

The study was, however, limited in its scope, to the extent that it dealt with only the professionally employed women who were educated beyond high school and
had at least three years of working experience. Only three independent variables were used and chi-square test was used to list the significance of differences between different groups of women.

In order to extend the scope of this investigation, a comparative study between women from varying employment background, rural-urban differences should be examined. A 2x2x2 factorial analysis of variance can also be used to determine the influence of the independent variables which can be further dicholomized. The factorial design can be used to determine whether any single variable or a combination of variables are responsible for differences in the sample. A comparative study between men and women and their styles of life can also be conducted. Such further investigations and analyses could lead to further comprehensive understanding of the life style and position of women. A comparative, systematic analysis can provide important insights into material and cultural factors which may be responsible for shaping the lives of women.