Summary & Conclusions

CHAPTER: SIX
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

The problems of employed woman in rural areas were traced, analysed and discussed in the preceding chapters. Though all of her problems are worthy of investigation, the present study has isolated some of them and examined them from a sociological perspective. Problems relating to her family, employment and the rural environment are studied in the present dissertation.
It has become evident from the earlier analysis that the employed woman in rural areas suffers from the problems of various kinds arising out of her familial, professional and rural situations. These problems are analysed to bring forth the sociological factors responsible for the same.

Problems in the family of the employed woman are examined to see whether social change conducive to her work-role outside has occurred in the family or not. The role of an employee is one more addition to the former role-complex of house-wife. So the employment of woman disturbs the delicate balance of her previous role system. It was found in the present analysis that the social change which should have taken place in the family to restore the lost balance is conspicuous by its absence. The kitchen is not at all modernized as to save time and labour of the employed woman. There is no significant attitudinal change in her husband, relatives and the villagers as to accommodate her as a working woman playing dual roles. The result is that the Indian working woman, unlike the modern western employed woman, has to bear the entire
domestic work-load along with the sole responsibility of caring her young ones.

This situation exposes the employed woman to the conflicting loyalties in such a way that the complete fulfilment of both the roles is realistically impossible. And here lies the genesis of her problems in the family. The study has noted down, intense role conflict in majority of the cases of these employed women. It seems that the social situation has not become ripe enough to give her concessions in the traditional role expectations about her as house-wife and mother and relieve her for her outside role.

Along with the familial problems, the occupational problems are also studied in this dissertation. Exposure to a completely alien role, incapacities inherent in her personality to handle the occupational role, derogatory, nonsympathetic treatment accorded to her by the officers, absence of promotions, unfair deals in transfer matters etc. are some of her problems in the occupational field. These problems owe their origin to the following causes.
One reason of her occupational problem is that a change in one aspect of the social system is not followed by corresponding changes in other aspects of the same. Employment of woman is itself a social change. But this change has not been followed by changes in other constituents of the social system, such as belief patterns, attitude towards sex, social values etc. These other important constituents of the social system have remained more or less unchanged, e.g. women are always regarded as inferior to men, in India. So, women are regarded as less reliable workers and treated accordingly. Men attach significance to the sex-role of woman. Woman as having an independent personality is never thought of. Hence the emergence of her occupational problems.

Another factor responsible for her problems in the occupational field is a clash of two group values. For generations, Indian woman is socialised for her primary group relationships only. Now, without adequate formal as well as informal orientation, she is exposed to impersonal, utilitarian, bureaucratic world of secondary group. So she faces the problems of
adjustment in her new field. Dissatisfaction with the job, inadequacy in handling official procedures, insecurity etc. are the problems in the occupational sphere, emerging due to this clash of values.

The third reason of the problems in the occupational field seems to be the enlargement of status-set of the employed woman. "Since each status position has its accompanying role-set, this additional status position has its accompanying role-set, this additional status adds another complement sometimes conflicting, on the incumbent of status position. When a person is involved in several role sets by virtue of occupying different statuses, the demands made by different role sets are more often than not incompatible and infeasible resulting in status conflict."

Absence of social change in the allied fields, related with the employment of woman, clash of primary and secondary group values and enlargement of status-set demanding conflicting loyalties are the reasons giving rise to the occupational problems of the employed woman in rural areas.
The problems arising out of rural situation are also studied in the present work. Since ages, Indian villages have retained their traditional form. It is in such villages that, women employees are sent to do a pioneering job of introducing innovations based on the scientific outlook. This disturbs the established pattern of life of village people. As Dr. S.C. Dube has pointed out, "When it comes down to the established social practices neither appeals on scientific grounds nor logic can easily persuade the village people to give up their traditional life ways." 1. The innovations disturb the established pattern of life so, the problems are created in the path of employed woman.

In the context of rural environment, the main problems from which the employed woman suffers are harassment from the villagers and non-cooperation from them. The study has tried to analyse the factors responsible for these problems. It was revealed in the study that different social variables have bearing on

these problems. The caste of the employee, nature of employment, family situation, age and marital status of the employee are the significant factors in harassment and non-cooperation from the villagers. Women employees of lower castes suffer from harassment and non-cooperation more than their counterparts of the higher castes. Women teachers are less victimised by the villagers than the nurses and gramsevikas. The employee of mature age, married and staying with her responsible family members seems to be well adjusted in village. This is a conclusion about the problems of women employees in relation to the rural environment.

The study has noted down that the woman employees suffer from various other problems which arise out of rural environment. Lack of facilities of entertainment, scarcity of proper accommodation, lack of educational facilities for children, feeling of insecurity etc. are some of the problems cited by the women employees.

The overall nature of the occupational role of these women employees is of an innovator. Their role is to initiate and assist the process of modernization,
in the form of developmental activities sponsored for the rural people. The study has revealed that the acceptance of these women employees as agents of change by the rural folk depends upon various cultural factors.

This study reiterates the sociological principle that the social system is an integrated whole, so any aspect of it should be analysed in the context of the total social system. So, the problems of employed women can not be considered as isolated one, but should be viewed from the whole cultural perspective.

Indian society and especially the rural community is still tradition oriented and technologically underdeveloped. The developmental activities sponsored in rural community are the deliberate attempts made by the State for modernizing rural community. The overall nature of the problems of employed woman in rural areas seems to be an aspect of repercussions of modernization of a traditional society.

Modernization tries to bring about continual change in various aspects of society. So, it involves disorganization and dislocation of the organised
groups. This results into social problems. S.N. Eisenstadt has rightly elaborated this phenomenon of modernization in the following words, "The very fact that modernization entails continual changes in all major spheres of a society means of necessity that it involves processes of disorganization and dislocation, with the continual development of social problems, cleavages and conflicts between various groups and movements of protest, resistance to change. Disorganization and dislocation thus constitute a basic part of modernization, and every modern and modernizing society has to cope with them." 2.

That, modernization in its wake inevitably creates problems in the modernizing society is succinctly brought out once again by Eisenstadt in the following paragraph. "The assurance of a fixed given position which spilled over most of an individual's institutional roles was being continually undermined. It was undermined not only by personal or family fortunes or misfortunes but by the very nature of the

system of social organization, by the continual changes and structural differentiation. Hence although these developments usually opened up new perspectives of advancement and change of status, status necessarily became also a focus of insecurity, awareness and political conflict. " 3.

Can we say that the Indian society to-day, is passing through the turmoils created due to the clash between traditionality and pressure of modernization? The traditional ascriptive criteria of status based on caste, family, age and sex are getting the challenges from the non-ascriptive, achieved positions now. Naturally the vested interest groups based on ascriptive statuses are disturbed. These interest groups are protesting and resisting the change.

The following discussion concerning the Indian situation, will illustrate, how non-ascriptive achieved positions are getting the challenges from traditional groups based on ascriptive statuses.

The higher castes are resenting the

3. Ibid. P. 11.
encroachment of scheduled castes people upon various fields of social life hitherto denied to them. Likewise the concept of independent, free, earning woman is something new to Indian culture. Hitherto, the general concept of Indian womanhood was that she should be shy, meek, submissive, dependent and confine herself to the four walls of her house. Employed women in villages throw a challenge to these cherished ideas of Indian womanhood. And so they become victims of harassment. Similarly age is always revered in India. In joint-family, in Caste Panchayat and in Village Panchayat, it is the maturity in age that always commands respect. Women employees of younger age are seldom heeded to in villages. Indian society is dominated by men. In India woman exists for the sake of her husband, and her son. She is not expected to have any independent existence of her own but employment brings to her independence in various ways. Thus, employment of woman poses threat to these cherished values of society, hence her problems.

My contention is that the problems of employed women in rural areas should not be studied as peculiar
problems but should be viewed in the broader context of modernization of traditional society. So I put forth here certain general conclusions about modernization of traditional Indian society.

Modernization requires certain flexibility within the broader social structure. S.N. Eisenstadt points out, "The continuous absorption of change necessarily entails the development of social processes which tend on the one hand to break up any fixed freezing ascriptive arrangements of groups and power structure, while on the other hand they facilitate the continuous restructuring of the distribution of power, wealth and prestige and the re-arrangement of different social groups and roles within common institutional frameworks."

The crucial question is whether Indian society at present, is flexible enough to absorb modernization. If it is not so, what are the factors of persistence of traditional social system? Once, these factors are located, the hindrances to modernization

would be possible to be removed. Then the problems of employed woman would get solved automatically.

Dr. Cohen points out the following factors of persistence of the social system in general. 5.

Let us test the validity of these factors of persistence in Indian conditions and see whether they are more powerful than the factors favourable for modernization.

1) "Social systems or structures persist for a number of reasons. The first and most obvious is that infants become social by identifying with their elders and by learning norms, values and beliefs from them ...........

But since all men need some stable points of reference, some anchor in the past, it is probably true, as Comte said, that they are in some respects and to some extent, conservative. "

Only after Independence, the pace of deliberate modernization is accelerated in Indian

5. Cohen P.S. "Modern Social Theory"
village. So most of the people of recent generations are socialised with the traditional norms, values, beliefs etc. of the society. So they are conservative in nature. This conservatism creates hurdles in the path of modernization.

2) "The second reason for social persistence is that norms prescribe what is typical or predictable and that some men, at least, develop a vested interest in this."

In Indian society people belonging to higher castes, people of mature age and men compared to women have developed a vested interest in the established pattern of society. The problems of employed women are created because in many respects the employment of woman, poses a challenge to the vested interest groups in the traditional society.

3) "The third reason for social persistence is the force of legitimacy.... for it is not simply that men prefer the familiar but that they come to accept it as right, and that they must be highly motivated to oppose it."
In Indian society, the traditional norms, values and behaviour patterns have not only social sanctions but religious sanctions too e.g. caste rules have the sanction of religious scriptures. So because of double force of legitimacy to the existing social norms, modernization is opposed.

4) "The fourth reason, for persistence is the 'deadweight effect' of intergration between institutions, beliefs etc. Any pressure for change in one are of social life may be resisted because of the 'reinforcement effect' of different parts of social systems on one another."

In Indian society, the caste, the joint family and the village Panchayat are the main traditional institutions which enforce each other. So modernization is resisted.

5) "The final and some would say the most important reason for social persistence is vested interest; there are always some groups in a society who either have an interest in preserving a particular system or who prefer
the status quo to the uncertainties of particular type of change."

Indian rural society is made to change through deliberately introduced change in the form of developmental programme. People may be preferring the status quo to the unfamiliar change, because of element of uncertainty in it.

These are some of the factors responsible for the persistence of traditional Indian social structure. These factors resist modernization. The problems of the employed woman in rural areas should be viewed in the context of modernization. Once the factors of persistence in the traditional society are located, the hindrances to modernization would be removed. The problems of employed woman are created due to the thrust of modernity on traditional social structure which is not ready to welcome it.

Points To Ponder.

The study of the particular problems of these employed women has revealed that the woman
employee is exposed to conflicting sets of expectations to both the roles in such a way that complete fulfilment of both the roles is realistically impossible. In either case, deviance from the expected role is inevitable. Deviance in either case on the part of woman worker would not be favourable for carrying out developmental schemes meant for millions of rural people.

If the woman deviates from her expected role in the family, more problems would be created in the family, which in turn would affect her role performance as an employee adversely. If the woman worker is unable to adhere to the minimum expectations of her work-role that too, would prove detrimental to the developmental programmes. But we cannot dismiss the schemes envisaged for the welfare of the millions, merely because problems are created. Wisdom consists in spotting the defects and removing them. Dr. Dube has a word of praise for the developmental schemes in the following way.

"So much needs to be done in village India to-day that any organised effort like this is bound
to earn the praise of those who are interested in human welfare. " 6. T.S. Avinashlingam too, expresses the same view. " The community development movement and the Panchayati Raj organization continue to be the only means of rural development in our country, involving nearby 80% of our population. Therefore, this movement cannot be lightly dismissed as a failure..... Wisdom consists in spotting the defects and removing them so that the process of development continues unhindered. Therefore we should consider ways and means of improving it. " 7.

Womean workers in villages are appointed for the improvement of the lot of rural folk. Due to various problems engulfing them, these women workers are unable to play their occupational role properly. So if their problems are solved, the women workers would be able to play their work-role effectively. So let us consider the measures for eradicating the


difficulties of employed woman in rural areas, so that it would be possible for her to devote herself single mindedly to her professional role.

It is a common observation that the higher officials and persons occupying important positions in the Government services, are provided with many amenities to maintain their prestige in society. They are provided with fabulously furnished rent-free houses, paraphernalia of servants at their beck and call and many other allowances. Why not these employed women in rural area receive a small part of the charity of the democratic government wedded to the idea of socialism? These women too, play an important role in bringing about social change in rural community.

Much of the time and energy of the employed woman in rural areas is wasted in doing monotonous household work. To lighten her domestic burden the Government should give subsidies to employed woman to buy labour saving gadgets such as pressure cooker, gas ovens, electric-mixer, small refrigerators and other kitchen materials. This would serve the double purpose; one, reducing the hours of work in the
kitchen and secondly raising up the social prestige of these women, as these gadgets are regarded as the expressive symbols of higher classes in our society.

The employed woman needs help in her household work. As her pay is very meager, which does not usually exceed Rs. 300 per month, she can not afford servants. So some allowance for servants should be given to her.

In the present dissertation, it was noticed that considerable number of women have very young children. Employed mothers having young children should be given a special treatment by the Government. Extra allowances for childrens' food and for baby-sitters should be given to them. In addition to this, a sympathetic consideration should be offered in the transfer matters and in granting leaves of absence. Employed mothers having children above the age of six, should be given some monetary help for the education of their wards, so that their education would not suffer on account of the employment of their mothers. Mothers who would be transferred to remote villages would be able to make some arrangement in towns or cities for the education of their children
with this money. Our welfare State should not consider, bringing up of children as the sole responsibility of the parents. It should help those who urgently need it.

Five-days-week of reducing the daily hours of work by 2 hours at least, for the women workers is worth trying out, as we are interested in the results and not in the hours, of work. We should always keep in mind that employed woman carries over the double burden of home and work. Reduced hours of professional work would recoup her energy and in the long term would do justice to her work-role outside.

If the domestic problems are solved to the satisfaction of the employed woman, it is possible that she would be free from intense role conflict which was evidenced in the present study.

As we noted earlier, the problems on the occupational level have arisen by the virtue of the fact that these women have very low educational qualifications, and they are not adequately oriented to their new role. Vocational training is given to them. But along with it some arrangement for the training in the official procedures and formalities
for them is also needed. Women with higher qualifications are not attracted to these professions. If above mentioned amenities are offered to these jobs, there is every likelihood that women with higher qualifications would be attracted to these posts.

From the study, it was noted that these women are often transferred to distant places. So, many problems such as lack of help from relatives, insecurity, wastage of money in travelling etc. have arisen. If the women are transferred to the places nearer to or within their home districts, many of these problems would be solved. While thinking of work-role one has to take into consideration the contentment of the worker. If the worker is satisfied with his work and is free from personal worries, he would devote whole-heartedly to his work.

Mrs. Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, stress the same view point in their 'Womens' Two Roles.' Among those concerned with the welfare of the population, the view has increasingly gained ground that not only in the homes, but also in the organization of work and leisure pursuits, more account should be taken of
the fact that working men and women are not isolated individuals but members of families. The problem is how best to strike a balance between the economic interests of increased productivity and the social aim of contentment among the workers and their families alike. " 8.

From the data collected in the present study it is revealed that meagre possibilities of promotions exist in their jobs. Promotions are the mechanisms to elicit expected role performance in the economic field. So some more provisions should be there for promotions.

The study has brought to light that there are no united efforts on the part of these women, to get their problems solved. United efforts on the part of these women would help them to better their conditions.

Some of her problems owe their origin to the tendency of persistence of traditional social structure

in rural areas. As we are aware that change in social attitude, belief patterns, values etc. is a slow process which cannot be brought about by mere administrative measures. As observed by Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, "Social Progress always proceeds at an unequal pace in different fields of human activities. It has, as a rule, followed roughly the pattern, namely that new scientific inventions lead to technical advances with in their turn, are followed by social adjustments and reorganization; changes in general attitudes and opinions usually bring up the rear. " 9. So, slow hammering in the form of propaganda regarding different aspects of modernization is the need of the time.

Men too, play multiple roles, but they never make fuss of it, as women do. Women workers in rural areas, as pioneers, are bound to encounter certain difficulties. But with tolerant and humanitarian outlook they should bear their

difficulties with patience and sincerely devote themselves to their professional role, as the new role is bound up with the fates of millions of people. Padmini Sengupta alludes to the importance of developmental programme for rural people in the following words.

"One of the chief characteristics of modern India is the rapid development of community projects in rural areas. If the plans are implemented according to the schedule, sleeping villages would awaken into activity, defeating ignorance, poverty, superstition and reactionary tradition. Especially will women and children benefit from the many plans and projects so carefully drawn up for them. "

The employment of woman would have a far-reaching influence in our society. If she fails in playing her occupational role it would only damage the status of employed woman in society. If she triumphs over the difficulties, the lives of rural women would

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take on a new significance, as well, young women with necessary qualifications and aptitudes would look favourably towards these jobs.

On the theoretical plane, some comprehensive study should be undertaken of the deep-seated reasons of the choice of these jobs by the women workers in rural areas. Effects of the employment on important familial relations of the employed woman, such as marital, parental and kinship relations and in turn their effects on employment are worthy of studying. This would serve a double purpose. It would throw more light on success or failure of the development programmes and it would reveal the hidden factors related to the employment of woman in general.

The impressions gathered about the development programme for rural women folk is that it is not satisfactory. To make the programme a success, a study of cultural factors such as belief patterns, habits, world-views, social values, attitudes of rural women needs to be undertaken by the social scientists.