CHAPTER V

APPRAISAL OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF THE MARRIED WOMAN TEACHER
A. ROLE AND STATUS OF WORKING WOMAN

In India traditionally as well as culturally marriage and home making have been the full time career for women. In spite of the changing attitude towards women's status since independence, this traditional outlook on social, economic and personal status of women has some dominating reflections on the working conditions of women even today. To give economic support to the family is not her primary responsibility. She takes to remunerative jobs only when there is a need and in such a case she has the support from society. Even if a woman is engaged in a paid job out of dire need she is not expected to follow the vocation after her marriage or if she takes up an employment to supplement family finance, she is expected to give up her job as soon as some other sources of family income come in sight. She has been a kind of "marginal worker" and not a full time bread winner of the family. As such her working status does not attract attention of society nor even of the family. In recent years a woman's role as a working woman has been gradually accepted by Indian society under the impact of economic and social changes, still, "their work participation is intermittent and supplementary to their role as housewives." 1 Child-rearing may be an exclusively women's privilege, yet housekeeping

cannot be the sole responsibility of a woman. But even to day, inspite of all the modern ideas pervaded into our social life, the age old out look on women's role still persists even in the so-called westernised sections of Indian society. The status of middle class women, so far as employment is concerned has considerably improved during the recent years, yet the traditional distinction between "man's work" and "woman's work" is still there in society. Certain jobs are considered to be suitable only for a man and certain others only for a woman. Of the "woman's works" two occupations, teaching and medical profession, are considered to be the most appropriate occupations for a woman. Though, in recent years, a small number of women are in administrative, executive and managerial services, industrial and technical jobs have not attracted women much even today.

Because of the traditional notion on vocational career of a woman, vocational preparation and guidance for a woman are practically absent even today and the marginal worker enters a profession without any vocational preparation and definite guidance. The scope of general education has been limited so it has failed to meet the growing demands of girls. As a result of which occupational aspirations for girls have been restricted and they go for such professions which require least vocational preparations to start with.
As quoted by Hate (1969) a Labour Bureau Pamphlet adds, "The major difficulty in the way of girls and women entering more skilled and better jobs has been lack of vocational training." Most parents have been ignorant of and as well as indifferent to girls' education. Environment has also been uncongenial to vocational preparations for girls. These two factors are mainly responsible for the present employment pattern of the educated women in India in general. For a variety of social, cultural and economic reasons, far fewer women than men are literate. But the women have the additional problem of getting a kind of education which is not emancipatory but seems designed mainly to make them play their traditional role more effectively. Pramilla Kapur (1972) rightly stated on the present role and status of working women in India in the following words:

With the assumption of additional role - working wife - outside her home and with the achievement of a new status involves a fresh array of expectations from those constituting the 'roleset' of the incumbent. The 'workrole' on the one hand brings the wife out of the limited sphere of home and on the other hand makes continuous demands on her times and energies. In doing so, some of the expectations of the members of her original 'roleset' are bound to be unfulfilled unless they are adjusted to her changed social situations.

Women's role and relationship have changed and are changing but there is still

a gap between her legal, political and economic rights and privileges and the actual rights and privileges she enjoys and utilises. Society's attitude in general has not changed significantly towards women's role and status.

Large number of girls enter teaching which is considered to be the number one "woman's work". In teaching also there is some distinction for a woman, primary school teaching is considered to be the most suitable for a woman than in other levels of education. Whether for economic reasons or for personal reasons or for social reasons a large number of educated women are in the primary school job. This particular "woman's work" does not require intricate vocational preparation initially. A person with a low academic qualifications and no professional training can get into this job. To train the teacher in service is the responsibility of the government department. The educated girls who do not have any scope for higher education get into a primary school, get themselves trained while in service at departmental cost and even if they are not trained it does not matter much to them in their career. These girls get married and continue to work in the school. They come from low-income group of families and married to the families of the same standard. Their academic achievement is low, their present social status is not very high which may elevate

them from all other unfavourable factors. Inspite of all these unfavourable factors these primary school teachers have been working without a break. The growth of number of women teachers during the last two decades has been phenomenal. The present policy of Education Department, Assam, is to appoint more women in the primary school. But a question remains - Are these women teachers, who are out of their homes, getting favourable conditions which will enable them to pursue their profession effectively and with the satisfaction of their own? The present study was designed to go into the conditions in which a married woman had been working in a primary school. The dimensions of the working conditions considered in the present study were:

- academic conditions
- family conditions
- social conditions
- economic conditions

B. ACADEMIC CONDITIONS AND THE STATUS OF A WOMAN TEACHER

(1) Qualifications

The minimum qualifications required for a primary school teachership at present has been discussed in details in Chapter I. During the pre-independence period the academic qualifications for the post of a primary school teacher were lower than this present requisite minimum.
Sudden expansion of primary education during the First and Second Five Year Plan periods had led to the increased demands for primary school teachers, more particularly women teachers. For expansion of girls' education, women teachers were required at the primary stage. But the existing M.V. school could not cope with the increasing demands for teachers. As such, persons with three years high school education after the completion of the primary school course were considered as equivalent to M.V. passed teachers. This fact has been discussed in detail in Chapter I. As a result, a large number of girls without the specified qualifications entered the primary school and continued to teach. But such a measure had been a stop-gap arrangement. The Department of Education, Assam set up teacher training schools to train the teachers. Altogether 25 Basic Training Centres had been set up to train the primary school teacher.

There had been a big backlog of untrained teacher at the primary stage. The pace of expansion of primary education had receded by 1960-62 and excessive demands for more teachers had come down gradually. In the meantime, high schools produced some Matriculate girls. Taking into consideration all these factors, the minimum qualifications for a primary school teachership had been raised. A Matriculation pass had been fixed as the lowest minimum qualifications with a certificate in teacher training. Pre-service training on stipendary basis had been introduced.

* This figure includes Meghalaya and Mizoram.
fresh Matriculates. Teachers appointed since 1962 are mostly Matriculates though very few of them are trained before they join the school. On account of all the varieties of provisions of recruitment of teachers, there are teachers with various levels of qualifications and training in the primary school. As regards women teachers the variations in their qualifications and training are even wider. In rural areas Matriculate teachers are few and far between. They are scared of training which they try to avoid on very small pretext.

In the sample under study 64 percent of the teachers were non-Matriculate. Thirtysix percent were either Matriculate or above it; but not a single one was a graduate. A degree is not necessary for a primary school teachership, but there are quite a few man teachers in the primary schools of the district who are graduates, the percentage being about one. As regards training, 83 percent of the women teachers were trained. This training was not of equal nature. Some were non-Matric trained, some had in-service training which is of one year's duration, some had two years pre-service course, still some had short-term training courses. There were few others who passed a teacher test examination which was a selection test for teachership during 1950 to 1954. This was in no way a teacher training examination, still these teachers were sometimes exempted from training if they so desired. There are different types of teacher training
courses prevalent at present though a minimum equivalence of standard of the different courses is maintained.

Because of the different levels of qualifications different pay scales have been prescribed (Cf. Appendix II) which were formulated by the Pay Commissions appointed by the State Government from time to time. Selection grades are prescribed for efficient teachers and those who receive State Award or National Award. In the development of these salary scales teachers also take part by submitting memoranda, giving interviews to the Pay Commission collectively and individually. The All Assam Primary Teacher Association takes active part in this matter. The present salary scales prescribed for the primary school teachers are equally comparable with other professions with the same minimum qualifications. Salary scales developed on the basis of qualifications and experience are also intended to serve as incentives to the teachers to improve their qualifications and efficiency. There is no bar from the Department on the teachers trying to improve their educational qualifications. Large number of teacher candidates have been appearing in the High School Leaving Examination every year under the Board of Secondary Education, Assam. But very few women teachers have been availing this opportunity.

Teachers with higher qualifications and training are entitled to higher grades of pay. Teachers in service who
pass High School Leaving examination get higher grades and have earned better chance for promotion. But motivation seems to be lacking. Inspite of the existence of such facilities, the present group of teachers under study did not have any aspiration to improve their qualifications but wanted specialised short-term training courses, but they were scared of the general training course and unwilling to improve their academic qualifications (Cf. Chapter III). None in the group of sample teachers had passed Matriculation after she joined teaching.

2. Teaching load

As discussed by Huggett and Stinnett (1956) the teaching load of the teacher covers seven principal factors (i) the size of the class, (ii) the presence of problem children, (iii) the number of teaching periods, (iv) the amount of clerical works required, (v) the extracurricular duties that are expected, (vi) the number of professional duties assigned, (vii) the amount of outside preparation required. These seven factors are equally applicable to the primary school situation in Assam.

(i) The size of the class

In a primary school in Assam the minimum teacher pupil ratio is 1:40. There is no objective evidence to prove that such a ratio is educationally sound for
primary school in Assam. But many studies had been done in other countries to find out the effectiveness of a large size as well as a small size class which showed that in a small class of twenty five pupils there was little better achievement in subjects like spelling, reading and arithmetic. But factors like social adjustment, physical growth, health, mental hygiene and development of mental processes were equally important as subject matter areas. Considering the importance of such factors a big class of forty five pupils was found to be suitable for the primary stage. But "teachers commonly hold that it is impossible to do justice to children in classes forty to fifty. Experience tends to bear out this contention. However as we have indicated, there is no objective evidence which would verify this common belief among those who work in the class-room."

Big schools with 400 or above pupils are very few in the district under study. Likewise the size of the classes is not very much unmanageable. In rural areas there are schools where the teacher pupil ratio is 1:15 or less than that. In urban areas the ratio goes up to 1:50 but in rare cases. In the urban schools covered by the present study only about 1 percent schools had a teacher pupil ratio of 1:51. Most of the schools had a teacher pupil ratio between 1:20 to 1:40 (Cf. Chapter IV).

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Existence of problem children in the class increases the teaching load of the teacher. Because the teacher has to take extra precaution, additional measures and special care of the problem child. But who is a problem child? "Michievous youngsters are problem children to many teachers. But most teachers would agree that real problem children are those who are either so physically and mentally retarded as to be uneducable in the regular class-room." As reported by this group of teachers under study they did not have any problem with children. A class without problem children is rather unthinkable. There may be two possible reasons for such a response received from the sample teachers. Universal enrolment is not yet achieved in the state. Those physically and mentally retarded children are away from the school. Again in the primary stage wastage is so rampant (67 percent) that uneducable children dropout without causing any problem to the teacher. So such types of problem children are not seen by the teacher in the class room. Secondly specialised training for teachers to teach problem children is not available in the teacher training programmes, nor such a topic is included in the general teacher training syllabus of the state. As such the teacher was not aware of such problem children. So their field of work was clean and

1. Ibid, P 114
easy in this matter as they themselves viewed it. Only Case No. R 66 referred to problem children she had in her class whom she found difficult to teach.

(iii) Too many periods

"It is not intensive effort which were a teacher down, it is continuously working with children throughout the day." It is really a pleasure to be able to go deep in one's own professional responsibility, and it is more so if that effort brings forth desirable results. But a break in between for a rest, is of prime necessity. In Assam a primary school sits for five hours - 10 A.M to 3 P.M or 10:30 A.M to 3:30 P.M. from Monday to Friday with a break for half an hour at 12 O'clock, Saturdays are half-days. The daily time table consists of six periods. The periods before recess are forty minutes' duration and the periods after recess are of thirty five minutes' duration. Prayer and general Safai (Cleaning of the school) are compulsory for which ten or fifteen minutes are set aside. The school starts with a common prayer and 'safai'. All the teachers are to take part in these two activities. Again Class I of a primary school is retained for half-day, it is dismissed after the recess. Out of the six periods in the daily timetable teachers have to take all unless they are in a big school with requisite number of teachers. Only two percent

1. Ibid, P 216
of the teachers enjoyed a period off during the day, the rest did not have any period off except the recess for half an hour. In a single-teacher, two-teacher or three-teacher school a teacher has no off period at all. Rather she has to take multiple classes in one period.

(iv) Too many clerical jobs

Clerical jobs even in a primary school have been constantly increasing. A circular to be put into action, a report to be prepared and submitted to the office of the D.I.of schools, a special record to be maintained, curricular, cocurricular and extracurricular activities to be conducted and reports on the progress of the same to be maintained and all such other activities are multiplying in numbers and in complexity. The headteacher in a primary school is very much engrossed with such extra-teaching works in the school for which little time is left to her for classroom teaching. Sometimes an efficient assistant teacher helps her but that too she is able to do at the cost of her normal teaching duties. As a result of which classroom teaching load falls heavily on other teachers. A primary school does not have an office assistant to do the clerical jobs. But this group of teachers under study had little extra burden on account of clerical works.
(v) Too many extra curricular activities

The number of extracurricular activities are also on the increase. Annual sports, functions, conferences, seminars and what not. But it is seen that the burden of such activities are not equally distributed among the teachers. As stated by Case No. A 06, those who were lazy and had hundred and one objections were always excused or were able to slip-off from such activities. But the burden fell always on the same persons, persons who were energetic and enthusiastic. The head teachers also stated that the married women teachers were not easily available for extracurricular activities.

(vi) Heavy professional duties

The primary school teacher is almost free from heavy professional duties and more so is the married woman teacher if she does not come forward.

(vii) Pressure of outside preparation

Though a primary school teacher is expected to prepare lesson-notes, scheme of work for the year, maintain a log-book, notes on homework and class room assignment, not many of the sample teachers were found to prepare these. They learnt these in their training school and left these there itself and came back to the school unchanged as they were before joining the training course.
Very few were seen to correct class assignment correctly and regularly. Home-work was practically absent. When asked about the scheme for home assignment one teacher said rather plainly, "the children study regularly at home."

No study so far has been done to find out the teaching conditions which tend to lighten the teaching load of the teacher in India. In the U.S.A. a research study was done on this subject by the Research Division of National Education Association in 1950. The findings of this study may be seen in Appendix II (TABLE No. 51).

As judged by the conditions put forward by the research findings in the U.S.A., the present group of sample teachers under study enjoyed the following favourable conditions:

- Sympathetic and considerate headteachers
- Teaching the subjects they liked

But they suffered from some unfavourable conditions as noted below:

- Non availability of textbooks and other teaching aids
- Non availability of a desk for the teacher
- Participation in extra duties not according to their tastes and aptitude
- Lack of provision for drinking water and toilets

Ninety eight percent of the teachers had to take
the first period in the school after walking down a long distance from home. Ninety-three percent of them were within three K.M. from the school the rest beyond it. There was none beyond five K.M. away from the school. As stated by the school authorities, they tried to appoint women teachers in schools close to their place of residence. In temporary appointment such measures could not be followed. Almost all the teacher had to come to school on foot. Any other means of conveyance was not available even for the teacher from distant places. Only on rare occasion such as heavy rains, hot days and sickness, the teacher took a cycle-rikshaw if available in the locality but it was a costly means of conveyance to a primary school teacher.

3. Facilities available in the school

The teachers were denied of some very essential facilities they ought to have, to be able to discharge their responsibility with satisfaction and ease. The most important of these facilities was a good school building. There were 2698 primary schools in the district out of which 95 percent schools were in very unsatisfactory condition. Sixty-two percent of the teachers reported that they had some sort of a school building out of which only five percent were good school buildings. Building grants released to the schools in the district
during the last five years may be considered here. But the proper utilisation of the same is a doubtful matter. Drab, unattractive school building and surroundings tell upon the health of the teachers as well of the children. Furniture was also in short supply (Cf. Appendix II). It may be stated here that building and furniture are not in satisfactory conditions in anywhere in the state. It is of course true that building and furniture are not the main constituents of a good school. Rather they are parts of the skeleton of the entire complex. It is true that the teacher and the pupil are the two main constituents of a good school. If these two constituents are of good stock, the standard of the school improves. But the fact must not be lost sight of that cheerful and harmonious surroundings, comfortable chairs and desks, ample illumination and a general cleanliness exert no small influence over the quality of the work done in the school room. And the school is the only really beautiful environment within the experience of many children. What is of so much importance to the children of U.S.A. must be of much more importance to the children of the present district under study. Most of the primary school teachers are from poor home conditions both

1. Lawrence, A. Averill., The Hygiene of Instruction, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928, P 57 as quoted by Huggett and Stinnett (1956).
2. Ibid, P 226
economically and socially and they have very limited educational background. Their professional background is also limited. In their homes none of them has the opportunity to see better physical facilities. These teachers must be provided with better physical facilities in the school to enable them to have an idea of better living conditions, over and above to facilitate easy discharge of their duties with pleasure. Likewise the children do not have the luxury of modest residential facility at home and most of them are first generation school goers. It is rather a problem to keep these children for at least three years in the school for effective education. Some extranal motivating factors must be provided in the total environment of the school to keep them in the school for the stipulated period. Children never find any charm to stay in the school away from homes. The school building, its surroundings and its furniture must be more attractive than what they get at their homes. Moreover children who never see better residential facilities in their homes must be provided with better physical facilities in the school which will create a great impact on them. Their outlook on better living conditions will develop. A monotonous school building is the anti-thesis of a healthy growth of vigour and spirit of children; pleasant and attractive surroundings create interest in children for the school.

Almost all these teachers under study did not
have a good school building nor even a common-room for them. For a woman teacher a common-room in the school is very much necessary. Unfortunately most of the schools were one-room schools. Minimum furniture for the teacher was also not available, not to speak of attractive and handy furniture suitable for a primary school. These were no doubt serious handicaps faced by the teacher in the school. But the somewhat more serious handicaps were there in the school which were rather unt-thinkable. In most of the schools (35 percent) there were no toilet rooms. A sophisticated, well-equipped modern toilet room was not in question. But a very modest urinal to meet the bare necessity of the teacher was absent in the school. This 35 percent of nonavailability of a urinal was not the actual picture of the same. In the actual field the percentage may be much higher. In fact, teachers who had not seen a urinal in the school during their entire working life had taken this condition as normal and did not realise the absence of the facility. The sense of deprivation was not felt by the teacher.

Researches done in other countries show that a teacher’s success in and enjoyment of teaching is largely conditional by a pleasant and healthful school building. Dirty furniture, smelly rooms, broken walls and dusty floors are never conducive to the best work of teachers as well as pupils.

As stated earlier most of the school buildings were one-roomed and even if in some of the schools there were
partition walls these were just temporary. In such school buildings, noise was a source of discomfort for the teacher. Noise reacts on the nervous system of the teacher and hinders effective teaching. A woman teacher was exposed to noise and humdrums in the family, she was exposed to the same noisy atmosphere in the school. Luckily outside noise of heavy traffic and mills and factories were not there in the vicinity of the schools.

4. Change of school

The primary school teacher is not to change school on transfer very frequently. Though of course, during the temporary period of service, a teacher has to change school, if she is appointed against a leave vacancy. If she is appointed against a permanent vacancy she is not transferred from that school generally. And as soon as she is posted in a school close to her in-laws place, she almost becomes a permanent incumbent of the school. This group of teachers under study served at least two schools during their tenure of service. The maximum number of schools served by a teacher was eight. There was subdivisionwise variation on the maximum number of schools served by a teacher. In Sibsagar subdivision, a teacher served altogether in eight schools, whereas in Jorhat subdivision the maximum number of schools served by a teacher was six and in Golaghat subdivision it was seven.
In Jorhat 33 percent served in only one school, whereas the corresponding number of teachers in Sibsagar was 19 percent and in Golaghat it was 24.4 percent. To be able to serve in a school close to her place of residence is a matter of great convenience to a woman teacher, and if her performance is satisfactory, she is not transferred from a particular school. Indirectly such a provision serves as an incentive to a teacher for her professional competence to a great extent. She tries to carry on her responsibilities to the satisfaction of her headteacher and the school authorities to avoid a transfer.

5. Relationship with the headteacher

The reaction of the teachers under study towards the head of the institution had been a mixed one. Nine percent of the teachers reported that the headteacher was not considerate to them. Twenty percent of them reported that the headteacher never excused them if they were late in attendance. More than 10 percent of them did not like their present headteachers. These reactions of the teachers were very much significant considering the open nature of the administration of the questionnaire.

The headteachers in their turn, gave their choice in favour of male teachers. About 50 percent preferred to have more men teachers, 20 percent wanted more women teachers and about 16 percent had equal preference for both men and women.
Most of the headteachers tried to reason out their particular preference for a man or a woman teacher. For a large number of schools a man teacher is more useful for activities other than academic. As stated earlier out-of-school activities have been on the increase constantly in the primary school even. These activities are (i) to go to the office of the D.I. of schools to get necessary information whenever an occasion arises, to submit reports, (ii) to buy stationary and other articles for the school, (iii) to do minor repair work such as compound fencing etc. It is more convenient for a man teacher to go out to perform such activities. As such a man teacher is more useful for these types of physical labour and non-teaching activities.

A very few of the headteachers reported that a man teacher was better in teaching. This response represented only one percent of the total respondents. Among the headteachers who preferred to have more women teachers, there were equal number of men and women headteachers. To teach the beginners in the primary school a woman teacher is more suitable than a man teacher. As such, some headteachers preferred to have more women teachers in the staff. A woman teacher is also necessary to draw more girls to the school. But more than 16 percent of the headteachers did not make any distinction between a man teacher and a woman teacher. As stated by some of this group of headteachers a trained and qualified person with love for the profession was suitable to teach in a primary school.
6. Leave enjoyed

A teacher in a primary school is entitled to 15 days' casual leave in a year with full pay, 70 days holidays including the summer vacation. The teacher is also entitled to 20 days medical leave in a year with half average pay. The medical leave of 20 days a year on half average pay may be accumulated for six years and commuted to full pay leave depending on the number of days accumulated against the teacher.

(1) Maternity leave

Over and above these leave stated above a married woman teacher is entitled to maternity leave for 90 days on full pay on child-birth. But a teacher cannot avail maternity leave for more than three times. In earlier days they had the privilege to avail as many periods of maternity leave as they required. This 90 days' maternity leave is split up into prenatal and postnatal leave. An expectant mother is allowed to go on prenatal leave of forty five days and another forty five days after the birth of the child. Forty five days after the birth of the child are not sufficient for a teacher. As such a teacher generally applies for full ninety days of leave after the birth of the child and which is adjusted accordingly. Or otherwise she applies for medical leave after the birth of a child.
So it is seen that a married woman teacher attends the school to the last day of her confinement. She is exhausted and tired and cannot do justice to her duties as the headteachers complain. This group of married woman teachers availed maternity leave of various durations and for various times which may be seen from the TABLE NO. 5'2 and 5'3 below:

**TABLE NO. 5'2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of leave availed</th>
<th>No. of teachers (in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 to 4</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave not availed</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE NO. 5'3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of leave availed</th>
<th>No. of teachers (in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 months</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 months</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 months</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 to 20 months</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 to 25 months</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who enjoyed maternity leave up to 25 months during their service career belonged to the age group 45 to 50,
who had a total length of service between 21 to 30 years. Out of a total service of about 360 months this group of teachers under study availed twenty five months of maternity leave at the maximum and that too was availed by only about 1.4 percent of the teachers.

(2) Casual leave

As per government rules a person absent on casual leave is not treated as absent from duty and public service may not suffer in any way from the absence of the officer on casual leave. And casual leave should only be granted for adequate reasons. The concession of casual leave must not be converted into any unauthorised system of privilege leave. Again casual leave may not be combined with any other kind of leave and may not extend to more than 10 consecutive days and more than 15 days in any calendar year (Cf. Manual Book of General Circulars, Government of Assam, Chapter 10).

This present group of teachers under study availed casual leave on various grounds of which their own illness received the highest consideration. Other occasion on which a teacher took a casual leave were illness of her children, husband and in-laws. Sometimes she had to take leave on account of unexpected guests at odd times. The various causes of availing casual leave by the teachers
were as follows: (in rank order)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Her own illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Children's illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Husband's illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In-law's illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Heavy pressure of work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Visit of unexpected guest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It may be seen from above that the married woman is not free from household duties and other responsibilities inspite of her working status. Not a single teacher said that her husband took leave if some body in the family fell ill. It did not strike her that her husband might go on leave, if his parents were ill. The traditional role-set of a woman still remains though her status has been changing from a mere house wife she has been emerging as a working woman. A woman is expected to nurse the baby and the sick and play hostess to guests and manage all the household affairs. About 48 percent of the casual leave availed by a teacher was on account of heavy pressure of work and nine percent on account of visits of unexpected guests. Hate (1969) discussed the problem of absenteeism of a woman worker, specially a working mother in her book "Changing Status of Women." In her own words:

"The question of and replies to absenteeism reflect the plight of women workers, specially the mothers. Fortyone supervisors have stated
that they remain absent more often than men. In fact two of them remarked that they exhaust all their leave. They do not utilise it for rest or for going out but if anyone in the/suffers from illness, they have to attend to the person and hence remain absent. On the other hand 24 said that no difference is found amongst men and women in this respect. Men also want to utilise their full casual leave and other leave, though there may or may not be any reason to do so. Four even stated that absenteeism is less amongst women than men."

As may be seen in Chapter III, TABLE NO. 3'56 the headteachers stated that married men teachers were more irregular than the married women teachers. As discussed in the section under reference a man teacher is preoccupied with many out-of-school activities and he has little time to attend the school regularly. But a woman has no such activities to keep her busy out-of-school. And she is regular in attendance.

(3) Medical leave

A primary school teacher is not governed by the Government Hospital Leave rules (SR 122, Government of Assam).

A primary school teacher is entitled to twenty days Medical


* SR indicates Subsidiary Rules as formulated by government from time to time in supression of certain Fundamental Rules.
Leave in a year on half average pay as discussed earlier. About 42 percent of the teachers availed medical leave of various duration which may be seen in the Table No. 5'4.

**Table No. 5'4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length of leave (in days)</th>
<th>No. of teachers (in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 50</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 - 100</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101 - 150</td>
<td>1.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151 - 200</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the cases where the child-birth was normal a teacher generally did not want to take longer leave. Again if there was a near relation in the family to look after the baby the teacher never went for longer leave. The two causes—a good health of her own and of the baby and secondly the availability of a dependable relation to look after the baby during her absence from home enabled her to resume duties after the expiry of the stipulated maternity leave. Twelve percent of the teachers wanted longer leave when the children were young, but 73 percent did not. As per government rule "maternity leave may be combined with leave of any other kind, but any leave applied for in continuation of the former may be granted only if the request be supported by a medical certificate." (Cf. SR 121, Government of Assam).
In spite of such provisions available, 23 percent of the teachers under study did not avail medical leave or any other leave in continuation to her maternity leave. Various reasons for this had been put forward by them as may be seen in TABLE NO. 5'5.

**TABLE NO. 5'5**

Causes for not taking longer leave after child birth by teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes for not taking longer leave</th>
<th>Total scores (in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You want to earn for the family</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You do not like to stay at home</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have no difficulty in leaving the young baby at home</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You do not know that such facilities are there</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is a known fact that during the period when the children are very young the woman teacher is very irregular in attendance. This fact had been corroborated by the head-teachers under study. Irregular attendance on the part of the teacher, more particularly by the teacher who is to take the first period in the daily time-table causes much inconvenience to the school and goes against the normal discipline of the school. The situation in a two-teacher or three-teacher school may be very well realised. In the Education Department, Assam,
there is no provision for part-time teachers in the schools. Such a provision would have been a great source of relief to a nourishing mother at work.

(4) Part-time work

The present group of teachers were asked if they wanted a half-day work when the children were very young. Their responses are given in TABLE NO. 5'6 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School hours preferred</th>
<th>No. of teacher( in percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Morning</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afternoon</td>
<td>62.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both equal</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As usual</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A married woman preferred to be free in the morning hours so that she was able to follow her busy domestic schedule at ease. Afternoon hours were more suitable for married women teachers. But for about three percent of the teachers both the halves - morning and afternoon - were equally suitable and about five percent of them were satisfied with the present arrangement. These five percent of teachers belonged to the older age group who might have practically forgotten their own hard days when they had to manage household
affairs with a baby in their lap and ran down to school at the strike of the hour. But about eleven percent of the teachers stated that they did not know that such provisions were there and had it known to them they would have availed such facilities. It showed that almost all the married women teachers would have gone for part-time work if there was a provision like this during their pre-natal and post-natal periods.

It may be seen from the TABLE NO. 5 above that there was no difficulty in looking after the baby when the teacher was away in school and therefore the teacher did not think of longer period of leave or half-day work. On further analysis it was found that these responses were in conformity with their responses to the question numbers 24 and 29, of Part 3 of the Questionnaire No.1. The in-laws looked after the children with all affection and the teachers were least disturbed on this account. The second reason in order of priority for not taking longer leave and option for half-day work was financial. The teachers (33.2 percent) did not want to affect the total family finance. Again about 20 percent of the teachers did not like to keep themselves indoors for a long period. They wanted to keep themselves busy with their school works and to enjoy the social contact out-of-home.

7. The guardian and the teacher

The teachers realised that they should have close contact with the guardian of the pupils they taught. The
contact with the guardian these teachers had was not close, it was rather casual. Mrs. HS (Case No. A 02) said she was not sure whether the guardian would appreciate the visits of a teacher to their homes in connection with the academic progress of their wards. On her part, "I would have welcome such visits from the guardians to my place." Mrs. TS (Case No. A 12) said, "I never visit any guardian of my school. If I receive any invitation to any function in their homes I try to attend. Whenever necessary I send notes to the guardians so as to appraise them of the progress of their wards. At the beginning of my career I was very much keen on keeping good contact with the guardians. But the response from their side was dull. They did not like a primary school teacher to be so much enthusiastic on their (teacher) profession. If they are cold in response, why must I take initiative single handed?" Mrs. AB (Case No. R 19) though a headmistress, did not visit guardians but the guardian visited her at the time of promotion examination and admission into the school. Other academic interests of the guardians were not to be found. Whether the guardian was educated or not there was not much difference in the interest. Mrs. UB (Case No. A 06) who was a successful teacher did not visit guardians. She had no inclination to do so. She did not remember to have met a guardian of her pupils who came to see her in the school. "They do not find any need for such a visit," she said, "I have not also taken it so seriously and at the same time I am so much busy with my household duties that I do
The women teachers kept themselves away from the guardians and the guardian were not so conscious to discuss academic matters with the school teacher.

8. Ccoropical activities and the teacher

As responded by the teachers, they took part in cocurricular activities of the school. Cocurricular activities of a primary school in Assam are not many and the few the schools have included in their scheme of activities are very simple activities. The daily time-table in a primary school provides one period each for drill and games in the upper two classes and for the lower classes more than one period. The school observes certain functions during a year such as annual sports, annual prize distribution ceremony, Swaraswati Puja and birth days of Sri Sankardev and Mahatma Gandhi etc. These are very simple activities in which much planning and organisation are not necessary. Though the sample under study stated that they took part in these activities of the school, the headteachers were sceptical about the performance of the woman teacher. A married woman teacher generally keeps herself away from such activities whenever she finds a scope. But enthusiastic teachers are also to be found in a school. Such teachers take active interest in such cocurricular activities. In the opinion of the headteacher, a married woman would prefer to go home instead of staying back in the school in connection with
such functions organised in the school. Extracurricular activities are most often, shun by a married woman teacher. Unmarried young girls are more active and enthusiastic in such activities. For drills and games a married woman teacher never comes forward.

The personal data of the teachers showed that all the teachers had a variety of interests such as hand work, music, games and weaving. These teachers enjoyed these activities while they were in their training course. But as soon as they were put in the actual field they fell back. Why did the married woman teachers did not take active part in the cocurricular activities of the school? The headteachers reported that most of the teachers after child-birth do not recoup their health and as such become lazy. Again they have their household responsibilities and the young child is left back at home. As soon as they are free from the curricular responsibilities in the school they want to leave aside their cocurricular duties and hurry back home.

9. Pupils and syllabus they taught

Though the conditions of the school building were not satisfactory in about 95 percent of the schools, the teachers were happy to be with the young children. As reported by the teachers none of them had any dissatisfaction with the children they taught. One of the main causes of joining the profession by this group of teachers had been the love for
teaching. Their love for the profession helped them to develop a love for the children they taught. As reported by the head-teacher, the married woman teachers are so much overpowered by motherly affection that they fail to control the class they teach. Teachers are generally appointed in schools close to their place of residence and as such the pupils are all known to them personally. Such a close acquaintance is helpful in maintaining good teacher pupil relationship. The headteachers reported that the women teachers were very much helpful in maintaining good teacher-pupil relationship. But in the maintenance of discipline a man teacher was more competent than a woman teacher. This observation of the headteachers was a disputable one. When there is a good teacher-pupil relationship there is good discipline in the class-room. The headteachers had a wrong notion on the class-room discipline. Therefore the headteachers were of the opinion that there should be both women and men in the teaching staff of a primary school and where there were a large number of girls on the rolls a woman teacher was a must. Again the woman teacher is more suitable for the beginners than a man teacher. Among the teachers under study there was not a single case of dissatisfaction so far as the pupils were concerned. But the teachers, who were to teach non-Assamese pupils through Assamese medium were very much unhappy with the pupils they taught. Mrs. LD (Case No. A 21) said that language was the greatest difficulty
she faced in the school she was posted at that time. The pupils were from different cultural background with which she was not acquainted. A woman teacher if posted in such a school is bound to suffer from professional dissatisfaction. Teachers who are put to such types of schools must have specialised training on the teaching of second language and must be oriented towards the cultural patterns of such communities. But the existing teacher training syllabus followed in the state does not cover such topics. Orientation courses are also not arranged for the teachers who are expected to handle the children with different cultural, social and linguistic backgrounds.

There were about three percent negative responses against the existing syllabus for the primary school. Teachers with limited qualifications and academic guidance found it difficult to follow the existing syllabus they were supposed to teach. Some of them had not seen the prescribed syllabus for the primary school. Some even did not know that there was one like that. The primary school teachers in the state collect together at a central gathering centrewise every month. For this purpose the schools get one day off every month generally on the last day of the month. The objectives of this centre meeting, as discussed in Chapter III, are two-fold. Firstly, individual schools submit their monthly pay bills to the centre secretary to be submitted to the office of the D.I. of schools for payment, secondly they discussed academic matters,
class-room problems which they deem necessary and which are of general interest. Such academic matters and class-room problems are discussed by the teachers themselves and sometimes they invite experts on the line for discussion. Sometimes demonstration lessons are arranged which are conducted by selected teachers. Attendance in such centre gatherings is compulsory for every teacher. Such type of centre gatherings offer scope for professional growth of the teacher and exchange of ideas. Not a single teacher covered under the present study had taken part in any such discussions or demonstration lessons organised by the centre meeting from time to time. Academic aptitude of this group of teachers were lacking in that way, to a great extent.

10. The colleagues

The present study covered both big schools and small schools. Of course, there are very few big primary schools in the district. In big schools the teaching staff consists of more than 10 teachers. There were three schools in the sample with 16 to 18 teachers. In a big school the interaction among the teachers is wide. But most of the schools are small with three or two teachers. In such a small school interaction among the teachers is restricted. A woman teacher if she is the only woman in the staff is unhappy which is quite natural. She can adjust with her colleague if they are contemporary. Mrs. RK (Case No. A 22) was very much unhappy to be
in a school with three teachers of which two were men teachers. She had no company in the school even to spend her leisure hours. Other two men teachers were younger to her who did not like to give her company.

In some schools, teachers were not of equal standard as far as their academic qualifications were concerned. Non-Matric teachers, specially the women, were despised by the Matriculate teachers. This was expressed by Mrs. UB (Case No. A 06). Otherwise they had no misunderstanding or difference of opinion of serious nature among themselves. About five percent of the teachers were not quite pleased with their colleagues. About four percent did not say anything on this point. Ninety-three percent had no difficulty with their colleagues. The headteachers' reaction on this point conformed with the teachers' view. The headteachers said that the women teachers were friendly with their colleagues. Other men teachers were generally cooperative with the woman teacher. If there is a man teacher in the staff, a woman teacher is not expected to go out for out-of-school activities though they are not very pleased that the woman teacher enjoys leave very frequently. In matters of discipline, a woman teacher is easily amenable, which is an obvious fact, though the headteachers found it difficult to be strict on the woman teacher if any occasion arose.

11. School subjects they taught

This group of teachers taught almost all
the subjects in the school. In a primary school a teacher is expected to teach all the subjects and she is prepared accordingly. Class-teacher system is followed in a primary school, subject teacher system is applicable in the case of a secondary school only. In a small school with one or two teachers a choice to teach a particular subject or not is not left to the teacher either. Though a big school with a large number of teachers can adjust the subjects to be taught in the class according to their taste and ability. It is not a general practice on the part of the authorities to appoint better qualified teachers in the small school which affects the satisfaction of the job and competence of a teacher.

This group of teachers enjoyed the privilege of teaching the subjects they liked. The favourite subjects of this group of teachers were almost the same subjects they were expected to teach. The most favourite subjects were mother tongue, Arithmetic, history and geography. These are the general subjects taught in a primary school. To be able to teach the subjects of their liking greatly lightens the teaching load of the teachers. Drawing was a subject disliked by these teachers. But a large number of them had to teach this subject in the school.

12. Utilisation of holidays

As stated earlier in Chapter III and Chapter IV a primary school teacher enjoys 70 days holidays during a year including the summer vacation. There are occasional half-
holidays over and above these. After the annual examination till the beginning of the next new session the teacher is a little free from teaching activities.

This group of married women under study generally kept themselves busy with household chores during the holidays. They liked to be with their children in the family instead of going out to visit relations or to see people during the holidays. They had other activities to attend to in the family. Hand-work, knitting, sewing, weaving were some of their leisure time activities. Some engaged themselves in their own agricultural activities. Some had no time to enjoy their holidays because of pressure of work. Very few engaged themselves in extra domestic activities such as social service, private tuition etc. Very few of them had academic interest. During the holidays very few of them engaged themselves in study or any kind of reading.

It is seen that the teachers kept themselves engaged mainly in two activities - the first one was household chores and the second one was child-care. Other activities were not significant. Household chores included a wide range of activities as enumerated above.

C. FAMILY CONDITIONS AND THE STATUS OF WOMAN TEACHER

1. The joint family

Forty three percent of the teachers stayed
in a joint family and 51.6 percent in a nucleus family. There were five percent no response cases. Joint family system has been a traditional typical family organisation in India "--- the joint family is composed of a group of patrilineally related males who have equal rights to property, sharing a common budget, residence and hearth, though this pattern of living has been considerably affected by modernisation, urbanisation and socio-economic change". Still the impact of the traditional joint family system remains. The working wife may be away from the ancestral family with her husband in her place of service, she does not sever her relationship with the main family. A nucleus family in urban, semiurban and rural settings of Assam is not a nucleus family in the strict sense of the term as conceived by Western societies. A joint family is more characteristic of an agricultural economy. Land owners who wanted to check division of holdings for the sake of economy of production and easy and free supply of labour prefer to stay in a joint family. Again the people who are close to their cultural heritage prefer a joint family system which help them to perpetuate their cultural heridity. In other culturally disadvantaged classes a joint family system is not in practice. These sections of society live in a loose type of uncleus family which may be termed as a domestic group. Even in this type of family the impact of

the joint family system is seen. In Assam among the tribal groups a nucleus family is the most common type of family organisation, though of course, the individual families are interrelated. Assam has an agricultural economy as such the joint family system is the common type of family organisation in the state. Gradual urbanisation and growth of population have affected the traditional joint family system in the state. The husband and wife with their children come out of the ancestral family in search of livelihood elsewhere and settle down in their place of work. The growth of population is an important factor which has affected the traditional joint family system in the state. An individual family may not go out to other place in search of livelihood, but it separates itself from the main family and lives under a separate roof within the same compound for the sake of convenience. Such a type of separation may be originated on account of family friction among the brothers, and sometimes on mutual understanding among themselves. Such are the processes which give birth to nucleus families in the state. But such a type of nucleus family is not the typical type as existed in a cosmopolitan society. This nucleus family has all the traditional connection with the ancestral home from which it separates itself. The nucleus family goes back to ancestral home to enjoy functions of the family jointly. Reciprocal help continues. The original family supports the nucleus family in times of need. In its turn the nucleus family, as far as it can,
offers boards to the children of the joint family to prosecute their studies or livelihood in the town if there is a need. Like this reciprocal help and support continue. Even when there is a family friction, it never separates its relationship from the ancestral family completely. In fact, a nucleus family in Assam represents a loose import of the system.

In a joint family the teachers under study received support from all the members of the family. The most important support and encouragement came from the husband and next in order of importance was the father-in-law. Mother-in-law was also an important source of encouragement and support to the working daughter-in-law. In a low-income group of family a working wife is never discouraged. Rather every one is looking for an employment opportunity for the educated woman in the family. In some families where some man are unemployed a working wife receives much venarations. The unemployed brother-in-law looks after the children which has been a great source of relief for a working woman. (Case No. R 63). The eldest brother-in-law who was a confirmed bachelor looked after the children of Mrs. SD. Again Mrs. BB (Case No. A 11) was also a young teacher who stayed in a joint family in which her widow mother-in-law looked after her children. Mrs. UB who was in an urban school living with her small family (Case No. A 06) had been offering boards to her nephews and nieces who stayed with her for studies. Her brothers-in-law and brothers sent rice, vegetables and other articles by way of helping
her in return to her service she rendered to the children of the families. Mrs. HS (Case No. A 02) said, "my father-in-law was very much pleased that I was employed at the time of my marriage. He did not allow me to give up the job though my husband was pressing me hard to resign the post. I stayed back, because I did not want to lose my independent income. Now my husband has reconciled himself to the new situation and realised the benefit of the additional income I earn. At the instance of my father-in-law I shifted to the town to stay with my husband and I got myself transferred to the present school. But I go back to my in-laws place during holidays, in functions and in festivals. My sisters-in-law have veneration for me because I am earning a monthly money income."

Mrs. AB (Case No. R 19) who was in a nucleus family stayed in a separate house close to the ancestral family. The joint family grew too large to facilitate easy living for the entire family. The uncle-in-law of the family advised Mrs. AB's husband to put up a separate house in the big compound of the ancestral family for his own small family. Since then they had been staying alone with their individual family. But she had all the help and assistance from the members of the joint family specially in matters of child care. Because her husband was not helping her in household chores, she had hard-time in her early days. But "now my children are all grown-up and I am relieved of that burden of looking after children. My husband got irritated if I failed to give him the attention
he expected from me and many a times asked me to give up my job. But I had to adjust to such situation and I had the support of my uncle-in-law who had progressive views."

It is seen that the working woman receives support from her in-laws even though she may not receive support from her husband. The husband has to reconcile himself to the new situation because a working wife gives him a financial support. Inspite of these financial helps the husband is not willing to relieve the wife of her household duties. Household duties are the sole responsibilities of the wife, the husband is not expected to help the wife in such works. But the case with an over bearing wife is different. A husband without a suitable source of income submits to an over bearing wife (Case No. R 34) Mrs PD very proudly narrated how she was busy with her job out side home and how her husband engaged servants to help her and if a servant was not available he himself lent his assistance to her in domestic chores.

The encouragement and support from the in-laws go a longway to facilitate the working conditions of the teacher in her family.

2. The nucleus family

Fiftytwo percent of the teachers stayed in a nucleus family. As stated earlier the nucleus family system in the state is a lose import of the term as conceived by western
societies. A nucleus family though away from the ancestral family has all the connection and relationship with the ancestral family from which it originates. Mrs. TS husband had been permanently posted at a place more than 300 K.K. away from the in-laws place. There was no point in her staying with the joint family of her in-laws. She stayed with her husband and eventually they put up a house of their own in their place of work though they had a share in the property of the family. Her in-laws came and stayed with her if they happened to come to that town. Even the married daughters of the family came and stayed with her whenever necessary. Mrs. TS said, "My brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law and their husbands never stay in a hotel even if they come on official tour. I personally insist on their staying with us. My husband is rather unc oncemed about such relationships. I like to maintain such family relationship. Ours is a big family and almost every month I expect a guest. I enjoy entertaining the guest though sometimes I am over worked." When asked if she was to take casual leave for the visit of a guest, she said, "Yes but very rare." Mrs. GD (Case No. R 25) stayed alone in a nucleus family. She had no good relationship with her in-laws family because of the nature of her husband. She stayed alone with her big family of five children who were grown up by now. She had very hard time in her early days. Sometimes she used to take her baby to the school as there was no body in the house to look after the baby. She said, "I could carry my baby to the school
only when the headteacher was considerate. Sometimes they were considerate sometimes not. Sometimes I approached my neighbours for help. When my eldest child grew up I was a bit relieved of this anxiety."

The older group of teachers had a large number of children some of whom had as many as nine children. A large number of them had three to four children (43 percent). The total number of children has direct impact on the economic condition of a low paid primary teacher. Partly due to ignorance and partly due to shyness or reservations towards modern family welfare provisions they did not avail such provision during their early days and if there was any they had no knowledge about it. The young one had been utilising the benefit of such family welfare means. But such teachers were few in numbers. Most of the husbands were not favourably disposed towards such modern provisions. In fact superstitions still prevail among the primary school teachers on the size of the family. Over and above the size of the family the gap between two children as well tells upon the health of the working woman. The gap between two children of this present group of teachers may be seen from the TABLE NO. 5’7 (P 331).

It can be easily realised the plight of a teacher residing all alone with children born every two years or even less than that. It seems the spacing between two children was
not planned by the younger group of the teachers under study.

**TABLE NO. 5'7**

Gap between two children born to teachers
(in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gap in years</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between 1 and 1½</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 and 2½</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 and 3½</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 and 4½</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and 5½</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 6</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Those who were fortunate enough to have considerate in-laws or other relatives to look after the children were able to discharge their duties with ease and comfort. Others hurried back home during recess, took halfday leave, avoid functions, festivals of the school. Or they carried their whole load to the school itself if there was mutual understanding between the headteacher and themselves. They got tired when they were back from school (57 percent). They were tired to get to work at home. But there was no escape. The headteachers said that most of the women were tired of household chores. Inspite of their working status these women teachers were not free
from household chores, home-making being the primary responsibilities of these teachers. The control of the family members on the daughters-in-law still felt inspite of the fact that these women teachers had been contributing towards family finance.

3. Household chores

This group of teachers mostly came from low income group of family. They were habituated to household works at their parents' place. They were to manage household works in their in-laws' place. There were not much difference between the load of works at their parents' place (590 scores) and the load of works at their in-laws' place (584 scores). Inspite of the tiring household activities the teachers were not willing to give up the job (91 percent). Mrs. RK (Case No. PL 1) and Mrs. LC (Case No. PL 2) said that inspite of the heavy burden of household duties they were to carry on their job for livelihood. Rather they were satisfied that there was a job for them which offered them means of independent living.

The head-teachers stated that the married women teachers were daughters-in-law of the family first and anything else next. Inspite of their working status, and inspite of the fact that these married women teachers earned for the family, their status in the family had not changed. These working
wives were still under traditional family control. Most of them could not move out as they would wish without the permission of the in-laws or the husband. As such they were not easily available for extracurricular activities of the school. Because of the burden of household duties and of the family control the women teachers were irregular in attendance, specially in non-teaching activities of the school.

4. Handling of wife's income

Handling of money income is an important source of family friction. Everybody wants the ownership of the money one earns and prefers to spend one's own incomes at one's own discretion. Marital harmony is affected not so much by financial scarcity or sufficiency but by the husband's and wife's way of spending money and each other's acceptance of wife's ownership over her earned money (Kapur 1970). Fortyseven percent of the teachers spent their income themselves. These included the widows and divorcees. Twenty percent of them had a common fund along with her husband. Twentyfour percent handed over their pay to their in-laws.

Though 84 percent of them reported that they had no friction about money matters in their family, more than six percent reported that they had friction over their pay income in the family on the issue as to who would spend wife's income. Mrs. RD (Case No. R 57) had friction with her mother-in-
law regarding the ownership of her pay income. She had to hand-over all her pay to her mother-in-law and the mother-in-law did not allow her to spend the money as she wished. She did not receive support from her husband. Mrs. CB (Case No. A 03) had friction with her husband regarding money matters. She felt that she had the privilege to spend the money she earned. But the husband demanded that he had the authority to control her regarding money matters.

Case No. A 03 was another example of working wife who has friction on money matters with the husband. She had to hand-over her monthly salary to her husband and had no say anything on her earnings. She even could not spend her own salary on her clothes, simple cosmetics. Even for a wollen shawl during winter she had to wait on the grace of her husband. She sent essential articles to her in-laws regularly who did not stay with them. But she had not the chance to send anything to her widow mother even on new-years day. Her only solace was her affectionate father-in-law. The old man though a villager had been affectionate and considerate to her.

But the Case No. A 99 suffered even worse than Case No. A 03. She was in the same compound of her in-laws family in a separate house. The step-mother-in-law and the father-in-law were not considerate. They were of demanding nature. They expected her to spend her money on them. Her husband was also not considerate "Sometimes I feel for not being able to spend my own money as I wish." The husband never realized
that she had an individual will or taste.

Case No. A 15 had friction on money matters with her widow sister-in-law. Mrs. SD wanted to enjoy her privilege of spending her own earned money. But the widow sister-in-law demanded some kind of say on it which was purely psychological. Other members of the family, specially the brothers sympathised the unfortunate life of the widow sister-in-law and gave her a high status in the family so that she enjoyed the satisfaction of authority over the rest of the family members. But this widow sometimes crossed the limits she ought to have maintained and caused dissatisfaction to other women in the family.

Such matters are purely family affairs and apparently beyond the perview of a research study. But these family affairs affect the family relationship of a working wife and to that extent such matters come under the perview of a research study. In fact, such matters need depth study for diagnostic analysis so that remedial measures may be taken up by social and family welfare services. A peaceful and happy family life is very much conducive to better discharge of duties of a primary school teacher who is already very much over burden with household works.

5. The widow and her working status

The present study covered altogether seventeen widow teachers. They had been all working in urban schools. A widow teacher in a rural school is a rare case at least
in the young group. Widow teachers in the urban schools were mostly from rural areas. Out of these 17 widows only three were from urban areas working in urban schools. The widow teachers either stayed alone with her children or with her own parents and if she was a childless widow she stayed with her parents or alone which-ever was convenient. It was a matter of great interest to know that the working status of a widow was not accepted in a rural area, a rural school did not accommodate a widow teacher.

Case No. A 04 was an example of a widow with children who left her first school in a rural area. She shifted to a town and got herself transferred to an urban school. She had lived all her life alone in a town away from her in-laws. Her own brothers and sisters had been her supporters in times of need. Because she had been away from her in-laws place she almost lost her claim to her husband's property. Case No. A 09 was an example of a childless widow though married to an urban area came back to her father's home in a village. From the school in which she was first appointed in her father's village, she got herself transferred to an urban school and began to stay in a rented house with her nephews and nieces. Her in-laws belonged to a middle income group of family whereas her father was in a low paid job. Still she did not like to stay with her in-laws, her in-laws were also happy that she was not a burden to the family.
Case No. 07 was another profile of a widow who stayed alone with her children though her parents and in-laws were in the same town. She joined teaching after the death of her husband and had her training while in service. "I do not like to be a burden to anybody as far as I can. I am able to get into the job because of the pains taken by my relations. And in that way I am fortunate. Now my eldest son has grown up and even if I am not here he will be able support the other two," said Mrs. PD.

Generally a childless widow stays with the parents if otherwise situation does not require to be away. Cases of A 10, PS 1, PS 2 were the examples of such cases. Case No. A 10 was an example of childless widow from a rural area married to an urban area. She stayed with her maternal uncle's place when she first got her appointment in an urban school. Eventually her brother put up a house in the town for the education of his children, and Mrs. AD shifted to her brother's place to take guardianship of the children. She had a permanent shelter to stay in, the brother had a responsible guardian in her to take care of his children.

Case No. A 13 was an example of a widow with children who stayed with her parents. Mrs. MH's parents did not allow her to go back to her in-laws house in the rural area. Her relations managed to get a job for her in the local primary school. Her in-laws were rich, whereas her father was not. Still she stayed with her parents. After the untimely
death of her father she became the guardian of her young brothers.

6. Care of the children

As discussed earlier in the present Chapter, (Sec. 3) the married woman is entitled to 90 days maternity leave during childbirth of which half of the days were prenatal and half postnatal. Forty-five days are not sufficient for the baby to be able stay away from the mother for the whole day. So child-care is a problem for the married woman teacher. The working mother generally seeks help from her mother, mother-in-law or any relation available. If none of these women is available she goes for a servant which is generally an expensive help and at the same time not very much dependable. The sample teachers preferred to take the baby to the school if there was such a provision. About 71 percent of the teachers said that they had dependable persons to look after the babies when they were away in schools. Such persons were mostly mothers-in-law or sisters-in-law. But the teacher in a nucleus family had very difficult time with the young baby. They generally requested the mother-in-law, if she was alive, to stay with them *temporarily*. On rare occasion the husband stayed back at home to look after the baby if there were no body in the house. The teacher went on leave - casual, medical or any other leave, took half-day leave. She must look after the baby, she could not neglect her child. On
extreme situations she carried the baby to the school, in spite of the opposition from guardians, colleagues and others. She was fortunate when there were accommodating colleagues.

D. SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND THE STATUS OF A WOMAN TEACHER

The tale of Case No. PL 1, one of the oldest retired women teachers covered by the present study, gives the real picture of the social status of a primary school teacher. When Mrs. RK first joined a primary school in her father's village people used to pelt stones at her. The older section pelted unpalatable words, the younger section literally pelted stones at the primary school teacher when she walked down to the school. But Mrs. RK came out successful, her success attained the highest peak. She received the National Award for successful teachers. Situations did not change much since then. During early forty's as stated by Case No. PE 2 who of course, did not have the stones on her back but had the unbecoming remarks on her ears. Even in the recent years Case No. A 02 had to stand against the unwilling husband, who was not prepared to accept a working wife, working in a primary school, though he accepted the additional income she earned for the family. These isolated cases were reflections of social outlook on a primary school teacher, social inhibition towards primary school teaching during the generations past and during the present generation.

Those who could stand against these odds survived,
and those who had to survive as a working woman had to bear all these odds. Mrs. RK had to work and like her, all the widows with children or without children had to earn for subsistence, Mrs. DB had to work to help her parents, to help her husband. Mrs. HS wanted to work because she had been working. All these married women wanted to work so they stood against all opposition, criticism and personal difficulties. The married women who wanted to survive independently and honourably took to teaching which was the only vocation open to a married woman in the days past. The social estimation on teaching has been gaining grounds very slowly. The present study did not find a single widow in a rural area. Just like PL 1 who was working in a rural school in early thirty's had to leave that school and she joined an urban school. Case No. A 09 in the recent years had to leave her first appointment in a rural school in her own place of residence. She shifted to a town school. Case No. A 13 did not try to work in the village where her rich in-laws stayed. Case No. A 10 waited for long ten years after the death of her husband with her parents in a village from which she was taken away by her maternal uncle to a town. Case No. 04 lived all by herself with her only daughter away from her in-laws who were in a rural area only 3 K.M. away from the town where she stayed. Had she stayed with her in-laws she at least would have had the paddy from the cultivable land owned by the in-laws family. Widow teachers who could not stay permanently in the
town had to walk down long distance to the town for their work from their place of residence.

Young widow teachers were few in the group of widows under study. The young age group generally go for higher studies if they can so afford. Facilities for high school education, even for college education are available in rural areas. The young widows try to avail themselves of such facilities. So whenever they can afford, they go for higher education in the hope of a better future, and very few go for a primary school job.

Social taboos on widows are still strong. Though legally permissible, instances of widow remarriage are still rare. In the closed rural society where the impact of education and urbanisation is yet to reflect, the widows have no social status, particularly the working widows, at least they are not accepted in rural society. As a housemaid she is welcome as stated by Case No. A 10 who was asked by her in-laws to stay with them as a daughter-in-law if she wanted, but not as a working woman. Though the laws of the land give her rights to properties of her husband, these working widows forfeited their legal claims to properties. As per Hindu Succession Act, 1956, the widow of a deceased Hindu is a Class I successor to her husband's property. Section 9 of the Act says, "Among the heirs specified in the Schedule, those who in Class I shall take simultaneously and to the exclusion of all other heirs." But the cases of widows under the present study
failed to establish their claims to their husbands’ property. The Class II heirs as specified by the Act had been enjoying whatever property left by the widows’ husbands. The sample widows said that they did not like to establish their claim with the help of the court of law because of social inhibition. That there are legal provisions is known to the widows but for fear of social indignation they do not like to go for legal help. But the social inhibitions are stronger than the legal provisions. A working widow is expected to be content with her own income and not expected to go for husband’s property, said Case No. A 09.

The foregoing discussions show that despite of the claims that there has been rapid social changes, the status of a woman has not been affected very much especially the working status of the woman. The headteachers also gave the same opinion. The married woman teacher does not have an independent status in her family. Her role as a working wife is subservient to her role as a wife and a mother. She is allowed to work, the in-laws encourage her to go for a paid job to earn for the family, to utilise her education. The mother-in-law looks after the children when the working wife is away in the school. All these facilities are there. Even then she is nothing but a wife, a daughter-in-law of the family. She is expected to go to school for teaching and after the school closes she is expected to come back home. She is not expected to move about in connection with the out-of-school activities, and other non-
teaching duties of the school. That was why the headteachers were in need of a man teacher on the staff. Even a headmistress stated that at least one man teacher in the staff must be there. Non-teaching duties, out-of-school activities of a primary school are on the increase and teachers are expected to take part in these activities according to their interest and abilities. But as viewed by the family members of the working wife such activities were not the responsibilities of a woman teacher. One old mother-in-law said, "It is enough that we allow her to go for teaching, but she must not entangle herself with other activities of the school. After all she is a daughter-in-law of the family. It does not look nice if she goes about in out-of-school activities."

The supervisors also endorsed the view held by the headteacher. The married woman teacher does not enjoy a better social status even today. Though there is such a provision to appoint more women teachers in the primary school, the number of women teachers in the primary school are still very few as compared to men teachers. (Cf. Chapter I). The supervisors too had reservation regarding women teachers. There was not a single special preference to a woman teacher on the part of the supervisors. This reservation was not because of academic reasons. The supervisors admitted that a woman in the primary school makes a good teacher. Even then she is not wanted in preference to a man teacher.
Because there were very few senior women teachers, women headteachers were few in number in the older age group. But in recent years senior women teachers were available for promotion in the primary schools of the district. Many women teachers of the sample did not come forward to take charge of the school. One senior woman teacher said that she was already over burden with household chores so she did not like to take the responsibility of the school. Moreover the non-teaching activities were not welcome by many a woman teacher, who was still under the control of the family and social inhibition. It is doubtful if a man teacher would decline to be a headteacher on account of household chores and social inhibition.

There is a state level organisation of the primary school teachers in the state of Assam. In this organisation women do not take active part. The main objective of this organisation is to take measures to ameliorate the working conditions of the teachers. But this teachers' organisation has not taken any decision so far, to study the problems and difficulties of the women teachers in the state and to take measures whenever necessary to facilitate better working conditions for their co-sisters. Decision making of the organisation has been the sole privilege of the men teachers. So the special problems of the women teachers are left unnoticed so far. Whatever special facilities enjoyed by a woman teacher to-day have been granted by the laws of the land. The office bearers of this teachers' organisation whether at the
state level or at the district level have been always the man teachers. Even at the lowest level, the centre-secretaries have been the man teachers. The present investigator was surprised, rather pleased to come across a woman centre-secretary in one town centre in Jorhat subdivision. She, in fact, was the first woman secretary of any teacher organisation of the state at any level. This has been a break through so far as the woman leadership in teaching is concerned.

Kothari Commission says, "The efficiency of the teaching profession and its contribution to national development in general and educational improvement in particular, will depend largely on its social status and morale. This will in its turn, depend upon two inter-related factors, economic status and civic rights of teachers, and their professional competence, character and sense of dedication." So the Commission recommended that the status of the teachers and their working conditions may be raised. Higher salary, retirement benefit, promotional prospects, residential facilities, possibilities of additional income, in-service training are some of the provisions recommended by the Commission to improve the status of a teacher. I. K. Kandel said:"It is widely recognised that a sound educational system is the prime requisite for a national development and the ultimate success of an educational system depends upon the teacher in it, yet the teachers are not held

in high esteem. It took a long time to realise this fact and
developed countries began to raise the status of teachers, as
a prerequisite to better educational standard.1

Better salary scales with other fringe benefits
will increase the economic status of the teacher. Wider prospects
for professional growth by means of in-service training and
orientation courses increase the professional competence of the
teacher. Better economic status and better professional compe­
tence in their turn increase the social status of the teacher. A
teacher who enjoys better economic as well as social status
will certainly develop a sense of responsibility and dedication
to the profession.

2. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS AND THE STATUS OF THE WOMAN TEACHER

1. Income of the teacher

As discussed in Chapter II under
personal data of the teacher all of them came from low income
group of families and married to the families almost of the
same economic status. The TABLE NO. 5'8 ( page 347) gives a
comparative picture of the economic status of the husbands
of the teachers and that of their parents.

1. Kandel, I. L., The New Era in Education,
George G. Harrap & Co. Ltd.,
TABLE NO. 5'8

A comparative picture of economic status of the husbands and parents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of parents income</th>
<th>No. of teachers (in percentage)</th>
<th>Range of husbands income (in percentage)</th>
<th>No. of teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 - 200</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10 - 300</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201 - 400</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>301 - 600</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401 - 600</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>601 - 900</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>601 and above</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>901 and above</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apparently the teachers were better off than their parents, though the difference was not very significant. The total income of the family taking husbands' and wives' income together may be seen in the TABLE NO. 5'9 below:

TABLE NO. 5'9

Total income husband and wife
(in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of income</th>
<th>No. of teachers in the range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>125 - 400</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>401 - 700</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700 - 1000</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was obvious that the family in which both
the husband and wife were earning the family income would be higher in terms of money income, than the parents' income who was the single bread winner of the family. But not only in terms of money income that the teachers were better off than their parents, they had smaller number of children to support than their parents. As discussed in Chapter II under background information of the teacher, the individual teacher on the average owned three children whereas the parents owned on the average five children each. The comparatively smaller size of the family owned by the teachers was definitely due to the impact of education and working status of the teachers.

2. No. of dependants

As regards the number of dependents 51 percent of the teachers had to maintain a big family, of course, jointly with her husband. The conception of the term big family differs from person to person depending on the pattern of the family one is used to. To a teacher in a nucleus family five persons were large enough to consider her family a big one. For others who were in a joint family ten members were not too large for the family to maintain. As such the demarcation of the bigness or the smallness of the family on the basis of the total number of persons belonged to a particular family was not done in the present study. It was left open to the individual teacher to realise for herself whether her family was big or not. On the basis of such individual realisation on the
part of the teacher it was found that about half of the teachers had to maintain a big family and the other half did not. The teachers who were to maintain a big family were in joint family. A working wife who has to maintain a big family of unemployed persons is not naturally very happy like Mrs. SD (Case No. R 63) though she had the privilege of enjoying the veneration of her brothers-in-law.

The total number of dependants of the teachers were not only their own children, the dependants included other children of the joint family who could not depend on their own parents, young brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law. As stated in Chapter II under personal data of the teachers and in section B of the present Chapter this group of teachers owned maximum nine children and that too were owned by only one teacher and eight children were owned by only two teachers. The rest of them had four children at the most. Four children of their own along with other dependants of the family made the financial burden of the teacher much heavy.

3. Additional income of the teacher

Over and above the money income they earned the teachers rendered assistance to the family by some other means as well. Those who belonged to cultivators family, they assisted their family cultivation. Both plantation and harvest of paddy are done generally by women and a family does not engage any hired labour if there are capable women in the family. In
fact, whether they belong to cultivators family or not, the rural women in the state generally of the low income group engage themselves in plantation and harvesting. The rural women teachers are no exceptions to this. That was why the rural teachers wanted morning hours of the day free during summer and afternoon hours free during winter, so as to enable themselves to engage in family cultivation or any where else. Such type of engagement added to their family finance. Though predominantly an agricultural state, there is no such provision to adjust the daily time-table of the school according to the suitability of the teachers. The supervisors also complained that the teachers both men and women are tired of the hard labour in the paddy field specially during the plantation period. Inspite of the exacting physical labour the women teachers can not avoid engaging themselves in such works. These are sources of additional income to the family. This income may not be in terms of money, but it saves their expenditure on labour.

Only one teacher in this group had one private tuition. A woman teacher is not generally engaged in private tuition. For private tuition of the children guardians prefer a man teacher. Though for a man teacher private tuition is an important source of additional income, a woman teacher has no such scope. For a woman teacher weaving is the most important and profitable means of additional income. In fact, weaving can earn sufficiently for a family if it is taken up with that aim.
in view. Case No. PL 1 and Case No. PL 3 took weaving in addition to their paid job in the school. Hand works and vegetable gardening were two other important means of additional income of these teachers. Hand works mostly included bamboo works which have good market in the villages and in the towns alike. Vegetable gardening though not taken up for sale met their own needs in the family. Those who were not engaged in any of these additional occupations, were engaged in knitting and embroidery in a small scale. Knitting and embroidery have market only in the towns, these occupations are of recent origin and are additional sources of income for the younger group of urban teachers. All these types of occupations may be classified as household occupations taken up by married women teachers in addition to their paid job. By way of engaging themselves in one type of occupation or the other the married women teachers add to their family income.

4. Income difference husband and wife

As stated in the Chapter II about five percent of the husbands of this group of teachers under study were unemployed. About 68 percent of the husbands were in paid jobs and six percent followed some kind of petty business. About 12 percent of them were cultivators but not big land owners. Income difference between the husband and wife may not be a source of family friction but definitely a source of dissatisfaction for the earning wife. Mrs. PD and Mrs. BD were two
teachers who earned more in terms of money income than their husbands. The first one was an overbearing wife, the second one had friction with her husband on money matters. Mrs. GD's husband was dismissed from his service and his present means of income was cultivation. But cultivation did not give them sufficient means of subsistence. In their family Mrs. GD had very strained relationship with her husband for which Mrs. GD was very much unhappy.

5. Choice of profession

As discussed in Chapter III, economic causes were the most important causes for joining the profession by this group of teachers. They wanted to increase their family income, they wanted an independent living and they wanted an income of their own. With these economic causes in mind, this group of teachers joined teaching. But when the question of satisfaction of the job came, economic causes received the lowest priority. And when a decision had to be taken to continue in the service or not after marriage economic considerations were at the bottom of the scale. The relative priority of the causes in three different situations as given by the sample may be seen in the TABLE NO. 5'10 (page 353).

The teachers joined teaching out of economic necessity. But their economic satisfaction was not as high as expected. They decided to continue in service because they were able to perform their two roles successfully. This group of
teachers belonged to low income group of families. But their out-of-home job did not bring them much economic satisfaction. Still they enjoyed their job because of the academic element attached to it and the social status it brought to them. They would not leave teaching to join any other jobs. Additional sources of money income had been limited for the woman teacher as compared to the man teacher. Most of the men teachers had sources of additional income such as private tuition, petty business. But the woman teacher did not have such facilities.

TABLE NO. 5'10

Relative priority of the causes in different situations
(in percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situational causes</th>
<th>Academic</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice of the job</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of the job</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation in the job</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A woman is not generally expected to earn for the family. Her role in the family is that of a helpmate. Even the widow is not expected to earn for her own. It is the moral obligation of the family—either in-laws or parents, to give support to the widow. But in the society which is
transition from traditional to modernity its outlook has been changing, but it has not yet developed a definite outlook on the status and role of a woman. Under such a situation a working woman is not in a clear status, is she expected to be a wife only or to take the role of a helpmate alongwith or be an independent woman?

6. Retirement benefit

Retirement benefit for the primary school teacher had been limited. There were no pension benefit nor gratuity benefit. The only benefit the primary school teacher enjoyed was her contributory provident fund benefit. This provident fund benefit was very meagre. The teacher could not contribute much to the fund out of her small income at the same time she took loan out of the fund specially on the occasion of her child-birth or the marriage ceremony of her children or on medical ground. Other advances like house building, medical benefit were also not available to a primary school teacher.

Once they were off from the school the primary teachers were penniless. Mrs. LC, Mrs. SD, Mrs. DD are examples of such penniless retired teachers. When there were dearth of women teachers at the wake of expansion of girls education, these women pioneered the cause of girls education in the state, work whole heartedly for the cause against all odds. But they retired without a pension in their old age. After leading a life of independent woman they found it difficult to depend
on their own relations even though the relations were very accommodating. Those who had children well educated, well placed, had comparatively a comfortable retired life. Even then they did not like total dependance on children. All these retired teachers stated that retirement benefits may be extended to the women teachers, at least to those who had no children. Social welfare services being limited in the state such facilities as old age pension, are yet to come to help the helpless retired women.

After the provincialisation of the services of the primary school teachers in Assam in 1975, the anxiety of the women teachers specially the women without children has been lessened to some extent.