CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS
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On the basis of different analyses done (Chapter V), the results have been discussed under the various headings:

MODERATOR REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Results (Chapter V) revealed that the correlation between stress and anxiety was significantly positive (though low) in working women in some of the stress dimensions, i.e., negative stress last year, total stress last year, and positive stress anytime; with total stress anytime, the correlation just missed the 0.05 level of significance. In case of non-working women, none of the correlations between anxiety and different dimensions of stress were significant. The results support the hypothesis (I) which had expected a positive relationship between stress and anxiety, only in case of working women but not in case of non-working women.

Results are supported by a number of studies which have reported a positive relation between stress and anxiety (Constantini et al., 1973; Sharma, and Sharma, 1984; Nezu, 1986; Savita, and Asnani, 1993). However, results are in contradiction to Lazzerini, Cox, and Mackay (1979) who found that the influence of the situation on anxiety is minimal.

Reasons for the above findings might be that a working woman would tend to become anxious when a stressful life event occurs because it might tax her already overstretched schedule, time, and might require various new arrangements needed for household work. For instance, if a working woman has to shift the house (stressful life event), it might make her anxious about childcare arrangements, household help, commuting problems from house to workplace and back, and so on. If suppose she has met with an accident,
or somebody at home falls ill, a working woman might show anxiety because of lack of time, leave sanction problems, etc.

Singh (1997) also reported that working status of women had significant effect on anxiety. An anxious person is under the constant pressure of being perfect or worrying how to perform the different tasks. Similar picture is evident in Indian working women. The confluence of the women's movement has forced dismantling of the most formal barriers to women in the jobs. At home, however, the position has still not changed much. Our minds might have been so conditioned that we are ready to accept changes or some new aspects of woman's life but without reducing the burden of previous roles (Kapur, 1970; Dubey, and Dubey, 1997; Sharma, and Vohra, 1998; Velegark, 1999), which might make a working woman anxious when faced with some stressful life event.

The dual role of home-making and career-building is in itself a tough task for working women (Kumari, and Raman, 1990), and when coupled with stressful life events, it may make them anxious. For instance, marriage of a daughter or dependent sister, death of a relative, having a sick person at home, etc., might take her already squeezed personal time, might reduce her satisfaction with life, and above all, the taxing nature of other members' demands might make her anxious (Pleck, Staines, and Lang, 1980; Kopelman, Greenhaus, and Connolly, 1983; Siddiqui, and Shah, 1997) whenever some stressful life event occurs.

Results (Chapter V) also revealed significantly positive correlations of general well-being with all but one (negative stress last year) dimensions of stress in working women. None of the correlations between stress and general well-being were significant in non-working women.

The results did not support the hypothesis (II) which had expected a negative relationship between stress and general well-being. In case of non-
working women, though the relationship between stress and general well-being was not significant but the direction was the same.

The findings of the present study are supported by the results of Rahe (1968), Holmes (1970), Unlenhuth, and Paykel (1973), Czublaski (1976), Monroe (1983), Nelson, and Cohen (1983), Okun, and George (1984), Brief, Burke, George, Robinson, and Webster (1988), and Payne (1988) who found a positive relationship between stressful life events and subjective well-being.

Wiggins, Wiggins, and Zanden (1994) also stated that despite the obstacles, many women today willingly do combine occupational roles with their roles as wives and mothers.

However, the results are in contradiction with a number of studies which have reported that stress reduces well-being (Dohrenwend, 1973; Rabkin, and Struening, 1976; Chiriboga, 1977; Zautra, 1979; Abbey, and Andrews, 1985).

One reason behind the results of the present investigation might be the factors which may moderate or influence the effects of stress on general well-being in case of working women. Aldwin, and Stokols (1988) stated that many negative life events can have positive outcomes for people experiencing them. It might be because people who have a trait called hardiness do not fall ill as a result of stress (Kobasa, 1979). Such individuals have been said to possess a sense of commitment and a feeling of control in their lives, and accept stressful events as challenges. When a woman is doing a job, she might develop more self confidence, more economic independence, more interaction with people outside home, and a feeling of some control over the outer world. Exposure to the outside (job) world might make them more analytical, and make them learn to prepare
themselves for stressful life events, and thus subside the state of arousal and maintain their general well-being.

Besides, cognitive appraisal and resources for coping can affect the relationship of stress and well-being (Taylor, 1995). Abbott, and Baella (1986) stated that predictability of an event can act as a safety signal. In the present study, the stressful life events scale had a large number of events having a factor of predictability, and hence might not have an adverse effect on the subjects' well-being. For instance, in some events, like beginning or ending of school, shifting of house, and so on, one might have a mental set and get prepared for the event. Thus, the woman might be able to maintain her well-being.

Though the relationship between stress and general well-being was not significant in non-working women, but direction was the same implying that there might be some moderators which can influence this relationship.

Another important factor which could lead to such results (a positive relationship between stress and general well-being) might be the period when the stressful life event had occurred. In the present investigation, for studying the impact of stress, events that had occurred anytime or last year were considered. It is just possible that the impact of stress on general well-being might have faded out by the time the study was conducted. Chances for getting the expected relationship might have been there, if we had taken stressful life events that had occurred in the immediate past few months. Weinberger, Hiner, and Tienery (1987) also stressed that daily hassles were better predictors of health status than major stressful life events, because their influence was indirect, i.e., they increased hassles, which in turn negatively affected health status. The wounds of major stressful life events might have been healed by the time when the study was conducted.
Besides, Rao (1983a) also stated that the effect of stress is intertwined by the concepts of cognitive structuring, threat, emotional involvement, organic reactions and coping activities.

Results of moderator regression analysis with three moderators viz. (a) quality of life (b) role conflict, and (c) locus of control are discussed below:

a) Quality of Life as a Moderator

Results revealed significant F values (Chapter V) for regression of anxiety on stress with quality of life as a moderator in working as well as non-working women implying that the relationship between anxiety and stress would be affected by quality of life. However, quality of life failed to be a significant moderator in the relationship of stress and general well-being. Results support the hypothesis III (a) but do not support the hypothesis IV (a).

To make the picture more clear, working and non-working women were divided into two groups (high and low quality of life). It was found that with the same amount of stress, quality of life made a difference in the anxiety level. Both working as well as non-working women with a high quality of life experienced less of anxiety and had better general well-being, whereas the low quality of life group experienced more anxiety and poorer well-being. Results are partially supported by the study of Adler, and Matthews (1994) who found quality of life to affect life stress and health.

The reasons might be that individuals who were high on quality of life were satisfied with life. When a woman is happy with her life, then the anxieties are likely to be minimum (Velegark, 1999). Also, a person would show more of general well-being because most of the problems (psychological) are the result of tensions and worries (Taylor, 1995). In
contrast, an individual with discontentment with life is likely to be surrounded by a sea full of tensions and worries. Such a discontented person would feel locked into her roles (Pearlin, 1983), and may experience tensions in the family (Hauenstein, Kasl, and Harburg, 1977). Such an individual might spend most of her time in resolving the conflicts, and in this process might not be able to relax or take care of her health which may result in reduced general well-being.

b) Role Conflict as a Moderator

Results of regression of anxiety on stress with role conflict as a moderator revealed significant F values at interaction step for negative stress last year, total stress last year, negative stress anytime and total stress anytime which partially supported the hypothesis III (c). In case of general well-being, there was negligible contribution of positive stress last year, but significant contribution of all others which also supported the hypothesis IV (c).

When the group was divided into high and low role conflict groups, it was found that high role conflict women experienced more anxiety than those in low role conflict group. However, there was no significant difference between high and low role conflict groups on general well-being.

Results on general well-being are supported by the findings of Barnett, and Baruch (1985), Aneshensel, and Pearl (1987) which provide little support for the notion that dual roles are detrimental to a woman's psychological well-being. In contrast, holding both family and employment roles tie individuals into two major social networks which can act as alternative sources of social and psychological gratification (Gove, and Tudor, 1973; Taylor, and Spencer, 1988; Thoits, 1992).
Baruch and Barnett (1986) further stated that the psychological well-being of employed wives was influenced by the quality of their experiences of both of their roles.

Schwartzberg and Dytell (1988) stated, "Housewives who are tied into only one social network have been found to experience more psychological distress, suggesting that singular focus of their lives put them in a position of higher risk" (cf. Goldsmith, 1989, p. 177).

When a woman is working, she might develop strategies to deal with responsibilities of home and job and find sometime to relax. Hence she might not show reduced well-being. But in the constant action of balancing, there might be chances of a state of arousal, and increased anxieties. Leiter and Durup (1996) also stated that both work and family domains are potentially stressful. The emotional, physical and mental demands of roles within either domain might exceed a woman's coping resources. Sometimes a stage might come where a working woman might have to decide between an important official appointment and an ill child and hence might increase her anxieties. This aspect might be attributed to the societal norms which expect women to forego work activities in the face of family responsibilities (e.g. staying home with a sick child), whereas men are permitted to forego family activities in favour of work commitments (Pleck, 1977).

Also, a woman who is high on role conflict would experience more anxiety because whichever task is given importance, a guilt feeling of negligence for other would make her anxious. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) also stated that role conflict can occur when "role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (p. 77). Chowdhury (1995) also found that 38% of the employed mothers were not
happy with their outside job, and felt guilty for neglecting their children and family.

Caproni (1997) stated that the well-intentioned discourse of work/(family) life balance may actually undermine women's attempts to live fulfilling lives, and may further entrench them in the work/(family) life imbalance that they are trying to escape. The traditional structure which opposes the work role for the wife and even more so the mother (Sharma, and Vohra, 1998) seems to be crumbling but traditions concerning housework seem to die much harder, thus leading to more anxiety in women high on role conflict. When there is no realisation of difficulties (faced by working women) by the husbands, working women high on role conflict might face anxiety.

If a working woman is entrenched in the dilemma of household chores and job expectancies, without any relaxation or help from others, she might become anxious, whenever she faces some stressful life event. This has been depicted beautifully by Javed Akhtar, the Urdu lyricist and writer who has written a poem addressed to his young daughter titled 'Do Raha' emphasizing on the importance of having time and space for oneself. In this he states: "you are our daughter, you would be a wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law. You will have to maintain these essential relationships and fulfill your responsibilities as you grow. But a word of advice. Keep a time and space for yourself, as a person". In short, a working woman might not have time for herself which might result in anxiety, especially in occurrence of stressful life events, which may demand stretching of already over-stretched time and ability.

c) Locus of Control as a Moderator

In regression of anxiety on stress, with locus of control as moderator, significant F values for interaction were obtained for all the sub-categories
of stress in working women, and non-significant F values in non-working women which partially supported the hypothesis III (b).

In case of regression of general well-being on stress, significant F values (Chapter V) were obtained for negative stress last year in working women and; for negative and total stress anytime for non-working women. Results supported the hypothesis IV (b). This indicated that the effect of negative stress last year on general well-being of working women was moderated by locus of control. In case of non-working women, the effect of negative and total stress anytime on general well-being was moderated by locus of control.

Results are supported by Zika, and Chamberlain's (1987) study in which locus of control was found to have moderating effect in the relation between stressor and subjective well-being.

When the groups were divided into externals and internals on the basis of cut off point, significant differences were found between externals and internals on anxiety and general well-being in non-working women, with externals showing more anxiety and lower general well-being as compared to internals. The trend was the same in case of working women, though not significant. Watson (1967) also reported that externals are generally more anxious than internals.

Tandon (1986) had also found externals to report more symptoms (inferior health group) who perceived God as being capricious and unjust and were harassed by negative thoughts. In contrast, individuals with superior health were found to have a positive self image and had a positive meaning of suffering.
Prediction and control of an event can make it less stressful (Thompson, 1981). Whereas externals can put the blame on others, internals can make an effort to deal with stress and find a way to cope with it, thus reducing anxiety and maintaining well-being. However, control beliefs are more likely to interact with a myriad of other factors, for instance, a person who has spent life time experiencing many positive outcomes as a result of his/her behaviour and therefore, has developed internal locus of control, if at later stage is hospitalized for some problem where all decisions are taken by others (staff hospital), then not having a control can prove to be disastrous and can affect his/her well-being.

When people are placed in an environment that they feel they are unable to change, or for which they have no satisfactory repertoire of responses, general anxiety seems to prevail. If a person does try to react to the situation, the attempted responses are often inappropriate and this increases the feeling of anxiety. Someone who is well-trained and experienced in a situation does not feel anxious or emotional under the same environmental circumstances. There is evidence that people will experience less stress in aversive situation if they believe they have some personal control over the outcomes of the situation. If individuals feel no personal control over aversive events they become increasingly anxious. Those who learn to associate anxiety with luck or chance may not engage in adaptive behaviours in future stressful situations even if it is possible to do so.

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

After doing the main analysis, i.e., moderator regression analysis, analysis of variance was applied to find whether there are any differences between working and non-working women of middle class and lower class
on stress, locus of control, quality of life, anxiety and general well-being. Analysis of variance results revealed the following information:

a) Stress

Stress variable as mentioned earlier (Chapter V) had six sub-categories viz. positive stress last year, negative stress last year, total stress last year, positive stress anytime, negative stress anytime, and total stress anytime. Results revealed that working women were higher on stress as compared to non-working women. Also, the difference between working and non-working women on stress was there in the middle class and not in the lower class.

A number of researchers (for instance, Hall, and Hall, 1980; Haynes, and Feinleib, 1980; Frone, Russell, and Cooper, 1991; Rout, and Rout, 1993; Velegark, 1999) have reported similar results where working women were found to be high on stress. This is also in line with Brown, and Harris's (1978) finding that working class women do not necessarily face more stressful life events than the middle class women.

Reasons for the present results could be attributed to the fact that a working woman cannot escape from the responsibilities of home (Scanzoni, 1982; Daniels, 1987; Goel, and Goel 1996). Being a woman entails her more than taking primary responsibility for the care and welfare of the children (Rani, 1976). As Wimbush (1986) cited "women.... also take on the major responsibilities for family health, and caring roles (which) often extend to include her partner and other dependent family members" (cf. Allatt, Keil, Bryman, and Bytheway, 1987, p. 152). They have to rearrange their work schedules, reduce work hours or take time off without pay to care for elderly relatives (Finch, and Groves, 1983; Brody, 1985; Karambayya, and Anne, 1992).
When a woman is working outside home, and side by side taking care of the different responsibilities of home, she is likely to be high on stress (Frone et al., 1991; Rout, and Rout, 1993; Agarwal, 1994). Stress as used in the present study included perceived stress in the experience of events like marriage of a daughter or dependent sister, a death in the family or accident, marital fights, pregnancy, purchase of a house or shifting of house, etc. When the events like these happen, working women might not be able to take time off from their jobs to attend to these responsibilities. Sometimes there might be a problem of sanctioning of leave. For instance, if someone at home fell ill at one time, and she was supposed to take care of that person, she may not be able to do so properly because of her being working as she may not get long leave. Coping with such situations may produce stress.

She might even receive sarcastic remarks, to the extent that she would feel guilty of being a working woman and blame herself for not being able to take care of that person. Sometimes one stressful situation may be followed by a series of stressful events such as marital conflict, ill-health, and so on.

Besides, because of lack of time, and mental fatigue, working women as compared to non-working women might perceive any change in their environment as more stressful. For instance, if she is supposed to shift to a new house, it might be perceived as a stressful life event for a working woman and not by a non-working woman, because for a working woman it might mean, making new arrangements for the childcare, change in time allocation depending upon the distance of home from the working place and so on. When a woman is working full-time outside the home, she needs more support from her family members in dealing with stressful life events (Rani, 1974). For instance, life events like construction or shifting of house,
going to pilgrimage, marriage of daughter/sister, death of some relative require lots and lots of work and time. However, for a working wife, as compared to a housewife, dealing with these situations might become more stressful as they have to go to their jobs as well as take care of these events. Since the sample of the study had most of the women living in nuclear families, these women had to manage things on their own. In doing so, working women probably would face more stress than the housewives. Besides, the problem is aggravated because of the mentality of Indian society where the husband is not expected to help the wife in household chores. Pepitone - Rockwell (1980), and Gallagher, and Delworth (1993) also emphasized that without the support of her family members, a woman might not be able to deal successfully with stressful life events.

Another major finding was that this difference between working and non-working women on stress was more in middle class as compared to lower class.

The reasons for this might be that the middle class women are still crossing the bridge between the past and new roles. Such "women who might like to participate less in domestic affairs have to face the pressure of the norm that women belong in the domain of housework" (Oakley, 1974, p. 153). In the middle class, a large number of women have come out of homes to do jobs (Davidson, and Cooper, 1984) but still have not been able to overcome the teething problems. Non-working women might adjust themselves well in their traditional roles and might not find most of the events as mentioned in the scale to be stressful.

If because of her job, a middle class woman was not able to deal with some life events properly, for instance, looking after an ailing person at home or failure/poor performance of children in exams, etc., she would feel stressed because of her negative self-evaluation and apprehensions.
pertaining to her evaluation by others. McCall, and Simmons (1966) also stated that if a performance of an individual is evaluated by others to be inadequate or even if adequate but diverge from his/her standards for himself/herself, it would be considered a failure. This kind of concern would be there more in the middle class working women than in those from the lower class.

Besides, lower class women were always there in outside jobs and might have already overcome the initial problems of doing jobs. Hence, there is no difference between perceived stress of the working and non-working women of lower class. Geerken, and Gove (1983) had also pointed out that the demarcation between working and non-working is not very important in the lower class; and in their household system if a woman goes out to work, her husband would help her in cooking, washing of utensils and looking after the children.

With regard to socio-economic status, the findings showed that middle class women experienced more negative as well as total stress anytime than lower class women.

This can be attributed to the society conscious mentality of the middle class who are very high on social desirability. If such things happen which are socially unacceptable or socially evaluated such as marital fights, some relative going to jail, having a drug addict at home, change of job, and so on, it can prove to be very stressful for a middle class woman irrespective of at what time it had occurred. As discussed earlier, middle class women are more sensitive to evaluation by others compared to the lower class which might have led to such results.
b) Locus of control

Results on locus of control revealed that the middle class women were more external than the lower class women.

This might be due to the fact that middle class people are more conscious of their social status, are more concerned and afraid of social stigmas, social evaluations and criticisms. They are very high on defensiveness. At times when social prestige is involved, they may show externality, thereby not taking the responsibility of what had happened to them. They try to do things which would increase their social status and if something went wrong, they would try to be defensive and shift the blame to others. As Rani (1974) pointed out to a change wherein women are becoming more concerned about their privileges and social status than their obligations. Thus, the desire for social status, fear of losing prestige may make middle class women more external than lower class women.

In contrast, lower class people are not so much concerned about what others would say. Right from the childhood, lower class women are accustomed to looking down upon themselves as inferiors and they might have learned to internalize the blame for whatever went wrong with their lives. They are made to feel worthless and inefficient without the support of male members and hence may learn to blame themselves for whatever happens to them (Tagore, 1998).

Mehta (1975) also found that the lower class women found secular society impersonal and competitive in which they felt lost. They want to belong to a known group and have ties that were based on several generations of relatedness. With such people there was no need to establish contact, it was there to be renewed when the need arose. So they may not be concerned with how other people will react. The fact that one had more than just one's immediate family to fall back on would give these
women a sense of great security especially in time of distress which would further make them less defensive.

c) Quality of life

Results of the analysis of variance for quality of life indicated better quality of life for the lower class women as compared to the middle class women.

Reasons for the present findings might be that the quality of life as used in the present study was based on relationships. Most of the items as used in the scale pertain to one's relationships with others, such as social relations, relations with parents, and relatives, having a job of one's choice, general contentment, etc. In the present day scenario, one has little time to go out to meet the relatives. Middle class people are more engaged in improving their life style. It is becoming very difficult to maintain relationships with others. The lower class families are more close-knit which could be the reason for higher perceived quality of life of lower class than middle class women.

Besides, lower class women generally have their relatives staying nearby and might be satisfied with whatever they had. They knew their limitations and generally do not bother about their drawbacks. They lacked high aspirations and expectations (Mehta, 1975). They wanted a status within the marriage relationship which meant being recognized as good dutiful daughters-in-laws and wives. They might have developed the attitude of acceptance, because of family teaching in childhood based on the same cultural attitude, that is, not to complain as long as the basic needs are fulfilled.

Infact, lower class women regard their husbands next only to God and to live in their shadow is no hardship at all. There is little evidence of
wanting respect or be recognized as individuals, and hence are generally satisfied.

In contrast, in middle class, expectations, goals, and aspirations are very high. Even if a person is in a comfortable financial position, one still aspires for more (Khanna, and Varghese, 1978). A middle class woman has modern facilities which could reduce the burden of household chores. Strouse (1974) stressed that now home is no longer the centre of husband’s life. His job might involve touring or meetings. All these might leave a middle class woman restless and thereby reducing her quality of life. Also, a middle class woman would be always worrying about how to meet the demands of her family and always trying to improve the social-status, and as a result might show dissatisfaction (Strouse, 1974).

Similar are the views of Ritzer (1977) who mentioned “status-panic” in the middle class and focussed on their zest for “artificial status hierarchies and competition for informal status positions” (pp. 256-257).

Besides, middle class women want to have their own identity, do not have time to explore themselves and even the husband-wife relation is in danger. All these might lead to dissatisfaction, and reduce quality of life.

Another important finding was that in the lower class, there was significant difference between working and non-working women on quality of life (working women being higher on quality of life). However, this difference was not marked in the middle class. The reasons which might have led to such results might be that at the lower levels, each increase in the amenities of living would result in a direct increase in quality of life. In the lower class, working women even with the meagre amount which they bring home may be giving them a feeling of superiority over others. Hence, in the lower class, when a working woman is able to achieve a little higher than others, it would add to her quality of life.
However, in the middle class the input-output ratio in terms of quality of life would become difficult to predict (Kapur, 1970). The quest for something better might be present in both working as well as non-working groups.

d) Anxiety

A scrutiny of results revealed that non-working women experienced more anxiety as compared to working women. Results are supported by the findings of Walker, and Walker (1980), Mukhopadhyay, Dewanji, and Majumdar (1993), Singh (1997) who had found similar results.

Reason behind this might be that non-working women spend their time doing the same jobs of cooking, child-caring, house-maintenance (Krausz, 1986) etc., without a word of appreciation from others, and they start taking their life as monotonous and dull. Besides, they might become more and more anxious. Also, there would be total dependence on others for financial needs and they might be exploited because of their financial dependence (Eitzen, 1980). When they see other women working and earning something, they may want to go out of home and do something for their self-satisfaction. But their inability to do so can lead to tensions, increased anxieties, dissatisfaction and so on. The problem is aggravated by the rapid social and economic change. Eitzen (1980) found that such changes had made the traditional child-bearing practices unimportant which again "... provide them with lots of spare time especially in their late twenties, and when their last child enters the school" (p. 157).

In Indian homes, wives are still the victims of a male put-down when it came to their point of view being taken seriously (Khubchandani, 1998). A non-working woman runs a risk of loss of financial support or loss of husband's attention, and in such anxious states might try to be a perfect
woman doing everything perfectly (Khanna, and Varghese, 1978; Velegark, 1999). Because of the limited sphere of work and limited exposure, there might be a constant pressure on her to prove her skills and abilities to keep her husband and in-laws happy. In the ever-revolving circle of being a perfect cook, wife, mother, and host, her personal needs and ambitions might be curbed, and hence might instil a feeling of insecurity; disinterest in life, and above all, would make her anxious.

Another important finding was that middle class women were more anxious than the lower class women. This is in contrast to Murlidharan, and Sharma's (1971) finding wherein individuals of lower socio-economic status were found to be more anxious than the individuals of high socio-economic status. Seth, Srivastava, and Seth (1979) had also reported that deprived individuals are more anxious than the advantaged. This might be attributed to the middle class mentality to keep worrying about different things. For instance, when there has to be a birthday party at home, a middle class woman might unnecessarily become tense and anxious about minute things such as arrangement, return gifts and so on; or in case of admission of a child she will think not only study wise but also status-wise while deciding about the school. However, such events might not bother the lower class women who generally accept their fate without constantly thinking about the problems.

Besides, there is more awakening among middle class women and they eagerly want to get due respect in home as well as in society (Wimbush, 1986; cf. Allatt et al., 1987). Mehta (1975) also stated that middle class women had a 'very real sense of their individuality'. They were not at all prepared to accept a feminine role in which men dominated without regard to the women's needs and wishes. Also, they might not be willing to
be crushed by the husband and much less by his parents. All this would make them more anxious.

However, such awakening is lacking among lower class women, where a woman is still seen as an object in the house and is conditioned right from the childhood to suppress her distress and needs, and bow to the demands of father, brother and husband. Besides, illiteracy amongst lower class women makes them less demanding, and thus they might have a casual approach to life without being very anxious.

e) General well-being

Results revealed that working women had better general well-being than non-working women. This finding is supported by a number of investigations (Astin et al., 1971; Bernard, 1972; Newberry, Weissman, and Myers, 1979; Lewin-Epstein, 1986; Pietromonaco et al., 1986; House et al., 1988; Kibra et al., 1990; Repetti et al., 1989; Nathawat, and Mathur, 1992).

It could be that working women would find something positive (such as economic independence) in an opportunity to work outside the home. A feeling of contributing to the welfare of their families as well as the society might enhance their general well-being. Taylor, and Spencer (1988) found that working mothers acknowledge the joys of combined employment and family responsibilities. When a woman goes out to work, she shakes off the feeling of subordination (Stein, 1978). Work provides a woman with more self-esteem and to some extent satisfies her need for freedom and independence, the need for social contact, and sometimes, job might operate as a safety valve through which frustrations which could be expressed in the family are avoided or directed (Haw, 1982; Moen, 1982; Ross, Mirowsky, and Huber, 1983; Krause, 1984; Pistrang, 1984).
In a way, working outside the home provides a set of social ties for women (Baruch et al., 1987). Besides, women are quite communicative and want to discuss their problems with others (Gupta, 1998). This opportunity would be there more in case of working rather than non-working women leading to their better general well-being.

The activity of a woman in the home as well as the work she does for wages, keeps her active and continually in contact with a world of qualities and change, and such a woman would learn how to maintain her well-being in difficult situations such as keeping the house spotless, food 'hot', the children's homework done everyday, husband to get his favourite dish, etc. Having enjoyed the benefits of employment, a working woman cannot afford the luxury of indulging in a hampered general well-being (Khanna, and Varghese, 1978). Poloma, and Garland (1971), Rapoport, and Rapoport (1976), and Bennin, and Nienstedt (1985) supported that career women who are also wives and mothers must find ways to balance work and family roles. Thus the dilemma of different roles needs to be resolved (Eshleman, 1985). Hence, she tries to be sturdy and copes.... with or without help.... somehow. She finds ways to balance work and family roles and hence has better general well-being. Baron (1987) too reported that despite many challenges, most professional women were confident that both roles can be managed well.

In contrast, the life of a non-working woman, on the other hand, might become dull and lack the charm. Researchers (such as, Rossi, 1968) have stressed that traditional female-centered family role arrangements are detrimental to women's well-being. Wimbush (1986) also stated, "female domestic control contains the paradox that it is often at the cost of the woman's own personal time, space and resources" (cf. Aliatt et al., 1987, p. 155).
A non-working woman would be staying at home throughout the day, taking care of needs of other family members, which may become very monotonous. They may lose their individual identity, which would further lower their general well-being. Housewives have been found to report feeling unappreciated for work done in the home (Vanek, 1978), bored with household chores and lonely for the company of adults (Aneshensel, and Pearlin, 1987). Besides, family members have been found to make more demands on non-working women than working women (Gove, and Geerken, 1977). In some families there may be too much interference from the elders or other family members. Such instances can tax a non-working wife's general well-being.

Surprisingly, results of the present study also revealed that lower class women had higher general well-being than middle class women. This is in contrast with Srole, Langner, Michael, Opler, and Rennie's (1962) study in which they found that greater the degree of poverty, higher was the psychological damage. It could be that in the middle class, expectations are very high leading to tensions and worries. Middle class people might always be striving to be on the top, always thinking about ways to enhance their social status, and worrying to excel in the different aspects of life. "Middle class women are very concerned about their individual identity" (Wimbush 1986; cf. Allatt et al., 1987, p. 156). These days, middle class educated women, whether employed or not, have become extra-ordinarily conscious of their individuality and individual status. They are more concerned and sensitive to the attitudes of spouses towards them and might have developed inflated egos. They may experience marital discontentment, frustrations, tensions, sleeplessness, and worthlessness if they did not get positive feedback, love, and affection from the family members. They may become mentally upset if their spouses were not ready to make necessary
modifications in their expectations from them. There might also be a feeling of restlessness for not making proper use of their academic qualifications. All these would lead to hampered general well-being. Jung (1995) also reported that worrying was related to psychological symptoms.

In contrast, lower class women would not be very ambitious and know their 'limitations'. They are generally satisfied, if not happy, with what they have. Their main needs focus around daily meals and clothing. The items in the scale used for the present study focus on mental satisfaction, proper sleep, proper rest, control over oneself, not becoming tense over the worries of life and so on. One can generally observe that lower class people are usually more contented and satisfied as they accept their lot and this would lead to lesser worries and proper sleep.

Unlike a middle class woman, who may become tense and restless over the issues like how much weight she has gained, which washing machine she has to purchase, to which school the child has to be sent, how to host a dinner and so on, lower class women have comparatively lesser useless tensions and thus would be higher on general well-being as compared to the middle class women.

**Role conflict**

The t test was applied to test the difference between middle and lower class working women on role conflict. Results (Chapter V) revealed that lower class women were significantly higher on role conflict than their middle class counterparts.

Results are supported by the findings of Begum, and Tasneem (1984) who found women in low income group to be high on role conflict than women in high income group. The results might be explained by the fact that the lower class women spend lots of time in washing clothes,
cooking, putting mud on housetops, taking care of husband's needs, fetching water from a far-off place, and so on, thus leaving no time for them to relax. Besides, when they work full-time outside home, there might be the continuous strain on mind of the incomplete tasks of home. Lower class women even today are considered to be inferior to men and hence might not be expected to ask their husbands to help them in household chores. Also their mental makeup is such that they consider their husbands next to God and might have been conditioned right from the childhood that it is their duty to take care of home and family members. This constant struggle to cope up with dual responsibility might lead to more role conflict in lower class women.

A lower class woman basically does job because of economic necessity. Most of the women in lower class are put in paid employment and kept there by pressures and constraints far beyond their control (United Nations Economic Commission, 1988, cf. Women 2000, p. 11). Wife's inability to reconcile the idea of her having to be in employment out of economic necessity might make her grudge and grumble, and make her feel work-fatigued which might be psychological than a physiological fatigue (Kapur, 1970). A husband's attitude of non-appreciation towards wife's financial contribution might add to her agony. "He might become hypercritical of her capabilities as a wife and as a housewife, and become very demanding with respect to her time and attention" (Kapur, 1970, p.334). This may lead to a wife to think that she is lacking in fulfilling her duties, and may lead to role conflict.

Middle class women are in a comfortable position to afford electrical gadgets, domestic help, and so on, which might reduce the time consumed in domestic work. Sekaran (1992) also argued that Indian career women prefer to delegate domestic work to paid help than to push for their
husbands to do more family work, thus maintaining an equilibrium and avoiding conflict without increasing their own workload. Husband might help the wife in some of the household chores. There might be more understanding of working women’s problems by their husbands in the middle class.