The treatise has so far attempted to comprehend – theoretically as well as conceptually – the portrayal of work in sociological literature. As a part of such comprehension, it makes an extensive endeavour to learn how the very phenomenon of work has been explicated in classical sociology, modern sociology and feminist epistemology. One feels methodologically compelled to glean the theoretical treasure pertaining to the notion of work before proceeding for field exploration to unearth its real connotation in actual ground realities. The rationale behind such gleaning is quite obvious. Attempting to ferret out the phenomenon of work – its multiple facets, meaning, character and effect – in empirical settings without equipping oneself with a sound theoretical base on the issue, as it is sometimes done, is like making bricks without straw. This vindicates the importance of the preceding theoretical background chapters developed so far. On the other hand, singular dependence on theoretical treasures to acquire wisdom on a particular issue would prove to be a one-dimensional exercise. Implicit in the argument is the idea that the inevitability of empiricism can never be ignored in the initiative of construction of knowledge. What is required is syncretism of theory and empiricism, which makes an academic endeavour methodologically compact. Therefore, it is aptly annunciated that it is through the prism of empirical insights and it is with reference to empirical proofs that knowledge (theory) renews itself, reconstructs itself and corroborates itself. It is in this context this chapter assumes significance. As an empirical exercise, it seeks to discover – from feminist and critical perspectives – the meaning of work in ground realities. As has been minutely explained in the introductory part, the focus of this empirical inquiry is manifold. In a nutshell, it aims at studying the following: the way women relate themselves to their work sphere/male colleagues/ assignments; the way they approach to influence their work; the way they perform, excel and maintain; the way they experience ‘work’ in their everyday life; the constraints they encounter; the way they, as professionals, perceive themselves and the way they are perceived by others; the influence/effect of work in their social life;
the way they juggle home and job; the way they prioritize, hierarchize and harmonize their manifold commitments; the way they evaluate themselves; the way they confront their constraints; in short, the way they experience, encounter and negotiate with the phenomenon of work in their everyday life.

METHODOLOGY

The research revolves around and focuses on four categories of women professionals, namely, women police, women academicians, women doctors and women administrators. This is purely an exploratory kind of research. The researcher has adopted twenty-five respondents from each category; that is, data have been collected from hundred women respondents. Needless to mention, the focus is purely on women working in organized sector.

The Field: Orissa has been taken as the site of empirical investigation. It has been situated in the northeastern part of the Indian peninsula. It is bounded by the Bay of Bengal on the east, West Bengal on the northeast, Jharkhand on the north, Chhattisgarh on the west and Andhra Pradesh on the south. In order to retain the property of representativeness, the researcher has encompassed all directions of the state – east, west, north and south – to interview respondents for the purpose.

Before proceeding further, it is appropriate to present a brief outline of the State under study. Orissa comprises of 4.74% of India’s landmass and 36.80 million people (2001 census). That is, the population of the State, according to the 2001 census is about 3.58% of the total population of the country. Nearly 85% of its population live in the rural areas and depend mostly on agriculture for their livelihood. The State has abundant mineral resources including precious and semi-precious stones. The total cultivable land of the state is nearly 65.59-lakh hectare. The sex ratio in the State i.e., number of females per 1000 males marginally increased from 971 in 1991 to 972 in 2001 in contrast to the all-India average, which increased from 927 to 933 during the same period. On the literacy front the achievement has been impressive as the literacy rate increased from 49.09% in 1991 to 63.1% in 2001 as against the increase from 52.1% to 64.8% at the national level during the same period. The male and female literacy rates, which were 63.1% and 34.7% in 1991, have increased to 75.3% and 50.5% respectively in 2001. Scheduled
Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in the State, as per 2001 census, was 60.82 lakh and 81.45 lakh respectively which was 16.5% and 22.1% of the total population of the State as against 16.2% and 22.2% in the previous census in 1991.

As regards the employment situation, the proportion of male workers to male population and female workers to female population in 2001 stood at 52.5% and 24.7% respectively. The proportion of women to total employees in the organized sector has increased from 12.41% in 2000 to 13.78% in 2003. The following table presents the employment position of women in the organized sector of the State.

Table-4.1

Employment of Women in the Organized Sector in Orissa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total employment</th>
<th>Proportion of women as percentage of total employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>801549</td>
<td>93367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>797287</td>
<td>99017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>805939</td>
<td>101762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>768735</td>
<td>102865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>767413</td>
<td>105784</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Economic Survey, 2004-2005, Govt. of Orissa

The proportion of women employees in the organized sector shows a positive trend. Out of 7.67 lakh employees in the organized sector during 2003, women employees accounted for 13.8% as against 13.4% during 2002. During the last five years (1999-2003), the number of women employees in the public sector has increased from 83,045 to 95,644 showing an increase of 15.2%.* In the light of the fore-cited facts, one can conclude that the intervention of women in public work domain is gradually increasing.

The Respondents: At the outset, it needs to be enounced, this is a qualitative research, where the study is purely exploratory. Before moving further, it would be wise to highlight certain assumptions that a qualitative study presupposes. Such a kind of study, as has been argued very often, is directed

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* The entire data relating to the brief profile of Orissa has been borrowed from *Economic Survey 2004-05*, Published by Government of Orissa.
• not towards fixed samples but towards flexible samples in size and types of subject;
• not towards random (probability) sampling but towards purposive (non-probability) sampling;
• not towards representativeness but towards suitability;
• not towards choosing a sample before the study has started but often while the study is in progress;
• not towards strictly defined size but towards convenient and suitable size.\(^1\)

It needs to be kept in mind that numerical boundary is not a characteristic feature of qualitative research. As Ahuja appropriately avers, in qualitative studies, sampling does not resort to numerical boundaries to determine the size of the sample. Similarly, when purposive or accidental sampling is employed, the researcher himself can decide the ‘sufficient’ number of respondents. In such cases, generalizations are concerned with quality rather than with quantity. Qualitative researchers make a choice about the kind of people who will be included in the study.\(^2\)

In the present study, the considerations that have guided the researcher in selecting the respondents are absolutely snowballing, purposive and convenience (accidental) in nature. These are varieties of non-probability sampling. Snowballing in the sense that the researcher begins with few respondents who are known and available to him. Subsequently, these respondents give other names who meet the criteria of research who in turn give more new names. This process is continued until ‘adequate’ numbers of persons are interviewed. Convenience is also known as accidental sampling. In this sampling, the researcher studies all those persons who are most conveniently available or who accidentally come in his contact. As regards the variety of purposive, the researcher intentionally and consciously chooses his respondents who, in his judgment, are thought to be relevant to the research topic and are easily available to him. The researcher has taken recourse to all the three types of non-probability sampling. The reason is quite compelling. As has already

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\(^1\) For an engrossing delineation of the issue, see Ram Ahuja, *Research Methods*, (Rawat; Jaipur/New Delhi: 2002). The postulates mentioned above can be found in this volume. p.184.

\(^2\) Ibid. p.185
Chapter Four

been said, the researcher is committed to study four varieties of women professionals i.e. doctors, police, academicians and administrators, whose detailed on-the-job profile is almost unavailable. In other words, no complete list of such female professionals could be made available from the desk of Orissa’s apex bureaucracy. For instance, there is no single governmental chart which could inform one regarding the total number of lady officials in Orissa administration along with their places of current posting. Everyone knows these are transferable jobs. Similarly, it was equally impossible to get detailed lists of lady doctors, police and academicians placement-wise. Thus, the task before the researcher was heavily cumbersome. He had to take the help of his known male officials to get information (including reference) regarding the location of female officials. He had to request each woman administrator to extend reference of other women administrators. Besides, the researcher used to move from one office to another in order to find out places having women officers. In the case of doctors, the researcher began with an interview with a known lady doctor, who in turn suggested the name of some more lady doctors along with their places of posting and thus the process kept moving. Apart from this practice, the researcher used to visit one hospital to another for the purpose of locating a woman doctor, because, not every hospital would have a woman doctor. The same practice was adopted to locate woman police. Not every general police station in Orissa has a Woman Sub-Inspector. Only certain select police stations are having posts for Women Sub-Inspectors. Of course, there are a few Mahila Thanas, which are having Women Sub-Inspectors in their premises. Again such Thanas are very few in number. The researcher had to develop an everyday habit of visiting general police stations to find out as to which police station was having the sanction of a Woman Sub-Inspector.

Likewise, the mode of contacting women academicians was also no different. However, it needs to be mentioned that the focus of the research is on gazetted women professionals in all sites of work adopted for the purpose. In order to retain a representativeness of some kind, the researcher has interviewed respondents from all parts of Orissa i.e. east, west, north and south. Telephonic conversation and face-to-face personal approach had been the operational ways through which appointment for interview was scheduled. Needless to say, the fieldworker used to visit one place/town/district to another, stay in lodging and cover
college, hospital, police station and governmental offices in those respective localities. While staying in a particular town or locality, he used to walk from one office to another, take a rickshaw to reach a police station, catch a town bus to reach a hospital or hire an auto rickshaw to arrive at a college. In a sense, each day devoted in this direction, has been both engaging, educative and, to say the least, tiresomely exhausting.

Fixing appointment with the respondents for the purpose of interview has been a tiring experience. The respondents being gazetted officials, it is not unnatural for them to be assigned any sudden task, which they cannot by pass. In such a case, the pre-fixed appointment gets cancelled and another fresh one is sought. Similarly, even if a lady doctor has assured an appointment hour for interview, there is every possibility that she might suddenly receive a phone call to attend to a serious patient just before/during the time of one's appointment. However, the researcher did not face any such difficulty with woman academicians. The most exhaustive part of the appointment agony relates to policewomen. In this case, appointments have been rescheduled twice, thrice and in some instances the researcher has to finally forgo certain frequently rescheduled appointments and proceed for the next police station. The policewoman is a professionally constrained controlled woman. As a 24-hour alert worker, she has to move immediately as and when she is informed of cases of violence/crime against women. In such a case, she is constrained to re-schedule the appointment, postpone it or cancel it, if need be.

The Interview: information for the purpose of research has been elicited with the help of interview guide. In the case of interview guide, the researcher initiates the interview with certain broad questions in mind. Subsequent questions emerge during the course of interview and also from the respondent's response itself. An interview guide helps in focusing attention on salient points of the study, securing comparable data in different interviews by the same interviewer. Interview guide serves its best purpose when the interviewer digests its various details. It is different from interview schedule in the sense that there is no fixed interview question format, which should be resorted to for the conduct of interview. On the other hand, it shares a logical similarity with interview schedule in that it is utilized for none other than interview itself. The kind of interview that has been undertaken by the researcher is an in-depth, direct, face-to-face qualitative one, which is not restricted to a mere
question-answer dialogue, between the interviewer and the interviewee. Though it is an interview, the researcher goes much beyond that. His quest is not merely to elicit response; rather, his quest is also to study the work place, the respondent's colleague-colleague interaction, and her equation with her clients, the entire work environment in which she operates. In other words, it is a kind of detailed ethnographic study of women professionals in Orissa.

However, the researcher's intention is not to acquire the ready-made answer to his queries, but to educe the actual information that relates genuinely to woman's (read woman professional's) life-world. Thus, the interview setting is not limited to her work place only. The field-worker had to visit her residence to talk to her either prior to the interview or after it. The idea is to be informal, casual, free, sociable, and familiar with her so that one will be in a position to win her confidence and trust. He has also talked to people outside her work place, and her neighbours outside her residence. Thus, the kind of interview the researcher has undertaken transcends the fixity of interview setting (place) and its time. It is a sort of detailed, informal, in-depth interview that used to last for three to four hours on the same day with one respondent.

When one proceeds to approach gazetted officials of a State, one should be aware of the impression that they are not ordinary women; rather, they are persons having their own professional-personal vanity and pride, whims, arrogance, assertiveness and feeling of superiority. It is not that easy to approach such women and convince them to assent for an interview. This is more so when the woman in question is in an administrative position or is a doctor. Thus, it is not necessary that every potential respondent one approaches and persuades will give her consent to be interviewed. In fact, there would always be some individuals who are 'impermeable' and 'impervious' to any kind of persuasions. One should not be disheartened by such imperviousness. Rather, it has to be absorbed as another variety of experience that fieldwork offers to the fieldworker.

Moreover, it is often said that the sex/gender of the researcher plays a vital role in eliciting response from respondents. It is also argued that belonging to the same sex, positively contributes to the process of interview and not belonging to the same sex is a handicap in interview. However, it is very difficult to go by such generalization. We all belong to a human world that consists of both males and
females, who belong to the planet called earth. It is not that men have come from Mars and women belong to Venus. The crux of the argument is that it is possible even for a man to engage a woman in detailed in-depth conversation and win her confidence. Yes, it may be true, on certain queries that relate to her deeply personal-private matters or matters relating to her sex, or issues concerning her familial stress, being a male in such situation certainly emerges to be the biggest handicap.

The fieldwork context is often more complicated. Sometimes, the researcher develops the perception that had he not been a male, things would have worked better for him. Although he remains undaunted by such perceptions, he cannot afford to remain indifferent to the unavoidable query that persistently haunts his imagination: what way gender, as the most obvious ascribed factor, shapes one’s access to the field, information and the interview. It is believed that women fieldworkers are more accessible, person-oriented and communicative and less threatening than men and this makes the interaction of the fieldworker easier.3

Although there is some grain of truth in such belief, it is very difficult to accept it in toto. But again, it cannot be scotched uncritically. There are many scholars who subscribe to this view. For instance, Whitehead and Conaway conclude that females are more sensitive than males to the field situation and are therefore more likely to attempt to understand the systematic relationship between the fieldwork process and the field worker’s sense of self.4 The view of Wertheim is also no different. The scholar annunciates that women fieldworkers have an immense advantage over male researchers because lady sociologists can enter both women’s and men’s world.5 Though there are competing opinions that confirm the view that being a woman fieldworker facilitates a lot, it would be an oversimplification to assume that women fieldworkers can easily get access to women’s world. The reason is quite complex. To begin with, it is not necessarily true that women’s world is always open to all women. Second, not all women fieldworkers are equally persuasive, sensitive and communicative. Third, the question of individual difference can never be ruled out. Four, to assume that woman

4 Ibid. p. 4
5 Ibid. p. 5.
population is naturally predisposed to remain averse as well as allergic to male fieldworkers is starkly preposterous. Fifth, there is no scientific discovery or evidence, which conclusively shows that women in general are more persuasive, sensitive and communicative than men. Six, even a male fieldworker can establish better rapport with a lady respondent if he is well equipped in communication skills. The point that one intends to put forth is that gender alone is not enough to win full acceptance into female concerns. It mostly depends upon the all round personality of the fieldworker. To stretch it further, it hinges upon the art of the researcher: how he initiates, approaches, communicates, asks, elicits, engages, identifies and wins. In sum, interview is an art form.

True, the researcher was aware of such stereotypes surrounding gender. Nevertheless, he has completely succeeded in overcoming them in his fieldwork experience. He has been able to engage women in in-depth, dense and intense communication and elude the most sensitive as well as private information directly concerning their personal life. This will be amply perspicuous in succeeding analysis. Of course, the interviewer took brief notes during the interview, but in such a manner that it neither distracted the interviewee nor the interviewer. After the fag end of each interview, which usually lasted for three to four hours, the interviewer used to ask the respondent to fill up a pro forma that elicited information regarding her social profile i.e. name, designation place of posting, total years of service rendered, permanent address, number of siblings, number of children, caste etc.

In an ethnographic study of this kind, that requires an in-depth/informal conversation, what is important is the fieldworker’s persuasive language. Such language is vital for creating an ambience of trust, confidence and comradeship. Such language is to be accompanied by another integral property, that is, observation. The goal is to explore the “inner” as well as the “outer”. As F.J. Roethlisberger and W.J. Dickson justifiably aver, the interviewer should listen not only to what the respondent wants to say but also what she does not want to say or cannot say without help (silence can mean either desire to avoid rehearsing, painful experiences or indifference). Implicit here is the idea that for a researcher, it is not

\[\text{The authors intend to opine that the researcher must remain continually alert to the language/response of his respondent: both verbal and non-verbal. For an illuminating learning on the issue read P.V. Young, Scientific Social Survey and Research, (Prentice Hall of India; New Delhi: 1992), pp. 242-245.}\]
only important to observe her speech, but also her visage. Observing her visage is equally important as like observing her voice. The target is not solely to comprehend what she reveals; it is also germane to know what she conceals. And this throws down the gauntlet for the fieldworker to extract what she tries to 'conceal.' For this, the fieldworker’s mind needs to be extraordinarily sharp, alive, intense, earnest, zealous and zetetic, curious and questerist. It proceeds by enquiring, observing and engaging. For such an intimate observation, what is utmost required is a mind that is inquisitive, a mind that has no distortions or prejudices of conclusion, of formula or beliefs.

Eliciting response from the respondent particularly in an in-depth, intense interview is not based on any scientific technique. This is more so when the response in question relates to certain sensitive issues that, if sincerely answered, has the potential to affect the dignity of the respondent or the security of her job. Under such circumstances, many-a-times, the respondents tend to evade or outsmart the interviewer. Subterfuge becomes the name of the game. It all rests on the art, flexibility and skill of the fieldworker as to evolve a strategy so as to counter such subterfuge, and involve the interviewee to obtain the authentic answer.

Certain ethical considerations have prevented the fieldworker from using electronic recording device to lively record the entire dialogue in toto. To begin with, the researcher has not only to contribute to the existing epistemology of his discipline or give a boost to the policy-making process of society; he has also to be faithful to his respondents. He has got the sacrosanct responsibility of religiously guarding the anonymity of his respondents, where need be. This is especially so when the respondent, for instance, a policewoman unravels the murky story of her male bosses’, colleagues'/peers’ or in-laws’ corruptive behaviour or acrid gestures towards her persona or her professional role. It has to be assumed that a woman’s workplace experience is not necessarily a happy story. As it has been discovered in the field, her experience in workplace is also one of agony and ordeal, conflict and constraints, acrimony and embarrassment. True to his spirit as a critical investigator, the fieldworker has astoundingly succeeded in moulding his interviewee and extracting from her the agonizing, pathetic, abnormal experiences that plague her dignity and enthusiasm. Nobody will be stimulated to divulge such information that
will, in the long run, hamper her dignity, security of job. Even at times it may cost her job. In such cases, it is natural that each interviewee would try to conceal such unconventional/peculiar experience. And the challenge before the fieldworker is to unearth those facts that otherwise remain obscure, cryptic and opaque. As will be clear in subsequent discussions, there are certain questions whereby the interviewee is required to comment on her equation with her male colleagues and their perception of/attitude/behaviour towards her. In such questions the task before the fieldworker is to draw out those details that she attempts to keep under wraps. To such questions, she as a professional, *ex cathedra*, is spilling the beans on/against her male officials of her department. This not only needs a great deal of grit and gumption on her part, but it also demands a degree of informal, familiar, confidence-building and rapport-building art on the part of the fieldworker. Her answer is not as simple, straightforward, problem-free and risk-neutral as it is supposed to be. Not only does she express her dern agony, but also she spills the beans regarding (male) colleagues' shenanigans and dishonest behaviour. She not only utters but also inveighs. So under such circumstances, the use of any recording/documenting equipment would only discourage the respondent to reveal her repressed experience as it has the potential to ruin her professional and personal life. Instead of exposing her voice before *voice-recorder* completely, she would prefer to remain cagey on sore points. And what is more important for the fieldworker is her open-ended voice that releases her spontaneous speech than the *speech-recorder* device. Hence, in concinnity with his commitment to the ethics of social science research and his *duty-boundness* to the respondents, the researcher has deliberately withheld/changed their names wherever necessary.

To reiterate further, with the kind of sampling cited before, the fieldworker has interviewed women professionals from almost all parts of Orissa; for instance, from Cuttack in the east to Sambalpur in the west, and Rourkela in the north to Ganjam in the south. The succeeding discussion revolves around the work life of women professionals in the following order: 'policewomen, women doctors, women academicians and women administrators.
Before proceeding for the analysis part of the empirical observations, the researcher intends to state two things unambiguously. First, he has deliberately ignored the analysis of caste as a causal factor even though he has collected information about the informants' caste background in the process of collecting their social profile. The reason is quite deeper. The researcher has thoroughly analyzed those factors that have actually affected, effected, influenced, shaped and impinged upon women's employment viz. their financial background, level of educational attainment, urge to attain financial freedom, volition, societal/public image of the job, lure of the job (i.e., power, prestige and privilege) and the like. The role of caste as a factor on the score has become absolutely zero. The researcher has hence not felt the need to analyze and delineate the role of caste in the forthcoming chapters. Second, the researcher's sample of lady doctors does not include any of the clinic-centric ones. This is not without any valid reasons. While conducting a study of this kind, availability of respondents is one of the prime factors that should be taken into consideration. The researcher, for instance, has faced an uphill task in his search for women doctors. The profession of doctor, it is worthwhile to mention here, is one of the most lucrative professions. For a doctor, profession is service and time is money. This is equally true both for male and female doctors. During the course of his field study, the researcher has made several rounds to hospitals/residence of lady doctors. Many of the lady doctors refused outright to spare some time for giving him the interview. For those working in the hospitals, the service to the patients was more important than giving interview to a researcher and the situation was much more worse (for the researcher) while approaching the lady doctors practising in their private clinics beyond the official hours in their places of employment. In fact, it had a demoralizing effect on the researcher, when on a single day, his request for interview was turned down by five lady doctors working in their respective clinics. After the initial endeavours to interview such clinic-centric doctors, the realization that dawned upon his mind was that any attempt to convince those doctors would only end up as a pipe dream. He, therefore, stopped making such futile attempts further. No wonder, hence, that the researcher's sample of 25 lady doctors does not include any of such clinic-centric doctors.
Chapter Four

One thing needs to be made laud and clear here. The unavailability of
doctors practising in clinics does not handicap this study in any way. When we are
talking about a lady doctor practising in her own clinic after serving in the public
hospital where she is formal employed, any discussion regarding her facing the
problem of balancing the work-family dichotomy becomes redundant. Logically
speaking, a lady doctor rushing to her private clinic from the place of her
employment would not do so if there were any familial problems waiting for her at
home. She is a woman who conforms to the Weberian notion of instrumental
rationality where time is money and money is all. It can, hence, be assumed that she
is empowered beyond the purview of our discussion and, perhaps, beyond the level
of our times. While women in other professions are jostling for a balance between
home and 'paid work' here is a category of women who are not perturbed
by/concerned with any such hurdles.

SECTION—I
WOMEN IN UNIFORM: THE (MAHILA) POLICE

The profession of police has long been perceived as a man’s job in public-
imagination. It goes without saying the ideas that ineluctably haunt our
consciousness are brutality, violence, physical torture, rigidity, order, law,
ruthlessness and the like. When one thinks of the profession of police, one is
ultroneously confronted with a slew of shibboleths: that is, it is masculine, male-
dominated, female-unfriendly, and anti-feminine. In short, it is a man’s job, which is
absolutely masculine in nature. Therefore, the idea of ‘women and police’ has long
been viewed as something seriously incompatible whereas that of ‘man and police’
is seen usual, compatible and acceptable.

As one begins to encounter the scenario of police profession in hodiernal
times, one witnesses the genesis of a metamorphic shift. Women are gradually
joining the profession, which was so far being held as a male preserve. Not solely
IPS (Indian Police Service), starting from the constabulary level to the upper
echelons of police service, women have started taking up the gauntlet and
intervening in the sphere. It is really challenging for a woman to pursue a job in
public work sphere, that too, in a domain that is considered exclusively masculine. Thus, it is sociologically as well as methodologically important to make a sense of such metamorphosis. It is really stimulating to examine and phenomenize the challenging work that certain women dare to pursue and the historic transition that the profession of police is currently witnessing. Along with the broad/dominant questions raised in the introductory chapter, this particular section throws light on certain specific issues. For instance, does her entry as a woman make any difference in the profession of police? Does she feel that it is a male-friendly, masculine job? Earlier, the cases were handled by a male police officer. Now a policewoman handles them. Is there any difference in approach? Or, does she deal with the cases in the same conventional manner as has hitherto been accomplished by her male counterparts? In line with the broad idea of interviewing officials of the gazetted variety, data have been collected from Woman Sub-Inspectors (WSIs) and Woman Inspectors (WIs). Not only has the fieldworker visited five mahila thanas located at Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Rourkela, Sambalpur and Berhampur, but also he has reached several general police stations spread across Orissa for the purpose.

Before analyzing the data pertaining to the fundamental issues, it is appropriate to have a broad understanding of the social profile of the 25 respondents studied in Orissa.

**Education:** Table 4.2 shows 68% of the respondents are just graduates. What is exciting to pay attention is that 32% of the respondents are highly qualified; they are postgraduates, who have joined the job of a cop.

**Table 4.2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduation</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parental Financial Background: A perusal of table 4.3 posits a significant outline that is palpably intriguing. Before, interpreting the data, it is proper to simplify the terms used by the fieldworker to delineate respondents’ financial background. By ‘poor’, the researcher refers to those just managing their bare minimum necessity of life, who are working just to arrange for their hand to mouth existence. This category includes small/marginal farmers, wage labourers, class four employees and the like. The term ‘average’ includes people employed in secretarial jobs or those in similar occupational positions i.e. typists, schoolteachers, personal assistants clerks and the like. ‘Decent’ is employed to mean those found in just gazetted level position or in its peripheral position, i.e. inspectors, sub-inspectors, assistant sub-inspectors, lecturers and the like. In the category of ‘good’ financial background, the fieldworker locates people in better position than those included under ‘decent’. For instance, it includes, college Reader, Vice-Principal, Principal and the like. However, it needs to be stated that the meaning of such categories (that of the poor, average, decent and good) remains the same for all purposes on the score throughout the thesis. The following table denotes more than it displays. Most of the respondents who have opted for the cop’s job, hail from families having average financial status. More than one third of policemen belong to very poor families. Only one-fifth of policewomen are from families having decent and good economic return. To stress it further, 80% of the policewomen have come from families having poor and average financial base. This insinuates the kind of correlation that exists between family’s economic base and the choice of the job.

Table 4.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The detailed ramifications of this issue will be extensively deliberated upon in subsequent discussions.

As one ferrets out the plethora of issues presented so far, the insights that one obtains from the field are quite flabbergasting, intriguing and heart wrenching. Before going into the details of women’s experience as working women, it is imperative to examine what led, inspired and compelled them to join police department, a domain that has hitherto been segregated as an exclusive masculine sphere.

a. Why Police? Exploring the Explanations

It is evident from the revelation of respondents that the factors that have moved women to opt for the profession of police are three in number. They are (i) deprivation (abject poverty), (ii) the urge to attain financial independence and (iii) volition. Table 4.4 represents the statistical view of the explanation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deprivation</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volition</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

i) Deprivation: Deprivation, here, refers to financial deprivation. Needless to mention, in the societal convention of Orissa, women are not preferred to be cops. The reason is simple. It is stigmatized against them. Data reveal that 44% of the respondents have taken up the job primarily due to sheer economic deprivation of their parental family. Despite their sheer unwillingness, they have been constrained not to say no to the job, even though the prevailing social convention is against their entry. They have joined out of complete helplessness. At a time when the family is facing acute financial crisis and is caught in a state of abject poverty, a woman has no choice other than taking up any employment that is immediately available to her.
Or for that matter, this is apodictic in a situation where she has to build the educational career of her younger siblings or support her widowed mother/pay for her father’s illness and there is no other financial source to sustain such responsibility. The situation is in complete consonance with what Karl Marx writes in his book *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Marx stands justified when he postulates that a person goes to work not out of volition or his idiosyncratic spontaneity but as a compulsion for the survival of himself and his family. And, as it is empirically observed the constraint that a woman confronts in contemporary context is no different from what a worker encounters in Marxian parlance. Moreover, the proposition of S.M. Lipset and R. Bendix is immensely germane to comprehend the scenario in a more meaningful manner. Perhaps Lipset and Bendix stand vindicated when they annunciate that the work that an individual pursues, the career that one chooses or for that matter the job that one aspires for, are solely influenced as well as determined by one’s family’s socioeconomic location. One’s family’s socioeconomic location compels one to take up the immediately available job with whatever educational qualification one has.

**ii) Financial Independence:** 48% of the respondents opined that initially they were not fixated on cop’s job; but they are in the profession simply because it is the first job that they have qualified from among many other jobs. The prime objective for such women remains to attain the goal of financial independence and not to remain a liability either on parents or on the husband, if married. Thus explanation-ii differs from explanation-i in the sense that in case of the latter (explanation-i, that is, deprivation), women join the job as a compulsion exclusively owing to sheer financial deprivation of their family. And they join against their own willingness; whereas in the case of the former (that is, explanation-ii, i.e., financial independence), women’s choice of the job is guided by their proclivity for attaining financial autonomy at an individual level. Moreover, such women do not necessarily have any specific fascination for police; but they do persist in the profession, as it

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7 Marx argues the worker is compelled to go for his work, as he is incapable to exercise any choice. This vividly corresponds to the policewoman who joins the job, as she is equally incapable to exercise any choice. For a lucid grasp, see Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, (Progress Publishers; Moscow: 1977), pp. 21.33

8 Marx’s *economic determinism* has been re-visited by Lipset and Bendix. For them, it is *socioeconomic determinism* that defines one’s life chances. Thus, Marxsian notion of *economic determinism* gets reconstructed as *socioeconomic determinism*. For an illuminating discussion, see S.M. Lipset and R. Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*, (University of California; Berkley & Los Angeles: 1959/1967), pp. 197-198.
was the first job offer that came their way among the several jobs they had applied for. Again, explanation-ii draws similarity with explanation-i in the sense that these women did not have any specific penchant for police profession. Talking about explanation-ii, what is limpid from the information accumulated in the field is that, police job for such women has never been a dream or a goal: their predilection is unambiguously clear, that is, gaining financial independence and consequently, getting liberation from perpetual dependence on family members. In Parsonian terminology, their attitude to their profession is one of quid-pro-quo.9

iii) Volition: Although very few in numbers, there are women who feel intrinsically ignited to suppress the dogma and take up the gauntlet. Field-view manifests that only 8% of the respondents are in the profession out of their own volition to serve despite knowing the fact women are undesirable in police and their decision in this regard may cost them their marital prospects, dignity, personal space and familial commitments. On the other hand, it is also clear from table-4.4 that 92% of the respondents have joined the profession devoid of any such volition. But the remaining 8% of women feel proud to be different and exceptional. At a time when the dominant mode in society is utterly hostile to see women in uniform, there are also gritty women, though miniscule in proportion, who are determined to garble all shibboleths, make a difference in the prevailing social order and set the trend in a trailblazing way. This certainly represents a welcome trend in the larger struggle for disentangling women from the shackles of hegemonic patriarchy and its inveterate dogma.

b. Police: Masculine and Male-Friendly?

It is very often argued that police is a masculine job and it affects femininity of females who join this profession. For instance, Garskof advocates that when

9 In a way, explanation-ii can be explained in Parsonian discourse. Parsons propone the occupational role is a type of contractual relationship between workplace and the individual. Quid refers to individual's commitment to continued performance as a worker; quo refers to the monetary compensation that he gets in exchange of his performance. Thus, the entire negotiation is one of quid-quo exchange. Scholars like Herbert Spencer, Max Weber, Ralph Dahrendorf, S.M. Lipset, R. Bendix, John H. Goldthrope, Herbert Marcuse, W.H. Whyte and Talcott Parsons share certain degree of similarity in the sense that all of them take recourse to the analysis of organizations, industries, bureaucracies and modern economies. But Parsons differs from all of them in the sense that he is the only scholar who has unambiguously put forward the quid-pro-quo dimension of worker-work relationship in explicit terms. For an enriched education, see Talcott Parsons & Neil J. Smelser, Economy and Society, (Routledge & Kegan Paul; London: 1956/1969), p. 114.
women take up roles of authority, become active and independent, assertive and firm; they are viewed as being unfeminine.\textsuperscript{10} Sherman states that the profession of police connotes the predominance of male attributes (viz., authority, assertion, brutality, physical strength, roughness), working at old hours, dealing with criminals/deviants.\textsuperscript{11} Our field-view depicts no different story. All the respondents subscribe to the view that police is both masculine and male-friendly. Not astonishingly, such response is in line with further calcifying the inveterate dogma that it is an exclusive male preserve. Says one respondent:

To sit in the Thana or working along with male colleagues and culprits is an everyday struggle. Each rebuke, vituperative or punishment to the culprits begins with foul, vulgar, obscene and bawdy words. Most of such words made by policemen have their reference to sex and body parts. It is really challenging for a woman to hear such words or be a party to such exercise. The contemporary policewoman does not feel squirmy about such vulgarity/obscenity. Moreover, culprits are beaten and kicked mercilessly in Thanas, which is again another difficult task for women to witness or conduct such act. The Thana is filled with policemen except one or two female officials. Thus, it is uncomfortable as well as suffocating for a woman to work in a place that is surrounded by men and guided by masculine ethos.

Field insights demonstrate that though it is a masculine job, women professionals are mature enough to be adaptive to the demands of the job and be reconciliatory with the unavoidable adversities. According to the respondents, police job has been found to be male-friendly for the following reasons:

- It requires round-the-clock alertness.
- It requires severe verbal and physical abuse to be made to the culprits.
- It needs physical fitness throughout the year.
- It pre-supposes that a police personnel does not have any immediate/extra liability.

These considerations are regarded as ‘essential conditions’ that the profession of police requires. Cent percent of the respondents explain that all these


considerations are antithetical to and incompatible with being a woman. The reason is obvious. As a woman it is very difficult to remain nonchalant to one’s children, biological menstrual cycle, pregnancy, childbirth as well as one’s family. Moreover, all such considerations are negatively correlated with married professionals. The reason is so obvious that it barely needs to be stated. Replies a Woman Sub-Inspector (WSI):

The difference between police and other jobs is that the former requires 24-hours alertness. A woman may possibly strike a balance between home and office if she is pursuing a job other than that of the police. She can do justice to her police job only if she sacrifices on her personal front and remains a life-long spinster. That is, women police should not marry and if they marry, they should quit the job.

Empirical evidence suggests that marriage, motherhood, wifehood and womanhood are essentially contradictory/antagonistic to a cop’s profession, a profession that requires round-the-clock complete physical engagement as well as fitness. The insight obtained from fieldwork negates the much-debated view asserted by Kanwaljeet Deol. Deol enounces that women are suitable for police work. The reason she cites is in line with one’s conventional thinking. To her, women possess the innate qualities of empathizing, seeing other people’s perspectives and high emotional strength that can enhance the capacity of police. Based on such reason, Deol asserts that women are especially suited for police work.\textsuperscript{12} Deol might be correct when she says that women are more empathetic, sympathetic and emotionally stable. But the contention is, these are not the essential conditions that the profession of police requires. The essential conditions that the profession requires, which our respondents have already told us, are much more different, complex and problematic. And going by such essential conditions, as claimed by respondents, one can safely conclude that the job of a police is especially not suitable for women.

c. Efficiency: Is it Sex-Neutral?

The general assumption in public imagination might run in the following manner: that policemen are much more efficient than policewomen. But our empiric insight educed from interviewees discepts such dogmatized beliefs in the strongest

\textsuperscript{12} Deol’s conclusion is one-dimensional: women are suited for police because they are more empathetic and emotionally stable. See Kanwaljeet Deol, “Women Suitable for Police Work”, in Hindustan Times, 29.11.2003, p. 15.
possible manner. Cent percent of the respondents reply that women are equally efficient as men. But the difference is, men’s efficiency always appears transparent and that of the women remains perpetually opaque, as we have been using a patriarchal lens to differentiate, delineate, discriminate and dogmatize such efficiency. As a WSI contends:

How can you stigmatize women’s performance and hand out an unconditional clean-chit to men’s efficiency? Be it a lathi or a revolver; it performs the same function. It does not matter whether it is in the hands of a woman or that of a man.

All the respondents concur that police job may be a male-friendly one, but a woman can also do it. The contention appears quite apodictic. Mita, for example, an achiever, unafraid of being alone, is almost like a male in razing down conventions, conventional emotions, in cutting through domestic fetters and in functioning in her police duty no less than male. Let’s see another example. Small starts precede big bashes. The policewoman in question is Asha. Initially a low-ranking policewoman, now she heads a *Mahila* police station. Before the gritty female attained this pinnacle, it was a story of dreary days of traveling from her home for the pursuit of education – a privilege of those who can afford it – that she can never forget.

For woman, it is a challenging job; but not something unachievable. As it has been found, there are also exceptionally successful policewomen, who have been the subject of jealousy of their male colleagues. Non-recognition does not necessarily imply non-performance. Likewise, womanhood does not essentially explain inefficiency. The point that appears quite perspicuous is that efficiency may vary from individual to individual; it is not sex-linked. In other words, efficiency does not necessarily vary according to the sex of the individual.

d. Competency, Professionalism, Prejudice and the Issue of Sexual Harassment

Even more than 50 years after our ‘tryst with destiny’, Indian democracy has made very little democratic éclat on people’s imagination on certain issues. The department of police has been no exception. Not only the public, but also some policemen have got a very cheap notion of women police. It is quite luculent from empirical insights that their male colleagues see women police as casual, non-committed, free-and-easy, non-professional, money-minded employees. Cent percent of the respondents opine that they are seen first as a woman; then as an
official. They are seen as women, who are not consciously protective of their personal character and who have no compunction in reciprocating sexual overtures of male colleagues, whenever approached. Snobbish and snooty behaviour is an everyday experience. Narrates Surama, a WSI:

Policemen can come and go at any point of time. They evade office duty on the pretexts like dropping the child at school, bringing medicine for wife, getting headache, bringing the child from school, treating guests at home and the like. But their loose professionalism is never questioned. Ironically, when we ask for similar favour, which may be genuine in nature, it is recorded/maintained officially. Our performance is always under supervision, scrutiny and surveillance. We are under perpetual tension to prove our competency, professionalism, honesty, sincerity and commitment in manifest terms. Policewomen have got more challenges, i.e. they have to appear strictly professional, be 24-hour alert and they have to manifestly show that they do not have any familial responsibility or any extra-job responsibility. We perform with equal/more competency as our every action is strictly scrutinized and suspected. There is always a compulsive urge within us to prove our sincerity and capability as police personnel.

It is said that a job model is used to evaluate men’s work and a gender model is used to analyze women’s work. The experience of policewomen suggests no different story. Cent percent of the interviewees experience that their male colleagues do not see them as career women. Some of them even go to the extent of revealing that they are viewed as non-serious women working primarily for a mere income and who shall not hesitate to offer themselves sexually in exchange of a mere on-the-job favour. The point that is intended to raise here is that even the workplace of a woman is not a friendly one. It is also one of hierarchy, stereotype, hegemony, double standard, dishonesty and exploitation. Reveals a respondent:

Certain male police personnels camouflage as well-wishers/brotherly comrades and manage to win the good will of a policewoman in anticipation of sexual favours. Still the patriarchal shibboleth casts its baleful demands on men’s mind. It requires that a woman must genuflect before men. Many policemen develop expectations — very often, sexual expectations — from us in exchange of every proactive favour they extend. Paradoxically, they develop a sense of hostility the moment woman refuses to kowtow to their whims and desires.

The insights emanating from the field might appear quite shocking. But it is hard to remain indifferent to the agony, ordeal, experience, discrimination, exploitation and harassment of policewomen in their own workplace. The maudlin manner in which they express their repressed suffocating experience is very pathetic to hear. For instance, responds a WSI:

We are seen as lovable wench, inefficient professionals and, at times, females bereft of femininity, as we have plumped for a masculine job. Ironically, we are, very often, seen as object of gratification of carnal desires. Certain policemen preen themselves to be our wardens; that we work in their station. Thus, often, they never mind in making unwelcome adventures or sexual overtures.

Male-chauvinist policemen may find such revelations sardonic. Again the proportion of such chauvinists is no less. Many-a-times, they are very explicit in their prejudice. During his fieldwork, even the researcher has heard policemen exuding sarcastic/coloured/passing references directed towards the respondent, that too, in the most bawdy/vulgar terms. This is symptomatic of the kind of male chauvinism with which they encounter their female colleagues. Reveals a WSI:

A woman in our department has a compulsion of being always at par with men. This persists as a typical problem haunting every policewoman. Problems compound when some policemen want a female official to entertain them while on duty and fill up the absence of their wives. Otherwise, she has to pay for her disobedience on one pretext or the other.

While exploring the issue of sexual exploitation and harassment at workplace, it has also to be realized that the relationship between a policeman and a policewoman is not always one of exploitation. In some cases, it is also one of reciprocal love, consented romance, and willful intimacy. Moreover, such reciprocal sex involving two police personnel of opposite sexes is not as reciprocal as it appears always. At times such reciprocity, consent and willfulness have proved to be extremely violent in implication. In fact, some women have lost their lives owing to their involvement in physical romance. Thus, while understanding the conundrum of sexual harassment, the phenomenon of physical love has also to be sufficiently recognized. For instance, if the report published in national dailies is to be considered, the Orissa police have recently cracked the whip on ‘lover boys’ in its force. It is now keeping tabs on romances among junior officers as media reports of
"controversies" are giving the department a bad name. Some officers have been transferred to discourage such romances. Romances in the force first came under the scanner after two sensational killings rocked the Orissa police in 2003. One Pradeep Seth, an Assistant Sub-Inspector at Rourkela, shot dead a WSI named Mamata Mohanty because she wanted to get married to someone else. Seth and Mohanty had apparently become 'intimate'. Similarly in another incident, an IIC named Mrutyunjay Panda of Kanpur police station in Cuttack shot dead his junior lady colleague Manorama Basantrai under similar circumstances. It would be too simplistic to brush aside the instance cited above as mere sporadic/isolated incidents. Those could rather be few among the many instances, which have come to limelight and got media attention. There could be many such occurrences, which might have been kept under wraps on account of personal/departmental compulsions. The point that one intends to intromit is that while investigating the issue of sexual harassment, the 'romantic' angle should never be eschewed. As one WSI would confide to the researcher:

It is not always that sexual camaraderie is a consequence of male personnel's exploitative urge. Sometimes, it is also reciprocal in nature. In fact, the WSIs have to go far mandatory night shift for one-third days of a month. It may so happen that a lone woman police and a male police may be in the police station at night. Being a mortal human being, any of them may be in a weak physiological/emotional state in late hours of the night. It is not always humanly possible to resist one's temptations if approached/given favourable responses by a colleague from the opposite sex. But it becomes a problem if the one night fling is carried forward. Later on it may so happen that either of them may disagree to convert the companionship to a marriage. Very often, as it comes out, the male colleague who refuses to get married to a 'woman in khaki' ditches the female colleague. In other cases, if a woman police later on refuses to carry forward the companionship, the married/unmarried male police may get irritated and makes attempts to 'punish' her. Most often, it is the woman police who is at the receiving end.

At another level, everybody maintains officially that police department has no gender bias. For instance, Pratima Sharma, a Station House Officer — with the Delhi Police, makes a public statement that Delhi Police has no gender bias. But one discovers the actual victimization of policewomen and the extent to which crime

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14 For a succinct information, see, Soumyajit Pattnaik, "Smitten Orissa Cops Under Watch" in Hindustan Times, July 16, 2005, p. 6
15 Pratima Sharma, "Delhi Police Has No Gender Bias" in The Pioneer, January 27, 2004, p.1

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fighters are male chauvinists as one goes beyond what is stated officially and statistically and interacts with such women. To say that only some individual male police inspectors are male chauvinists is to say the half-truth. Rather, the entire department, at times, turns hostile to women. Not surprisingly, even a Director General of Police (DGP) of Orissa once released his patriarchal chauvinism in a very shocking manner. In his impression, women in police force are more a liability than an asset. They need security from their male counterparts and create problems for the force instead of helping them out.  

Like every democratic ritual, various women’s groups vehemently protested DGP’s statement. And as we all know, there is a thing called governing elites’ prerogative which is enjoyed only by legislators, politicians, top bureaucrats and other constitutional authorities, which has the power of safeguarding such governing elites against their own acts of verbal commission and omission. This prerogative is that of saying ‘I am misquoted’. That’s what the DGP of Orissa exactly resorted to. He used his Brahmastra of ‘I am misquoted’ and saved himself from interrogation of any sorts. Even male cops’ attitude towards women cops may not be different in other parts of the country. For instance, an English daily once reported, Delhi cops have little faith in their female colleagues.  

The fact emanates here is that it is unnatural to find policemen gushing praise for policewomen. And our empiric observations as well as the everyday newspaper reports stand testimony to such a painful proposition. One confronts a paradox. On the one hand, we are celebrating women’s entry into police; on the other hand, we are questioning her efficiency on gender lines (saying that she cannot perform), stigmatizing her worth and dubbing her a liability. This is like putting sweets on one’s tongue and blaming the person for having swallowed it.

It is learnt from field experience that the workplace ambience does not seem to be ‘encouraging’ for females. The metagrobolizing idea of woman as a sexual being and as a domestic being still pervades educated minds. A policewoman is usually seen as casual, non-serious, inefficient and non-committed employee, whose head office lies in her family (if married) and who joins work only for income. She is also seen as a lovable, sexual, free-and-easy wench who should willingly gratify

her male colleagues' beastly concupiscence by bonking with them on the sly. Howsoever competent, efficient and professional-minded she is, the odds seem stacked against the female professional. The discrimination against policewomen and their allegations against policemen are quite mind-boggling as well as heart wrenching. Going by experience, it is chimerical to dream for a work-climate/work-culture of mutual consensus, exchange, reciprocity, cooperation and interdependence particularly in an ambience that selectively privileges one category and disprivileges the other. It is not for nothing that the National Commission for Women (NCW) gives the clarion call for the introduction of gender sensitization courses in the police force.¹⁹ The course should also teach policemen how to behave with their female colleagues. Usually, whenever there is a discussion on gender sensitization course, the focus remains the women in public: that is, how policemen should deal with women who have been victims of violence/atrocity. It ignores the kind of subjection that persists within the department. It assumes that everything is fine with the department. In short, the gender sensitization course should not bypass/eschew the intra-departmental gender issues that are equally tragic as well as pathetic. Thus, the gender sensitization course should also explicitly teach policemen as to how they should behave themselves with a policewoman and how they should assess her efficiency, if at all there is a need for such assessment. As a WSI suggests:

Even in a patriarchal set up, it is possible to build up a police force (consisting of both the sexes), where there will be no discrimination against/harassment of the so-called second sex and where woman members feel equally encouraged, integrated and assertive. But for this to happen, policemen need to learn three things:

(i) to refrain from expecting sexual favour from women,
(ii) to learn to get satisfied with the minimum,
(iii) stop masquerading as proactive well-wishers. Then only the fair sex can experience a fair deal in the profession.

It is found that the policewomen's relation with her male colleagues is one of harmony as well as acrimony. Harmony in the sense that, they require each other's official cooperation/formal coordination on the professional front. Acrimony in the sense that she is in a constant struggle

- to disprove the conjecture that females cannot accomplish police assignment,

Chapter Four

• to prove her sincerity, efficiency and honesty in explicit terms,
• to keep herself away from the exploitative gaze of her male colleagues, who often view her as a sexual object and
• not to genuflect before their misadventure, overtures or unwelcome sexual advances.

Policewoman stands in dire need of policeman’s humane assistance, empathy and cooperative comradeship to extricate her workplace from the menace of snooty treatment and harassment. To state in Durkheimian parlance, the division of labour in police department presupposes dependence, interdependence, specialization of tasks and above all, harmony. Again he would postulate, as also we notice in the field, the manifestly harmonic division of (police) task force is also not devoid of its abnormal manifestations.\(^\text{20}\)

To reiterate in Durkheimian script, the aforesaid acrimony raises its ugly head as a variety of abnormal form that has been intrinsic to our police work force. Durkheim acknowledges that such abnormality is an undesired development. And our field experience reveals that the policewoman encounters the abnormal manifestations of intra-job division and inter-gender hierarchy inherent to her profession. Like Durkheim’s dichotomy of normal versus the pathological that forms an inseparable component of his five rules of sociological methods,\(^\text{21}\) harmony versus acrimony continues to be a perpetual dichotomy which policewomen face in their everyday on-the-profession experience. Equal payment need not necessarily mean equal treatment.

e. Ascriptive Inequality, Male Hegemony and the Issue of On-The-Job Gender Discrimination

There are instances of policewomen (of the higher echelon variety), who have displayed exemplary excellence like/much better than their male counterparts. India has already witnessed such excellence in the case of Kiran Bedi or that of

\(^{20}\) While schematizing the civilizational contribution of division of labour, Durkheim is not blind to acknowledge its abnormal ramifications. This abnormality can be compared to acrimony, which a policewoman faces in her workplace. For details on abnormal forms, see article by Emile Durkheim, “On Anomie” in Images of Man (ed.) by C. Wright Mills, (George Braziller Inc; New York: 1970), pp. 456-62.

Kanchan Chaudhury. Not astonishingly, there are a number of WSIs/WIs in Orissa: assertive and ambitious, competent and efficient, bold and terrific. But ironically, they are conventionally seen (by their male colleagues) as soft, docile and non-initiative-taking. And accordingly, they are not given any adventurous tasks. What is especially shocking to discover is that a WSI is not treated at par with a male SI. Similarly, a WI (woman inspector) is not treated at par with a male Inspector. This is best manifested in the posting pattern of police personnel. It is found that a policewoman is not posted as Officer-in-Charge (henceforth OIC) to head a general police station. During the course of empirical investigation, cent percent of the respondents opine that they are largely given assignments that involve women’s issues and that they are not usually considered for any hard/challenging task, or for that matter, they are not desired to head any general police station. Although there is a placement of WSI in some general police stations, she is subordinate to her male colleague who has been posted as the OIC. Though an SI of equal rank, her position is reduced to that of a women’s desk meant for dealing with women’s issues.

Equal rank does not render equal respect. The reason is quite serious. The respect is not a neutral category here. It is also governed by masculine terms. It has been hijacked by a patriarchal police force that still believes in the sanctity of ascriptive inequality, an inequality that sanctifies and stratifies the hegemony of male over females in the department of cops. And this inequality not only frustrates women’s ambitions, motivations, but also kills their zeal, creativity, dynamism and the spirit of adventurism. For instance, the dissatisfaction of Kumudini Bahubalendra, a WI, is a case in point. She is so professional and competent, apart from being charming and much admired for her style of functioning and dignified personality, that at one time she was described as being superior to her male counterparts. But when it came to the question of getting posted as OIC of a general police station, she was by-passed simply because she was a woman. With the booming of Mahila Thanas, WSIs and WIs are a dime-a-dozen now; but one is still waiting for WOIC (Woman OIC) to head a general police station. To schematize in the language of Elliott and Smith, the exclusion of policewomen from the positions of OICs reflects ascriptive inequality at the ‘workplace power’ that constitutes the
central battleground in struggles for equalizing opportunities.\footnote{For an insightful elaboration of the concept, read article by James R. Elliott and Ryan A. Smith, "Race, Gender and Workplace Power" in American Sociological Review, June 2004, vol.69; No.3, pp. 365-386. Website: http://www.asanet.org/journals/asn/2004/toc039} The segregation in matters of on-the-job placement is symptomatic of the kind of organized inequality that has pervaded the system. The kind of hierarchy that is deliberately maintained between equal-ranking officials – between a WSI and a male SI – is purely sex-based. That is, equal rank does not mean equal desk/charge/responsibility/prestige; it is based on the presumption that a woman is devoid of the required potential to head a general police station. That is why, a WSI is posted to work under a male OIC as his subordinate, who is also another SI of her own rank. Even Ralph Dahrendorf would completely fail to characterize the kind of authority structure that exists between two employees of the same rank. Dahrendorf propounds an authority structure that draws its legitimacy from rational-legal criteria. His is a kind of authority that exists between officials of two different ranks – the upper rank superordinates who give orders and the lower-ranking subordinate employees who carry out such orders.\footnote{For a powerful demonstration of the concept of authority, go through Ralph Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, (Routledge & Kegan Paul; London: 1959), p. 71.} Perhaps it was beyond the imagination of Dahrendorf that he could not speculate a situation where a pattern of authority could exist between two officials of the same rank, or to argue in his terminology, between two superordinates or between two subordinates. The reason why the authority pattern found in Orissa’s general police station does not coincide with that of Dahrendorf is quite simple. The primordial notions of sex, gender, prejudice and patriarchy explicitly guide police station; whereas Dahrendorf’s schema is rooted in the rational-legal foundation of the structure of authority. And when authority is dictated by criteria other than that of rational-legal, frustration among the victims associated with it is a natural manifestation. The revelations by Lata an Inspector, is quite intriguing:

We are deprived on matters of posting. For instance, only men are posted as OICs and they are assigned independent charges. Why can’t a woman be given the job of an OIC? Like in patriarchy where a woman’s identity is related to her father, or husband or her son, in general police stations, our identity is also subordinate. We have to work under the authority of a male, who shall always be in the seat of OIC. It is not that women are weak or
incapable. We also do night jobs, raids and arrests. We need not be treated
with sympathy. Women are naturally more mature than males. This is not
considered in our department. We are also trained the way policemen are.
Then, why do you victimize us with no fault of our own? There is no
scientific proof, which states that men's blood is superior. Selection be
made on equal basis; physically, mentally and educationally. It is the people
who have dubbed women as weak. Then, why do such people induct
women into the profession of police?

This kind of irrational hierarchy between two officials of the same rank in
the same police station is bound to breed sense of frustration, mental torture, ego-
hurt and dejection in the memory of policewomen. And it runs against the principles
of equality, harmony and integrity. It is absolutely impossible to remain insouciant
to the agony, allegations and complaints that such women raise in relation to their
everyday professional pursuits. The compliant of Neha, a WSI, is quite
disheartening:

'Why is there an official chasm between an SI and a WSI? Why should not
we be assigned independent charges? Till how long shall we continue to
'assist' our male colleagues? Let me tell you unambiguously the actual
rationale behind our recruitment. First, to check counter cases against
male officers/colleagues. Second, to be used as their shield. Third, to
deal in cases of violence against women. We understand that cops are
male chauvinists. But what we experience on the job is a sort of organized
male chauvinism. And this organized male chauvinism is more dangerous
than individual male chauvinism.'

All the respondents come forward vociferously on their shared traumatized
point that ascriptive inequality needs to be effaced out urgently. Only then, police
department can sincerely proclaim to be integrated, inclusive, democratic, gender-
unbiased and non-hierarchical. *One cannot, make a bicycle run smoothly after
bending one of its wheels.* Similarly, we cannot create artificial on-the-job hierarchy
between two equal ranking officials and expect cordial coordination between them.

f. Debunking the *Mahila* Prefix

Cent percent of the respondents converge on the view that ascriptive
inequality exists in police stations, that reflects its sexist bias by making women
work as subordinates to male colleagues, by asking them to assist male officials and
by using them as shield to guard policemen against counter cases of harassment.
They also question the very objective of the Government in its induction of women
into police. As per official records, the basic purpose of setting *Mahila* police station is to give special attention to investigation of crimes against women. It is primarily intended to deal with complaints in which a woman is either a complainant or an accused.24 All the respondents locate the root cause of ascriptive inequality in the very sexist colour of the objective with which the Government recruits policewoman. They allege that the official objective is narrow, and sex-biased both in its intent and content. The Government designates women cops as *Mahila* police exclusively with a view to reduce their scope of operation/power and to narrow down their sphere of activity mostly to women-centric cases. This is a deliberate attempt to keep *Mahila* police always inferior to her male counterpart. All the respondents constate that the Government’s approach to *Mahila* police is both reductionist and restrictive. It allows males to deal with all cases, but does not do so in case of lady cops. Replies a WSI:

Why can’t a woman be given independent assignment? Why is she asked to deal in cases involving women only? Is woman incapable to handle other cases such as murder, theft and the like? They are categorizing us as Mahila police only to maintain the Laxman rekha between the power of policemen and Mahila police. It also satisfies male ego. Mahila prefix has been attached to our designation primarily to stigmatize us, restrict our operation to Mahila cases only and keep ourselves at a distance from dealing with other important cases.

A common consensus that emerges out of the views of respondents with regard to the tag of *Mahila* prefix is two-fold. One, the Government should delete the *Mahila* prefix from the prevailing designation ‘*Mahila* police’; that policewomen should be called as police and be treated at par with their male colleagues both in principle and practice, rhetoric and reality. If the Government decides to dispense with the sexist *Mahila* tag, it is bound to raise the morale of these women while inspiring many others like them. The step will also be in tune with the fact that all police officials belong to the same State cadre and there is absolutely no difference in the salaries of males and female SIs/WSIs. The State has already witnessed a series of protests from policewomen and various other women groups. To this effect, the outcome is expected in optimistic terms. If a report published in an English daily is to be believed, the State has started showing positive signals to decide the matter.

24 See the Letter issued by Orissa Police, State Head Quarters, Cuttack to the Commissioner-cum-Secretary to Government of Orissa, Home Department, Bhubaneswar; Letter No.IIP-40-95/4621/F; dated 27-01-2001(attached in appendix).
in favour of policewomen. Two, there is a need for a sizable women police personnel in the department. The respondents ingeminate the clarion call to increase women’s number in the department. Going by their demand, it is no more surprising when organization like National Commission for Women urges State governments to increase the proportion of women in the force.

g. Women in Uniform: Facilitating Humanitarian Intervention

A query that continues to puzzle one’s imagination is, how does the entry of women into the profession of police influence the handling of cases relating to women? Do they make any difference in the way such cases are dealt with? In sum, how different is their approach, if at all? The empiric finding is constructively unconventional. It vindicates the raison d’être of women’s induction into the profession. Cent percent of the respondents argue that their approach to cases pertaining to violence against women is reformist, rehabilitating and counseling in nature. Unlike the traditional policeman who takes recourse to the practice of registering cases and sending the culprit to jail, they analyze each case from the victim’s perspective and try to solve the matter amicably through counseling to the maximum possible extent. The intent is to convince, rehabilitate, restore and settle; and the method may vary from negotiation and counseling to coercion and threatening. They posit that policewomen's intervention helps the victim not only to express herself naturally before another woman (the policewoman), but it also facilitates in expediting such cases for their early solution. As Sunita, a WSI, opines:

A victim relies more on a policewoman than on a policeman. There are certain sexually sensitive cases, for instance rape, where the victim feels utterly suffocated, nervous and ashamed to express her torment before a male cop; whereas she feels confident to describe a vivid narration of her agony with optimum openness before a female cop. The reason is quite understandable. She feels psychologically encouraged if she gets the chance to give a detailed account before another woman. This ultimately helps us to investigate and sort out the cases better. We see cases from a human angle. Being woman helps us to understand another woman’s problems better and help the victim express much better. Our approach is to finalize

cases through counseling, negotiation, meddling and mediation and to reform the minds of the accused and to provide empathetic treatment to the victim.

A point on which all the respondents converge is that their intervention in the domain of police has cast a great therapeutic value for the victim. Investigation and solution to the cases are not based on typical interrogation and cross-questioning, as has hitherto been followed by male police. When women cops take over such cases, the victim is given a patient hearing; she is sympathetically consoled and empathetically advised that she has come to the right place and everything will be taken care of by them. These sorts of confidence building, hope-restoring and wound-healing assurances release her sense of helplessness, encourage her to repose faith in the justice-delivery system and make her believe that she has taken recourse to the best shelter. The victim starts feeling that she is no more defenseless. All these things, in turn, combine together to gradually bring her to a state of normalcy. Half of a patient’s horrific disease gets psychologically healed if she feels that the best doctor is medically treating her.

h. Tensions, Conflicts, Compromises and Constraints on the Personal Front

It is true that after joining the profession, women benefit materially. A workingwoman is regarded as an earning member, who can afford not to be a liability on her family. Not solely finance; job also offers many other things, which cannot be evaluated in monetary terms. Cent percent of the respondents put forth that such an engagement in a public work domain has metamorphosed their life. For instance, they have got better exposure, self confidence, an ever-expanding social circle, broader understanding of the outer world and most importantly, a distinct identity independent of their kinship. But the other side of their life is fraught with tensions and tragedy, turbulence and tribulations, sacrifice and suffering, conflicts and contradictions, constraints and compromises, agony and alienation. The reality is that for a woman, the profession of police is not that glamorous, as it appears to be. She is constrained to lose a lot, make unbearable compromises and compensate a lot for retaining her cop’s job. But then, even rose is not free from thorns.
Table 4.5
Respondents’ Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 denotes peculiar information regarding the marital status of the respondents. What is flummoxing to note is that 40% of the respondents are unmarried. Let us analyze the case of the unmarried category and then discuss the married variety. It is disheartening to note from field experience that a policewoman in Orissa milieu is always looked in bad taste. The phrase ‘woman and police’ still appears incompatible in people’s psyche. A woman’s entry into police job is met with serious social disapproval. At a social level, a woman in Khaki is looked down upon (this is not true of the IPS variety). She is viewed as a masculine woman, a woman who is lacking in feminine virtues, a woman who is working in a Thana that is full of males and a woman who is engaged in a job that requires frequent association with males round-the-clock. All these conceptions combine together to operate against her marital prospects. As women are not preferred to be police, their prospects of marriage gradually become bleak. They become undesirable as they wear a masculine uniform that has hitherto been identified with men. To reiterate further, as the lady cop is perceived to be lacking in feminine qualities, very few will be interested to marry her, that too, a woman whose workplace is surrounded by men. For a policewoman, it does not matter whether she has surpassed the marriageable age (say 30). The factors strongly influencing her marital prospects are integrally associated with the kind of job she carries. Going by the empirical impression, it can only be said that the policewomen who are married are certainly the blessed and fortunate ones. Thus, the very career that a woman begins with becomes the sole factor to ruin her marital prospects and deprive her of her familial dream. Our empirical finding negates all the sweeping generalizations made so far that an earning workingwoman has better marital prospects. For instance, a study conducted recently by an NGO, Centre for Social Research, concludes that in
matrimonial bazaar, there is a demand for professionally qualified workingwomen. 27 But the experience of policewomen in Orissa tells a different story and it disputes as well as disproves such a sweeping conclusion. Unbelievable as though it may appear, table 4.5 presents that 40% of the interviewees are spinsters. They never speculated in the wildest of their dreams that their employment would one day impose forced spinsterhood upon them. Inferring from their everyday memory, it can safely be concluded that in all probability these women are going to remain unmarried for the rest part of their life. They did have a sweet dream of entering into a happy matrimony after employment. But matrimony has continued to elude them. And the demon is none other than the so-called masculine khaki. It is not the employment per se which corrodes their matrimony, but on the contrary, it is the attire and the masculine character of such employment that wreak havoc on it. Marriage for such women remains a terra incognita primarily owing to the prejudice that they are presumed not to be docile, obedient, submissive, sequacious, pure, patient and feminine. Moreover, it is subsequently presumed that the family’s reputation will be spoiled if it brings a bahu who is dubbed as assertive, authoritarian, rigid, impatient and masculine. Narrates a WSI:

Our job ineluctably attracts a social stigma, that is, we are not feminine. By pursuing this job, we have lost our feminine virtues and, consequently, we have become masculine. We are looked down upon in our community and neighbourhood. The very job we have taken up has been instrumental in jeopardizing our marital prospects. Many Mahila police have been taken hostage to this jeopardy. One needs to compensate a lot on her personal front. On the professional front, we do not get much leave to visit home. We are intensely sensitive to the victims of atrocities against women; but our department is utterly insensitive to the tensions and constraints that we face in our life-world. We are assigned a great deal of tasks in such a manner as if we are one-dimensional iron-women who are kinshipless, burdenless and ever-elastic robots.

It is luculent that a woman makes invaluable compromises and compensates heavily for her decision to continue with her job. She suffers from a situation of

27 Centre for Social Research, a New Delhi–based NGO, conducted a study on “Indian Marriages: Economic Independence and Changing Power Relations” during the 2nd half of the year 2004. It concludes, the profile of the Indian bahu is changing. The stereotype of the shy, homely girl adept at singing and dancing and of the same caste and family status as that of the groom has given way to the demand for a professionally qualified working woman. This was its one among many findings. For greater grasp, see “Marriages down the ages: What men, women want” in Hindustan Times, October 8, 2004, P.1.
Double jeopardy. One, at a very personal/social level, marriage turns to be a mirage. Two, at a professional level, as we have said earlier, her power is truncated owing to the preponderance of the practice of ascriptive inequality on-the-job. And as regards the suffocating/hostile workplace environment, it will amount to repetition, if we stress the obvious. Highlights a WSI:

Our profession has its grim ramifications, that is, social humiliation and unwanted spinstership. We are actually treated as para-police, a soft, reserved, fluid force. Certain policemen, sometimes, make unwanted (sexual) overtures thinking that we are deprived of marital/sexual pleasure. Socially, we command zero-respect. We are unable to marry because we do not get even a manageable proposal. Women should join, if they get the chance, as IPS officers, but not as WSI or constable. We joined the job, earned money and determined our future; but lost the dream of creating our own individual family. Thus, we feel completely alienated from our ‘dream family’ and partially, from the job. Here is a profession where one’s entire ‘being’ has been undesirably subsumed. Here is also a profession where the incumbent cannot impose herself on her position. And this position emerges stronger to completely snatch you out of your ‘being’.

To put in Marxian terminology, she is alienated from her matrimony. She has been a servant of her profession, unable to nourish her individual joy, space and freedom. She exists first as a worker, then a woman. In her work, therefore, she does not affirm herself, but denies herself; does not feel content but unhappy. She is unable to discover joy in her work as it has devastated her marital future. She feels herself outside her work and in her work she feels outside herself. She is perpetually chagrined at her lifetime loss effected by her job. In a country like India where marriage is culturally considered to be the ultimate destination for every woman, not possessing minimum criteria to get married, staying spinster or staying single would only amount to ruthless social humiliation, being dubbed as inauspicious and being perceived as having a doubtful character (charitra). Staying spinster is doubly challenging than pursuing a job in public domain, especially in an impervious patriarchal milieu that seeks to formulate a woman’s identity always in relational terms. That is, she ought to be somebody’s wife, mother, daughter or bahu.

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28 For an encyclopedic analysis of the notion of alienation, read Karl Marx, Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844. (Progress Publishers; Moscow: 1977), pp.68-71.
On the contrary, data point out that 60% of the respondents are married. But their life situation is somewhat similarly stressful. In previous paragraphs we have noted that 40% of the respondents are unmarried primarily because they are not in receipt of any decent proposals. Be it noted, the rest 60% of the respondents are married to persons who themselves are policemen. In other words, cent percent of the married women opined that they had not got matrimonial proposals from any civilian or non-uniformed individuals. Khaki-clad was the only kind of proposal they got and accepted it instantly. Because they knew, they were not going to get any non-khaki-clad proposal.

What is interesting to document is that all the married respondents emphasized the primacy of family over profession. Profession is an important responsibility, but not more important than one's family. One pursues a job for one's own and one's familial prosperity. Cent percent of the interviewees converge on the point that the demands of family and that of the profession are incompatible.

Family responsibility is incompatible with professional work. Demands of both the domains plague each other. One is bound to compromise on one front in order to compensate on the other. All the married workingwomen constate that in the face of antithetical and divergent responsibilities, one cannot be a hundred percent happy homemaker or a hundred percent accomplished professional. The natural upshot that haunts every woman is a guilty-mum syndrome/guilty-homemaker or a not-up-to-the-mark professional feeling. While compromise is an everyday strategy, the job is never allowed to dominate over one's familial performance. The reason is simple. Family cannot be allowed to take a backseat; whereas, the profession can be. For such women, profession is pursued in order to support family and not vice versa. A woman cannot neglect her family. It is really a gargantuan difficulty to handle both the domains.

On the other hand, a woman cannot quit her job, because, after marriage, it no more remains her individual decision. And her conjugal family gives a go-ahead to continue with the job as her income is adding to family's financial pool. The point that is found from the situation is that a married woman's income is not considered a breadwinning income. Her income is seen as being supplementary to the husband's income. What is stimulating to observe is that all the married respondents opine that despite their occupational earning, the husband is viewed as the financial guardian
and consequently, the breadwinner. Although a woman is another earning member of the family, she cannot claim to be financial guardian even of her own income. Cultural expectations of being a wife require that she must deposit her money with her husband’s treasury or even if she keeps with herself, it must be so upon the satisfaction of her husband. Thus, for a married woman, financial income does not necessarily imply individual financial autonomy.

While reiterating the superiority of family over profession, such married professionals propose that both the roles affect each other and meddle with each other. Howsoever, serious/sincere one is in her profession, she is dubbed as casual. On the other hand, howsoever calculative one is on her domestic front, it is impossible to be 100% perfect, as domesticity is in itself a full-time job. Anything one pursues along with it, it is natural that domesticity is affected; on the other hand, any job one takes up being a housewife (having no domestic help), it is also natural that one cannot be a 100% perfect professional. In addition, the presence of under-adolescent kids makes the problem much more compounded. All the respondents advocate that marriage is a big constraint, and motherhood is the biggest handicap in one’s career accomplishments. Therefore, cent percent of the respondents posit that an unmarried woman can better serve her job than a married one. But a serious finding upon which all the informants—married and the unmarried alike—concur is that police workplace is masculine, male friendly and most shockingly, anti-women. Every policewoman has faced some sort of gender discrimination, hostility or sexual harassment in her on-the-job experience. All of them advocate that they would not advise any woman, at a personal level, to take up this profession. Most shockingly, cent percent of the married women, given a situation to choose, they would advise their daughters to pursue any career except the Khaki one. While depicting the kind of tension, compromise, frustration, stress that such women experience in their life-world, our field-insight also insinuates the kind of murky-masculine sexism and anti-women ambience that the department of police is replete with.

In Summary: Looking from the prism of caste, the composition of policewomen in the department is not a mono-caste monopoly. It’s a multi-caste composition whereby women hailing from various castes work together. But to state the obvious, the effect of caste on women’s choice, aspiration, access to the job is absolutely
zero. The things that immensely influence their ambition, struggle and competition are mostly financial, accidental and instrumental in nature.

- As regards their educational attainment, there are around one-third women personnel who possess higher qualification and have taken up this profession.

- Financially speaking, most women hail from very poor and average economic reality.

- It is a profession mostly plumped for by women either owing to their acute financial deprivation or because it is the one that has been secured first.

- Less than 10% of the respondents have joined this vocation out of their volition. For others, it is a mere velleity and the idea is just to earn.

- As regards the character of the workplace, it is both masculine and male-friendly. But women have taken up the gauntlet and have learnt the art of being adaptive to the adversity.

- At the level of appreciation, patriarchal shibboleths still colour policemen’s perception of their female colleagues. Male cops perceive policewomen as casual, non-serious, free-and-easy, salary-minded employees. Their efficiency is hardly appreciated or recognized by policemen. Howsoever efficiently a woman accomplishes her tasks, the tag of being ‘efficient’ still stays a masculine prerogative. A woman is seen first as a woman, then a worker.

- At the level of ambience, workplace environment is ruthlessly discouraging for a woman. The reason is serious. A policewoman is seen as a sexual being who has joined this masculine job solely for grabbing money and who shall not hesitate to offer herself for unworthy sexual act. As she is not considered a hundred percent feminine woman, policemen presume that she will not be that protective of her feminine chastity and thus, she will not say ‘no’ to their unwelcome gesture or advances. At times, policemen think that she should entertain them sexually and fill up the vacancy of their wives in the Thana. Thus, sexual harassment, of various sorts, is embedded into work sphere.

- As regards the issue of on-the-job occupational parity, policewomen are not treated at par with policemen. The power of policemen is very wide; whereas
that of women is limited to women’s cases only. Moreover, women are not allowed to head general police station and are subjected to work under their male colleagues. In addition, women are not assigned independent charges; whereas, men are. The very designation *Mahila* police is a deliberate creation by the government of Orissa to perpetuate a gendered distinction between policemen and policewomen. To put it otherwise, the on-the-job workplace is infested with the viruses of *ascriptive inequality*, sexist distinction and *murky-male-hegemony*.

- At the level of intervention, the entry of women into the profession has intromitted a metamorphic difference in the culture of *policing*. In short, unlike traditional policemen, women cops’ approach has been reformist, rehabilitatory, corrective as well as counseling in character.

- As regards work-family balance (in case of married cops), it is a terribly strenuous job, more terrible than the profession itself. A perfect balance is an existential impossibility; but managing a balance is possible. Again this *managing* act has its own consequences on women: they are *guilty-mum-syndrome* and *not-up-to-the-mark* professional feeling. The strategy is ‘*compromise, calculate and compensate*’.

- However, at the level of supremacy, as the informants opine, family is always the priority number one and job is number two. *Occupational assignments usually revolve around familial commitments* and not vice-versa.

- As regards negative consequences, the very profession has rendered many women spinsters. As it is perceived a masculine domain, few men come forward to marry masculine women. The social stigma attached to a lady cop’s position operates against her matrimony.

- Not being bereft of positive implications, the job has changed their personalities constructively: women have got access to the outer world, gained better exposure, financial independence, an ever-expanding social circle, self-confidence and the like.
As regards constraints for a married woman, motherhood is discovered to be the greatest constraint faced by married cops; other constraints being the ideologies of bahu and housewife.

It would not be far of the mark to say that Indian women are struggling with the demons of patriarchy to find their niche and reach their station in life. A policewoman’s struggle is multi-faceted: first, to attract recognition and approbation; second, to strike a balance between home and work (if married); third, to withstand and supersede social humiliation, stigma and hostility; forth, to withstand perpetual inner tensions and conflicts in cases of unwanted spinsterhood. Certainly there are women who have conquered the odds and have proved to be role models for younger generations. If this trend moves forward, then the wave of women’s empowerment is gradually gearing up for better times in future.

SECTION – II
WOMEN DOCTORS

After making a critical recension of policewomen’s life-world, our subsequent zetetic quest is to explore the experience of women doctors with special reference to the issues raised earlier. Here is an in-depth ethnographic study of 25 female doctors of various specialties i.e., ophthalmologist, cardiologist, pediatrician, psychiatrist or dentist and the like. It will, perhaps, not be malapropos to mention here that the researcher’s sample of lady doctors encompasses women from diverse medical specialties e.g. cardiology, ophthalmology, anesthetics, pediatrics, dentistry, psychiatry, gynecology etc. availability of women respondents in such a diverse kind of medical specialties stands in contradistinction to the reigning common sense notion ‘women in medical profession is synonymous with women in gynecology and pediatrics. Unlike police, here is a profession that is not raw-power-centric, which draws its unparalleled distinction from its noble philosophy of service to the mankind is service to God. Thus, it will be no surprise if we ferret out a wide chasm between the life-world of doctors and that of the policewomen. To repeat what has been explained in previous discussions, the fieldworker has interviewed lady doctors from almost all parts of the State, Orissa. As per our convention, let us start with certain basic social profile of the interviewees under study.
Financial Background: at the outset, it has to be kept in mind that the definition of the categories, used such as those of ‘good’, ‘decent’ or ‘average’ remains the same throughout the work. In contradistinction to the picture noticed in the case of policewomen on the issue, the financial background of lady doctors represents a metamorphic shift. The number of respondents hailing from ‘poor’ financial condition is absolutely zero. Unlike policewomen, women doctors hail mostly from good and decent financial backgrounds. In other words, more than 4/5 of the respondents belong to families having good and decent financial backbone. Only a miniscule of the population has come from families having average financial background.

Table 4.6
Respondents’ Financial Background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decent</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital Status: Unlike policewomen, the marital status of female doctors represents a stunning reversal of fortunes. Astounding as it may appear, all the respondents, excluding one, are married. The reason for such astoundment is palpably revealing. A doctor’s place in Orissa’s milieu is regarded with high esteem; one of the most socially respectable profession. Correspondingly, a lady doctor is considered a rare respectable/desirable bride in matrimonial market. From a matrimonial point of view, the prospects of a policewoman and that of a lady doctor converge on one point and diverge on the other. They converge in the sense that both the categories of women are regarded as professionals who are professionally qualified, eligible workingwomen. But they diverge in the sense that while a policewoman stands socially disapproved/stigmatized, a lady doctor is valued as the most desired, wanted and sought after esteemed bride in matters of matrimony. As regards the one lady doctor who is unmarried, she is in her late 50s; that is, she is no more within the average limits of marriageable age, which is considered to be 30 (by the researcher).
Although a lady doctor is a desirable bride in matrimony, she has preferred to remain spinster due to certain personal-familial considerations.

Table 4.7
Marital Status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Why Doctor? Unearthing the Interest

All the respondents concur on the point that they have taken up the career out of their inner volition, passion and determination. It’s an inner calling that has ignited their zeal to make their way into the profession. Lipset and Bendix’s view gets reaffirmed in doctors’ scenario also. Most of such women hail from sound financial background that, to an enormous extent, shapes their aspirations and supports such aspirations to be converted into real accomplishments. In contrast, a woman belonging to a very poor family cannot simply afford to imagine such a volition, passion or determination, as her economic background is contradictory to her volition. Otherwise, for such poor woman to think of a magnificent volition of this kind would only amount to trying to tie a belt (around the waist) without having its buckles.

It is true that career choice for such women is not a slapdash affair. What is stunning to notice is that while such volition remaining identical in case of all women, yet their perspectives differ. That is, they pursue an identical profession, but their perspectives differ.

Table 4.8
Different Perspectives that Dictate One's Volition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Esteem/Respect</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material Gain/Prosperity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving Mankind</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Perspectives Differ:** It is observed that most of the respondents, that is, around 60% of the total population, have chosen this career exclusively due to the kind of esteem, desirability, respect and glamour it carries with it in society. An entry into the profession will imply that here is a woman who is an individual of charisma, a charisma possessed by very few and who must be distinguished and respected. Needless to mention, monetary return accompanies the profession. But that does not predominate over the *esteem need* of such women. This perspective is absolutely in line with A.H. Maslow's theory of motivation, which propounds that *esteem need* is a higher order need that motivates an individual into action: its goal is to be successful, to feel self-esteem and be respected by others.³⁰

Only 20% of the respondents aver that their volition is guided by the desire to gain, prosper and acquire materially. To schematize in Durkheimian tone, it is the need for prosperity that impels the individual to specialize more and more.³¹ The objective of such women has been not only to attain financial independence, but also prosperity and a condition of better living. This in fact reaffirms Kala Rani’s

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³⁰ In his theory of needs, Maslow outlines five ordered varieties of needs that are motivating in nature. They are physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs and the need for self-actualization. Among these, esteem need is considered a variety of higher order need. For an engrossing elucidation, see A.H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality* (Harper & Row, New York: 1954).

findings that, among other things, state that monetary gain is an important reason that motivates women to seek job outside.\textsuperscript{32}

On the other hand 20\% of women assert that their \textit{volition} has been dictated by the proclivity to serve people, heal people and make people happy by utilizing their expertise, energy and initiative. They draw their ultimate satisfaction from people’s reconvalescence, good health and happiness. In sum, they are driven by a magnificent \textit{passion} to render service to mankind. The idea is to prove that there is something ‘greater’, nobler and marvelous in them that individualize them. Their joy, satisfaction and ecstasy hinge on the actualization of this \textit{greater}, \textit{nobler} or \textit{marvelous} into concrete people’s recuperation. Women of this variety can be positively correlated to those ignited by Maslow’s variety of need for self-actualization.\textsuperscript{33}

\textbf{b. Work: A space for Self-Expression and Self-Development}

Women’s propensity for joining medical profession is unambiguously perspicuous in table-4.8; it spells out their urge to achieve and establish, predilection for prosperity, enhanced life chances, happiness and quest for their ultimate satisfaction, excellence and self-actualization. Undoubtedly, it phenomenizes a category of women who are ignited by an unflappable passion to scale the Everest of their professional career. Table-4.8 is symbolic of the fact that here is a group of women who are committed to their self-development, prosperity and happiness. And the kind of work they have chosen, as they argue, is one of the finest media to attain such prosperity. Such women epitomize a variant of John H. Goldthrope’s \textit{affluent worker}, who is propelled to prosper, determined to develop, and accelerated to be affluent and motivated to be mobile.\textsuperscript{34} Table-4.8 also portrays another group of women for whom work, that they have selected, represents an ambit to concretize

\textsuperscript{32} Kala Rani examines why women take up paid jobs in public work domain. Economic reason, she cites, is one of the important reasons behind the decision. For details, read, Kala Rani, \textit{Role Conflict in Working Women}, (Chetna Publications; New Delhi: 1976)

\textsuperscript{33} Self-actualization is regarded as the top most need in Maslow’s theory of need. Self-actualizers are the people who make the fullest use of their capabilities. Of course, goals, which are sought in meeting this need, vary from person to person. The main motive is to do things, which one does well and enjoys. One’s satisfaction is his/her actualization. For details, read A.H. Maslow, \textit{Motivation and Personality}.

\textsuperscript{34} For an affluent worker, work is a pursuit, which he carries out in a relatively purposive manner in order to maximize material return and promote resources for the fulfillment of his intrinsic and extrinsic interests. Read, John H. Goldthrope, \textit{The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour} (Cambridge University Press; London: 1968)
their charisma, establish their esteem, secure their satisfaction, actualize their individuality and achieve their aspirations. To use McClelland’s phrase, the underlying thread that festinates their activism is achievement motivation. It is unambiguous from the views of all the respondents that despite differing perspectives, healthcare is a kind of work that is gratifying in nature. The reason is significant. Work here represents a direct exercitation of whatever learnt from medical science. Here is a scope to directly utilize one’s text knowledge to solve practical problems. In short, the profession of a doctor is such that he/she can directly utilize his/her book learning to remove people’s ailments and miseries.

As respondents would argue, this is a kind of profession where the possibility of the emergence of on-the-job frustration is almost zero. Similarly, the hegemonic and corruptive influence of politics/bureaucracy/masculinism in one’s everyday service is almost non-existent.

The nub of the discussion is that doctor, unlike many other professions including that of police, is a profession having sufficient space for independent functioning. It’s the one having independent charge. Barring exceptions, the very practice of the profession is devoid of any third party meddling. It’s a one-to-one hearing-healing exercise whereby the patient reposes unconditional confidence, trust and hope in doctor’s intervention and correspondingly, the doctor listens to patient’s narration, learns from the symptoms described in the narration and attempts to cure accordingly. As Shobhana, a cardiologist explains:

Our religion is the service of mankind and the target is to cure patients. Our satisfaction hinges upon the satisfaction of our patients only. They give us the opportunity to test our expertise and come out successful. That is why, we regard them as our teachers. Moreover, they are our teachers in the sense that, they describe before us a detailed account of symptoms of a particular disease that they are suffering from. Even, at times, two patients suffering from the same disease delineate two different sets of symptoms. We feel confident to intervene only when we comprehend their narration properly. We learn from their symptoms as well as their sufferings.

35 The phrase achievement motivation was immensely developed and substantiated by McClelland. He says, people in whom the need for achievement motivation is strong, seek to become accomplished and to improve their task performance. For a motivating understanding of the issue, read, D.C. McClelland et al. The Achievement Motive, (Appleton-Century-Crofts; New York: 1953)
The reputation of a doctor is contingent not upon the confidential character report drafted by his/her senior, but upon the remarks, satisfaction and love of the patients. Work, in this domain, implies an ambit for serving people, a therapeutic engagement with people, an engagement that benefits common people, brings material prosperity in the life of a doctor, bestows encomium on her/him, provides a suitable space for the realization of her talent/expertise and continually supplements to her self-expression, self-actualization and self-development.

c. Job and Family: Constraints and Contradictions

A lady professional is in a constant toil to dovetail work with family. Getting employed is, no doubt, appreciated/encouraged. But in a country like India where marriage is considered to be a cultural imperative to woman’s existence, any attempt on her part to abstain from familial commitments is ruthlessly reviled. Balancing work-family commitments is horrendously stressful, particularly in a milieu where motherhood is a cultural sine qua non for every woman. And there is no substitute to childbirth and motherhood; a woman has to bear such burden and she cannot say ‘no’ to it. The postulate that erupts from the views of informants is loud and clear. The cultural expectations surrounding the notion of bahu act as the greatest constraint for a career woman. It is not an ‘either or’ situation. One has to combine both the commitments whereby neither can be completely sacrificed. Our finding stands in total agreement with the generalization put forward for Baunach and Barnes. They conclude that the presence of children, particularly young children, affects one’s career. Women no longer choose between work and family; most women combine the two and society has also developed an increasingly favourable attitude towards working mothers.36 Our field insight unearths the view that female professionals feel like ignoring children in terms of time, care and attention. Reports Manjushree:

There is no substitute to childbirth and childcare. No child intrinsically loves to be brought up in day-care centres/crapes. Childcare is a full-time assignment. Once you leave home and join hospital, breast-feeding happens to be the first casualty. Thus, one is bound to develop a guilty mum syndrome. Again, one cannot ignore her child completely. She may develop a new strategy: coming to hospital late and/or leaving early. This also leads

to the feeling of a not-giving-100%-doctor syndrome. Things become easier as children reach adolescence.

All the informants converge on the view that the presence of infants and small children in family makes the balancing act difficult. Once they grow up and cross the age of childhood, the constraint gets reduced. As Sabita states:

I immediately leave hospital after my official duration (of work) is over. But I know, patients also come immediately after I leave. Still I cannot help because I have to take care of my kids.

Marriage often puts women in disadvantage. It means submission to a series of cultural expectations i.e. ideal bahu, ideal wife, ideal mother and ideal homemaker. Work-family balance is constantly mediated through and often destabilized/twisted by the ideologies of gender, home and professionalism. It is important to be around the child during his formative years. It is essential for a child to have at least one parent around throughout the growing years. An ideal homemaker is one who performs all household chores herself and does not, in normal circumstances, allow her kinsmen/husband to share the burden. An ideal bahu is one who takes care of in-laws and attends to their specific problems. All such things combine together to plague her performance/sincerity in her career.

Work spills over from hospital to home, where she comes back after a hectic day to cook, look after the kids, get their homework done and complete a huge pile of household chores. Amidst multiple pressures, she is not only juggling too many roles, but also wants to be perfect at everything she does. More commitments imply more stress. Such stress can be compared to what the Times of India, a national daily, on the basis of its survey coins as hurried woman's syndrome, which denotes that married career woman is busy both in home and work. To carve out a space for herself that goes beyond domesticity, a woman has to be brave enough to neutralize/dodge the inhibiting influences that impinge upon her career pursuit. She needs to cross over the boundaries that belittle her worth and maim her potential in the garb of social respectability. But again, it has to be constantly ensured that familial commitment is not squarely sacrificed. All the interviewees assert that the


38 See “Health is a Worry for Women in a Hurry” in Times of India, October 4, 2003.
best operational strategy is to classify, prioritize and overwork. They go on to phenomenize that job and family are two different forms of work, but there is a difference. Housework is heavier, rewardless and exhaustive. Job is systematic, rewarding and defined. At the level of relationship, on-the-job relationship is patterned, whereas familial relationship is diffuse. Thus, one cannot have an exact calculative approach to one’s family. Even though one is a careerist one cannot bypass one’s familial obligations. Says Kusum, a pediatrician:

As hectic workload spans both work and home, one has to be professional at making her appearance change according to the domain and demand. At times, she has to be casual at work place and serious at home and vice versa. At times, she has also to be serious at both home and work.

It is a truism that woman doctors jostle for striking a harmony between home and work and de-stress themselves. As Lotha aptly puts it, several studies show that women doctors have a higher level of stress and depression. All the respondents constate that domestic help is no replacement for a homemaker, or for that matter, no substitute to a full-time mother. Domestic help only reduces the workload at home; but he/she cannot shoulder the entire housework. There are many familial responsibilities, which are not done by a domestic help. Many such tasks require physical, mental and emotional involvement of the homemaker. However, cent percent of the respondents propone that it is possible to manage a fair degree of harmony between home and job if the woman gets support as well as cooperation from both family and workplace. And today’s working mothers are in dire need of support both at the level of family and at the level of workplace. As Sangita, a dentist, says:

Unlike job, housework is a full-time occupation. It requires full-time presence of a woman. When you join work, it is natural that you cannot afford to render full-time presence at home. It is in this context, the cooperation of family members assumes importance. Otherwise, a woman will emerge as a psychological patient. Similarly, unlike male professionals, a woman professional has serious extra-job commitments and requires devotion in terms of time and presence outside work-sphere. At times, such devotion requires her to make some adjustments on the job front. Thus, she needs support of her colleagues to make such adjustment possible.

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Cent percent of the respondents enounce that howsoever strenuous the whole work-life is, the pressure is minimized if the woman gets support at both ends: at the level of family and at the level of job. The thesis that emanates from our field is, support of the mentioned kind helps to minimize stress, tension and contradictions. Greater is the support, lesser is the stress. In other words, support and stress are negatively correlated; when one decreases the other increases and vice versa.

d. Women in Public Domain: Changes in Their Life-world

It is true that a married working woman jostles for drawing a balance between private and the public domain demands. It is also true that such demands present her with a slew of constraints, tensions and contradictions. But it is utterly preposterous to presume that her life-world is only fraught with stress and strain. It is balderdash to think that employment has not cast any positive ramification in her life-world. What is discovered in ground reality is palpably procelesemsatic. Despite, several odds, entry into the public domain has proved to be a boon for women professionals in many respects. To begin with, there has been a revolutionary shift in people’s thinking. Women are no more ostracized from public sphere. Every father, in contemporary times, weens that his daughter should be a professionally qualified earning woman. In matrimonial negotiations, there is a growing preference for working/employed woman. As vindicated in our study, all married professionals annunciate that their conjugal families always encourage them to be in the job. It is now a win-win situation for everybody. Family gets double-income (incomes of husband and wife), which is increasingly desirable in present times. Everybody wants to lead a prosperous life, provide quality education to children and secure better life chances in consumerist market situations. Thus, the family as a whole has a vested interest in woman’s employment. Her family needs it as much as she does.

Second, with the growing entry of women into the domains of education and employment, the entire public domain has come to be accommodative of both the sexes. In many regions, women are particularly promoted as a matter of state policy. They are no more seen as zoo-animals at workplace. Third, it is through their achievement, excellence that women command self-respect and derive job-satisfaction. Fourth, such women begin to realize that they have also an independent identity that symbolizes their extra-family contribution and that personifies their individual worth. Fifth, as they also earn financially, family treats them with respect,
because it gets *double income*. Sixth, although an earning married woman is not considered to be the *breadwinner* in conventional sense of the term, she is appreciated for her contribution to the family’s common financial pool/treasury. Lastly, and most importantly, employment inculcates a sense of self-sufficiency in each employed woman. Moreover, employment becomes a source of joy and satisfaction for all those who take it seriously and flourish in it.

e. The Primacy of family?

After learning that the totality of women has taken recourse to the profession of medicine out of their sheer volition, the impression that *willy-nilly* emanates in one’s thinking is that, for such women, career is primary and family is secondary. But the reality is much more complex. Cent percent of the married interviewees (among doctors) intromit that both family and career are important. Career is considered important because it provides the space for one’s growth. It is through work that they prove their talent, sharpen their skills, command respect and continually rise in the direction of vertical upward occupational mobility. To delineate in the language of C. Wright Mills, work, for such professionals, is a means of developing themselves and their *savoir-faire*.\(^40\) This self-development is a result of their cumulative devotion to the persistent practice of their work. They express themselves through their performance and their service. But on the other hand it is vociferously asserted that family is much more important. Family is an *artisan well* of social-emotional strength. It is true that jockeying for a ‘home and work’ balance is the perpetual puzzle that keeps galling them time and again. Despite that, women argue that familial joy boosts their morale to perform better in their career, not vice versa. As one of the respondents replies:

> An individual is not an isolated animal. You live in a family, neighbourhood and community. Your entire upbringing along with your education has been an unconditional investment by your parents/near and dear ones. Thus, when you pursue a career and earn money, you derive satisfaction by spending money for their cause, caring them and sharing your earning. It is thousand times wrong to presume that one is pursuing a profession for one’s own ‘individual’ sake. What is the meaning of this

\(^{40}\) Mills constates that work constitutes the mainstream of one’s life-world. An individual grows only through the rhythm of his/her work. For a passionate explication, see, C. Wright Mills, *Power, Politics and People* (Oxford University Press; London: 1969), pp.384-385.
career if it does not contribute to my family? After all, for whom we are working?

The revelation symbolizes the primacy of family in one's life. This is not to state that career is insignificant. Rather, what is significant to acknowledge here is that although career is an important aspect in one's living, family still rules the roost. As an interviewee avers,

Women should not/cannot escape their natural role. They cannot revolutionize nature. They have to do justice to their family along with career. If they are ignoring their domestic commitments, they are playing havoc with their family. Ultimately, they will be held solely responsible for family disorganization. You can't change your natural role (reproduction). There is a limit to fight against nature. Career should not be allowed to hamper your domestic tranquility.

But one always finds exceptions to the rule. It is amazing to discover women professionals who refuse to be bound by the shackles of patriarchal stereotypes. The case of Minati Patnaik, Chief Medical officer of a city hospital, is worth learning. A determined spinster, work, for Patnaik comes as a calling. Despite unfavourable familial milieu, she as a part of her ambition welded her way into the group of doctors. She contends that at some point of time, one has to break the tradition in order to get the taste of her dream and deed. One cannot make omelette without breaking the eggs.

However, as we have analyzed earlier, family continues to remain the most important priority in one's life. All married professionals propone that, it is supreme. And, though career is important, it revolves around familial commitments and not vice versa. As one of the respondents puts it:

You can cheat your boss. At times, you can afford to be insincere in your job; or else, you can take a temporary break from your duty. But one cannot cheat one's children, and husband. Because, cheating them amounts to cheating oneself and injuring one's own emotion. Family is supreme because it involves the life of those whom you emotionally love; but office work does not. Moreover, family is the kind of unit that is the repository of one's present (husband) and one's future (children). Thus, it is not possible to develop a mathematically calculative approach towards those around whom one's life inheres. Family is not merely a social institution; more than that, it is an emotional unit.
Chapter Four

f. A Non-Harassing Domain Minus Approbation

The medical profession stands in contradistinction to police in matter of on-the-job (sexual) harassment and exploitation. Unlike police, here is a profession that is not frustrating, discouraging, segregative, alienating and victimizing in nature. For women, it depicts a reversal of fate. Cent percent of the respondents postulate that there is no question of sexual harassment on-the-job. It's a profession that is devoid of any sort of victimization based on gender. It is considered a non-harassing domain because of the following reasons:

- Doctor is a profession having independent charge. That is, a female doctor is supreme in her sphere of activity.
- There is no fellow doctor to interfere.
- There is almost zero formal scope to gossip with other colleagues while on duty.
- One's activity/duty is patient-centric.
- Each doctor is independently as well as individually busy with his/her patients.

But non-existence of harassment does not necessarily imply disappearance of male chauvinism. Although it is true that there is no question of exploitation, harassment and organized discrimination on-the-job, it is also true that the superiority of male ego still persists at a perceptual level. Female doctors feel that their male colleagues still think to be better professionals. A male doctor is in serious discomfort and uneasiness to appreciate the superb performance of his female colleague. However efficient she is, it hardly receives commendation. Male doctors respond to her performance in silence. As one of the respondents reveals:

Although we are treated at par with male doctors, they are yet to appreciate our excellence. The primordial perception of male superiority still pervades their imagination. The influence of culture, social tradition and the social bondage of women in calcifying such perception cannot be ruled out.

The feeling that dominates a man’s thinking is that he should supersede his female counterpart in every aspect: be it earning, merit, wisdom, appearance, efficiency or performance. To constate in Rogers’s tone, the female should earn less,
be less tall and be less famous.\(^{41}\) Ironically, the modern man is yet to reconcile himself to situations whereby things deviate from his perceptual order and whereby his female counterpart moves beyond his perceptual order, to display equal and/or exceedingly better savoir faire. And the situation for women doctors in Orissa is no different. They seldom get any note of appreciation or applause from their male colleagues. Says an informant:

Males do not want that females should excel. Male chauvinism is omnipresent. They have a brazenly insecure proclivity to outshine. Even if both the partners are doctors, it is always the husband who feels the need to outshine. It is not that men are inherently efficient; but women make it possible by devoting 17-hours at home.

g. The Feminine Effect

‘Being female’ amounts to a stigmatized existence in Indian milieu. But the life-world of female doctors in Orissa represents an exhilarating experience that is worth discovering, and that proves to be a constructive deviation to the primordial rule. The finding is amazing. Stereotypical qualities associated with ‘being a woman’ prove to be woman’s strength in medical practice. Cent percent of the respondents illustrate that being female facilitates immensely in medical practice. In Indian social convention, a woman is usually taught to listen more and speak less, be tolerant than aggressive, be patient, resilient, be adaptive and humble. She is appreciated for her virtues of purity, patience and perseverance. Thus, as all the interviewees proclaim, all such conventional constructions combine together to equip a woman to serve better than her male colleague. A doctor is professionally supposed to listen more and be tolerant, patient and caring. To characterize in the language of Dahrendorf, she is a better skilled\(^ {42}\) health-caretaker than her male counterpart. Says a respondent:

Who can take more pain other than a woman? She has prior experience that she has acquired during her engagement with child rearing practices. As we all implicitly accept, a mother is the first health-caretaker of her child. This goes in line with our cultural constructions of Indian womanhood.

\(^{41}\) In primordial stereotypes, it is believed shameful for a man to earn less, be less tall, be less intelligent, be less efficient or be less achiever as compared to his female counterpart. For a revolutionary illustration on the issue, see Barbara Rogers, The Domestication of Women, (Tavistock Publications; London: 1980/1983)

\(^{42}\) Dahrendorf talks about three types of worker in modern society: unskilled, semi-skilled and the skilled. For details, read Ralph Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, (Routledge & Kegan Paul; London: 1959), pp. 49-50.
All the lady doctors asseverate that being female facilitates their on-the-job intervention. A woman is both soft and strong. The feminine qualities that accelerate a doctor’s intervention are the following.

- She is patient.
- She is sensitive.
- She is both empathetic as well as sympathetic.
- She is soft, and yet, firm and tolerant.

Excepting few diseases, patients feel comfortable to explain the symptoms before a lady doctor than a male one. As one respondent reports:

Service and motherhood are synonymous. A woman can be hard and soft depending on the situation. If men are efficient, it is not because of their anatomy. Men are more comfortable with the outer domain; but not necessarily more capable. Being male certainly helps in army, navy and police. But there are certain jobs like those in hospital where ‘being female’ overwhelmingly contributes a lot.

**In Summary:** Before moving to the next section on academic women, it is pertinent to recall the important points of our discussion.

- To begin with the issue of financial background, there is a positive correspondence between the social ranking of the profession and the professionals’ financial background. Most of the respondents (more than 80%) hail from families having good and/or decent financial backbone.
- As regards their marital position, the fieldworker discovers a topsy-turvy as compared to that of policewomen. Excluding one, all the respondents are married. This is symbolic of the degree of desirability of lady doctors in matrimonial negotiations.
- At the level of proclivity, it is sheer volition that has driven such women to prefer the profession. It is also discovered that such volition has been dictated by a number of perspectives such as
  (i) to command respect/esteem in society;
  (ii) to lead a happy and prosperous life and
  (iii) to serve mankind.
- At the level of vision, all the interviewees envisage the profession as a space for self-development, self-expression and self-actualization.
• At the level of effect, it has led to a positive transformation in the life-world of such women in terms of their aspiration, outlook, perception, marital living and the like.

• With regard to the issues of tensions/contradictions/turbulences, jostling for bringing a harmony between home and hospital continues to be an everyday ordeal. Both home and hospital combine together to put her in perpetual trial and tribulation. The presence of small children worsens the situation. The primordial ideology of gender still perpetuates to put woman always in test.

• However, social support acts as a stress-shooter in a lady professional’s life. She needs it at both the ends: at the level of family and at the level of hospital (of fellow colleagues). In other words, a working mother is in dire need of supportive cooperation of her kinsmen as well as fellow workers in order to strike some kind of harmony between home and hospital.

• Sexual harassment is almost alien at the workplace, but not male chauvinism. Howsoever efficient a lady doctor is, she is hardly applauded by her male colleagues. In other words, men still preen to be supercilious.

• Medical profession is a career that is positively correlated with matrimony. Career enhances prospects of marriage. Doctor brides are highly respected and sought after proposals. Moreover the penchant for double-income stimulates men to prefer professionally qualified workingwomen.

• The phenomenon of feminine effect has been a noteworthy discovery of the study. The asseveration of lady doctors that being female helps them intervene better is both convincing and interesting.

SECTION-III
THE ACADEMIC WOMEN

By now, this chapter has delineated a detailed panorama of women professionals in two professions, such as police and doctors. It has also attempted to ascertain the extent to which their life-worlds converge and diverge. While doing this rigorous exercise, the chapter sensitively examines a series of issues confronting women: the challenges they encounter, the contradictions they face, the stress they undergo, the strategies they adopt and the like. This section is aimed at making a sense of academic women and their negotiation with work. Keeping the central
issues in mind as thoroughly highlighted earlier, the fieldworker has taken in-depth interview of 25 college/university academicians of various specialities: history, botany, agriculture, economics, psychology, sanskrit, zoology, philosophy, women studies, politics, sociology and the like. Respecting the convention followed so far, it is advisable to begin with certain fundamental statistical information pertinent to the topos.

Financial Background: As compared to the case of lady doctors, who hail mostly from good and/or decent financial background, the picture depicted in table-4.9 manifests mixed data. Except one, rest of the respondents belong to families having good, decent and average economic strength. Especially, more than 40% of the respondents belong to the good category. In contrast, more than 50% of the interviewees hail from the categories of decent and average. The reason why the population preponderantly hails from such background is explicit. Getting trained in higher education in order to be eligible for college/university academic posts requires a fair degree of investment. Higher education itself, as it is often argued, a luxury good, which the poor cannot easily afford to acquire. That is why the percentage of the poor in the population is almost negligible.

Table 4.9
Financial Background of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decent</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marital Status: In contrast to policewomen, the marital status of women academicians presents a distinguished reality; and in consonance with lady doctors, it depicts an amazing resemblance. If marriage is believed to be the prime dream of every Indian woman, then unlike policewomen, table-4.10 is indicative of high
degree of acceptability of academic brides in matrimonial negotiations. As it comes out very candidly in informants’ speech, there is a tremendous degree of preference for women lecturers in matrimony in Orissa milieu. The reason why grooms prefer academic women to other brides will emerge clearly in subsequent discussions. Despite the fact that lady lecturers are a preferred category of brides in matrimonial market, two out of the twenty-five academic respondents are unmarried and they are in their late 50s. They have taken the decision to stay unmarried owing to certain pressing reasons that are deeply personal and familial in nature.

Table 4.10
Marital Status of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Academics: Reasons to Join

Lipset and Bendix’s idea of socioeconomic determinism gets reaffirmed as we begin to comprehend women’s inclination for the job. One’s family background mostly conditions one’s level of aspiration. Our field experience with regard to choice of a particular profession stands testimony to it. As we have discovered, all the respondents, apart from one, hail from families that do not come under our chosen category of poor.

Table 4.11
Reasons for Taking Teaching as a Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Empirical evidence suggests that the reasons that usually drive women to take up academic profession are two in number: volition and financial independence. 80% of the respondents have chosen academics out of their own volition. The ideas that have influenced such volition are quite impressive. They are the following:

- To excel in one’s own discipline
- It is a hassle-free job.
- Unlike school teaching where one has to teach and be physically present from 10 am to 4 pm, college/university-teaching is a flexi-time job. One can afford to go to this institution as per one’s convenience, that too, for the duration of the particular class only.
- It is a peaceful job.
- It is also an engagement that offers attractive financial return.

For the remaining 20% of the respondents, teaching is just an accident. Their core mission was to get selected for a good job and their objective was very clear: to attain financial independence. They were competing for numerous jobs including academics. Thus, selection in academics has just been fortuitous. In patriarchy where subjection of the second sex persists unabated, economic freedom is considered to be one of the potent means with which women can confront patriarchy, disentangle their subjection and address their agony. Thus, women's desire to be an earning member lies in complete consonance with the buzzword of economic empowerment.

b. Volition Vanquished: From Academic Professionals to Teaching Employees

If the information cited in table number 4.11 is any indication, one feels ultroneously impelled to draw a conclusion that almost all the female professionals in Orissa’s higher academia are serious, sincere, honest and rigorous. But the actual field insight renders one's presumption a non sequitur. One is stunned to discover that the so-called volition has completely evaporated. As has been reiterated earlier, the research is a kind of ethnographic study whereby the fieldworker studies not only the respondent but also her workplace and her functioning. Apart from remaining engaged in an in-depth interview with the respondent, the fieldworker has also observed her classroom teaching from a distance without the knowledge of the
interviewed academician. The idea is to discover the way she functions in classroom; in other words, the way she teaches and engages her students. It is said as well as established that teaching refers to the teacher's creative art who inspires students to engage themselves creatively and make it an actively dialogic exercise. Astonishingly, in practice, the fieldworker has noticed only three women academicians who fit themselves to the concept of ideal and serious academician. In other words, around 90% of the respondents are found to be teaching employees rather than being teaching professionals. Not only have they reduced their stature to that of a typical employee, but also they have drastically changed the meaning and the practice of the art called teaching. For them, teaching is restricted to the following:

- Dictation in classroom, that is, dictating from their own primordial notes that date back to their graduation and post-graduation times.
- Circulating printed and xerox materials in class.
- Covering a particular chapter mostly by suggesting the relevant book/reading material, which must be studied by students in order to comprehend that chapter. Saying to students, "this is a simple topic/chapter. So you read this particular unit from this particular book."
- Giving a charmless non-stop lecture thereby providing little scope for classroom interaction.

The message that the fieldworker ferrets out is quite flabbergasting. Professionalism has turned out to be a mere perfunctory term. The creative angle of teaching has been completely pulverized. As one of the respondents reveals:

There are many lady lecturers who are not seen in department except their teaching period. Most of them resort to the cheap exercise of dictating notes. They are also very expert at suggesting high-sounding foreign-author reading materials (which are usually not available in college library) to project their knowledge ability. They heavily contribute to women lecturers' cheap and non-professional image. And this impression is not totally unfounded.

Such workingwomen have developed a very reductionist attitude to their work. Teaching is usually reduced to dictation and lecture. Even the pursuit of research is no exception. What is most unfortunate to note is that many of them have
a very readymade as well as reductionist perception of research. For them, it implies ticking appropriate response to multiple choice questions printed in an interview schedule supplied by the investigator. This is the only surviving medium to conduct research. Many of them, at the initial stages, even had gone to the extent of asking the fieldworker “give us the multiple choice question-based interview schedule and collect that after half an hour.” They were not ready to accept that there also existed some other techniques of empirical research. Thus, it has been a Himalayan task for the fieldworker to persuade and take them into confidence and to convince them about the availability of various ways of seeking information/data and pursuing research. This smacks of the kind of interest they retain in their career. This is also symptomatic of their ignorance, complacency, stagnation and academic sickness.

Inclination does not necessarily imply intense engagement. Most of the academicians treat academic profession as a mere act of classroom lecture/dictation, which they call teaching. Attending conferences, writing papers or publishing academic work are foreign to their career. On an average, a faculty member is required to take two classes a day. The class duration is 45 minutes, be it a college or a university. Calculatively speaking, their world of academics is over after this 90-minute assignment. Remaining engaged in extra-classroom academic life is alien to their life.

Volition has turned to be a mere velleity. The attitude is clearly one of quid-pro-quo. Such women are driven by Weberian rationality\(^{44}\) in the sense that they view their job as a means to an end. That end is income. The lady professional has an instrumental attitude to her work – one that is suited to meet the priorities she sets, one that would offer collectively better economic/material/mundane gains in relation to other things. Therefore, work, for her, is just an economic pursuit, which she undertakes in a relatively purposive manner in order to maximize her material returns with minimum efforts.

Although it is true that 88% of the respondents treat their vocation merely as a perfunctory engagement, it is also equally stimulating to notice the existence of certain rare professionals, whose experience runs contrary to what we have

explained so far. Despite the preponderance of teaching employees, it is heartening to discover academic professionals albeit few in number. There are three such professionals whose proportion in our sample is 12%. Academics for such professionals comes as a calling. Staunch bibliophiles in their academic life, they devote lots of their time, energy and money in collecting as well as going through latest publications, journals, articles, and newspaper reports relating to their subjects. They derive their intrinsic satisfaction not solely from effective teaching, but also from extensive reading writing, publishing books/articles and renewing their knowledge from time to time. Take for instance, the case of Chapala. Despite shouldering the double-burden as a working mother, she slogs hard to excel as an academic. Not simply a Reader, but she is a writer and an independent academician to be reckoned with. Let us examine another example. Here is an academic who has fallen in love with academics and who has sacrificed her marital dream for the cause of flourishing in her professional sphere both as an ever-growing faculty and as a researcher. Both teaching and research are a calling to her. This is Prof. Asha Hans, an example of successful professional and a professional brain, who teaches Political Science at Utkal University, Bhubaneswar. She has proved herself as a dab hand at teaching, writing and research. To this effect, she has already published seven books, more than forty articles (both national and international), apart from publishing more than forty reports/monographs. Her cumulative excellence in teaching, publishing and research not only garners attention of others but also draws the envy of her colleagues and seniors. Similarly Prof. Manorama Biswal Mahapatra, who teaches Oriya literature at BJB Autonomous College, Bhubaneswar is an exceptionally inspiring role model worth-emulating. A married female professional, Mohapatra is a creative academic who is undaunted by the dual burden of college and kinship. Apart from teaching, writing is her special forte. To this effect, she has more than thirty-four publications and ten conference presentations to her credit. Her uncanny knack has already bagged more than ten awards – regional, state level and national award. She is considered as one of those rare shining stars in the galaxy of Oriya laureates whose sheen will continue to enlighten others till the survival of Oriya as a language.

Exceptional professionals notwithstanding, the general finding comes as a deep shock. It is true, around 80% of the female professionals join this domain out
of their own volition. But after they join, their entry takes toll on academics. Academic rigour becomes the first casualty. Creativity takes back seat. Academics is increasingly viewed as like any other salaried job. The salaried employee in this job begins to benefit monetarily by merely performing a perfunctory act. Ultimately what most unfortunately results is, their volition is vanquished. Therefore, it is no more surprising to discover around 90% of the respondents as teaching employees. But again, it is interesting to note that despite the prepollence of quid-pro-quo approach among majority of the professionals, there are also certain rare assertive academicians who refuse to get buckled under such cheap approach. The irony is, such academicians stay as examples who wish to make a difference in their profession; but again, they cannot be generalized for the larger population as a dominant pattern.

c. Teaching – A flexi-time/Part-time Work

In principle, teaching at the higher education level, is both a full-time and full-fledged job. But in practice, it is a flexi time job, or so to say, it is a part-time job. It is flexi-time/part-time in the sense that (i) it does not involve a 10 am to 5 pm rigid time schedule, (ii) it has an elastic time schedule, (iii) one can return home immediately after taking his/her teaching period and most importantly (iv) one can utilize the entire day, excluding the teaching period, for one’s own familial/individual ends. That is why, it is not only that women slobber over lectureship, but also men to dote upon lecturer life partners. The reasons that count while desiderating the job is that it is a job of comfort and elasticity. Several feel-good factors are at work to explain its female-friendly character:

- No frequent transfer and no transfer at all in the case of university teachers.
- The significant others at one’s workplace are mostly students.
- Convenient and limited work schedule. As we have already cited, one’s average per day work duration is 90 minutes. Moreover, one can schedule this 90 minute-work as per one’s own convenience in consultation with the head of the department (HoD).
- It is a part time work with full-fledged monetary return.
- Job security.
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- A purely teaching job; usually it has no tour, inspection or audit.
- One can afford to leave for home immediately after the hour of teaching.
- Long summer vacation (salaried) and too many holidays.

The implication of such part-time work is palpably astounding. Cent percent of the married professionals subscribe to the view that part-time work helps them integrate career work and family work better and achieve balance. To them, lecturers generally work flexible hours; so it is slightly easier for them to organize their time to fit in both work and family life. Such workingwomen get much time to devote to their familial commitments and thus it helps in routinizing their everyday commitments, effecting discipline in their performance and minimizing work-family clash/conflict. The thesis that emanates from academicians' ethnomethods is that job flexibility and work-family conflict are negatively correlated. Academic occupation has got the property of elasticity that flexibly allows women to comfortably employ an article of calculability in order to handle such occupation to their vantage point. Let us cite the example of Jyoti, a Leuturer. She comes to class on the dot and clocks off to be in time for her familial assignments at home. She does not stay extra time to do anything more than what her job notionally stipulates. Jyoti's strategy is just the tip of the iceberg. This is a general pattern resorted to by almost all married professionals as they have precisely plumped for this profession, which allows some kind of flexibility. And moreover, previous studies establish that part-time kind of flexible job helps women workers bring a balance between home and work.45 Our empirical finding represents another corroboration to calcify such viewpoints/conclusions.

To schematize in consonance with the views of Anthony Giddens, academic work is no longer a full-time engagement; it now requires only a part of the whole day to perform one’s specific task. This implies, people spend a few hour (say one hour or 90 minutes/two hours) of the day in the struggle of their economic gain and

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45 A. Myrdal & V. Klein’s study (1956) has lauded the fact that by taking part-time jobs women could keep in touch with both labour market, at the same time break up the monotony of housework and, importantly, harmonize their responsibilities as workers and mothers. T. Warren’s study also reconfirms that part-time working holds the potential to provide women with the best of the two worlds of home and employment. For an encyclopaedic illustration of the thesis, see, Tracey Warren, "Working Part-Time: Achieving a Successful Work-Life Balance" in The British Journal of Sociology, vol.55, issue-1, 2004, pp.99-122.
consume the extra time for their private purposes.\textsuperscript{46} This is not to enounce that modern occupations are gradually turning to be part time jobs. Rather, with due respect to all occupations including academics, this is an endeavour to delineate the elastic character of certain (say, for instance, academic) professions. To state in the tone of Dahrendorf, leisure varies from job to job; flexibility in working hours, assignments and duration of everyday work also differ from one job to another.\textsuperscript{47}

d. Balancing Home and Employment: Problems and Possibilities

We have already stated that lectureship is a female-friendly job in the sense that a woman can take advantage of the flexible character of its time schedule. But such flexibility is no guarantee for a perfect harmony between home and work. Because, such \textit{harmony} is contingent upon the nature of familial pressures, one’s own approach, co-workers’ cooperation at workplace and the character of the paid work. As Ginn and Sandell annunciate, stress from combined demands of home and employment varies according to the family circumstances and employment characteristics.\textsuperscript{48} More than 90\% of the respondents emphasize the preponderance of family over their profession. Excelling in one’s vocation is a different thing altogether. But when it comes to the question of a married workingwoman jostling for a balancing act, patriarchal considerations rule the roost. Opines an informant:

For a married woman, housework is duty. It is sacred as well as sacrosanct. This is not to say that it is no work, rather it is an obligatory kind of work to be performed without any material anticipation. It becomes a voluntary compulsion as you initiate your own family. In addition, it’s an integral imperative to family peace. Career is ok. But it should not be allowed to devastate your personal life.

Though a lecturer, her worth is gauged more in terms of performance as a homemaker. As respondents aver, housework is family-centric which inculcates emotional as well as mental happiness; whereas, paid-work is society/state-centric as well as individual-centric that gives intellectual satisfaction. In some way or the

\textsuperscript{46} The central topos of the argument is unambiguous: that is, working hour has been fluid. For a general idea on the theme, see, Anthony Giddens, \textit{The Nation-State and Violence}, (Polity Press; Cambridge: 1996), pp. 186-206.

\textsuperscript{47} Refer, Ralph Dahrendorf, \textit{Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society}, (Routledge & Kegal Paul; London: 1959), p. 70.

other, both family and work influence each other. It is absolutely a cumbersome task to neutralize their influence on each other to zero. Housework and office work affect each other.

Family plays a dual role in one’s life; that is, it accelerates as well as extenuates. These acceleration and extenuation depend mostly, among many other things, upon one’s family support. This is especially so, when a woman juggles the demands of a mother, wife, bahu, homemaker and a professional. It is true that husbands and in-laws encourage their employed status primarily for double-income. But they do not necessarily share the burden of double work. Says a respondent:

Husbands support the idea that woman should pursue her career. But they do not share homework. It always stays a woman’s department. And family is more important for her than job as she can neither live without it nor ignore it after her marriage.

Cent percent of the respondents propone that marriage stays a handicap in their career. In addition, being mother makes the situation much worse. It plays havoc in one’s professional growth. All of them argue that a determined spinster can better flourish in her profession; or else, a single/childless woman can also do justice to her employment and aspiration, if she is committed. It is true that academic profession is a flexi-time work. That is, on an average a woman needs to provide less than 2 hours per day for her teaching periods. But, only teaching two periods a day without reading latest books/journals on the subject, without renewing/revising/improvising one’s knowledge and without contributing meaningfully to the discipline, renders the very career of academics a perfunctory one. Professional satisfaction would emerge only when she devotes herself to an all-round development of her career. One needs to update one’s wisdom, go through latest publications, participate in conferences relating to one’s discipline, and share one’s own imagination/proposition/argument by writing papers, articles and books. All these things can happen only when:

- one is a dab hand at dodging constraints, forging avenues and negotiating work to one’s own vantage point;
- one is adept at managing time and juggling contradictory commitments;
- one has the ignition to achieve, excel and establish and, most importantly;
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- one has the fortitude to confront patriarchy, negotiate with patriarchal demands without compromising one’s own aspiration/career and
- one attaches equal importance to one’s career.

Around 88% of the respondents appear to have internalized patriarchy along with its corresponding beliefs in toto. They have not only internalized, but also they use it as an important justification for not being able to excel in career. Many have a mea culpa attitude for not being able to perform like their male counterparts. As a respondent reveals:

We, women, have a different life pattern. We get up in the morning; prepare coffee/tea; cook food for the entire family. It has to be ready by 9 am. We serve food to children and husband (in-laws if present). Then we ourselves eat and leave for college; return home before lunch; serve lunch to family members. Then, take rest; get up at 4 o’ clock and prepare afternoon high tea. The routine gets renewed for the evening/night dinner. We are the last to go to bed and first to rise. Tell me, where is the time left to update, renew and revise our knowledge? But men have the full day in their hands. They are free to thrive in academics, they are free to take control of college administration/examination; they are free to indulge in college politics; they are also free not to do anything and sit idle.

Family itself is a full-time occupation. It presents a bundle of responsibilities that a homemaker is culturally supposed to do. Amidst all such familial responsibilities, when it comes to the task of updating, renovating and improvising at the professional front, she appears to feel like beaten and lacklustre. An ideal working wife/mother is confronted with a bundle of contradictions: kinship commitments versus career commitments. Recourse to one affects performance in the other. There is reciprocity of burdens and interference. Balancing both kinds of commitments is one’s existential compulsion. On the one hand, she develops a sense of familial insufficiency; on the other, she feels herself to be a casual professional. The situation further aggravates if she has small tiny tots to be noursled at home. Integration of contradictory roles depends much on family satisfaction. Family still calls the shots as marriage is regarded as the sine qua non for Indian woman, whose worth of womanhood is ascertained through the prism of motherhood. Thus, extra-familial roles including those relating to one’s career revolve around the centrality of family commitments.
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Juggling contradictory roles is not that easy and straightforward. Still there are women professionals who have the gumption to grasp the nettle, who refuse to internalize patriarchy blindly, who call the shots themselves, who are firm not to buckle under the pressure of dual burden or that of patriarchy, who have emerged successful in instituting harmony in their scale of commitments and who have excelled resplendently in their career. Though their proportion is around 10% to the total population, yet their splendour is worth-emulating. The icons are none other than Asha, Manorama and Chapala who are almost undeterred by their family constraints. Besides Asha, who has maintained the life of a spinster, the other two married professionals have never allowed their family to stint their career growth. They are respected for their professional accomplishments. Chapala, for example, resplends by dint of her teaching, research, writings and other creative works. Asha, a reputed academic, is not only ignited by her unrivalled achievement motivation, but possesses an uncanny knack for being the crème de la crème in her professional circle. The case of Manorama is equally interesting. Juggling the demands of an exacting professional life and the pulls and pressures of raising children, running a home, being a wife and a socially active person, all rolled into one, Manorama emerges as a consummate time-manager, creative writer and an eminent professional soul. These women juxtapose, maneuver and adjust, but flow of neither stream gets ever stopped. It seems, patriarchy has failed to let them down. It is very difficult to obstruct the sheen and endeavour of such adventurous women. It would be like forcing the sun to hide its rays.

It is aptly observed that both family and profession affect each other. It is also true that familial commitments are stunting in nature. Motherhood and the presence of small children are no less constraining. Patriarchy defines family as sui genesis for women. Thus it does not come as a surprise for the fieldworker when he discovers around 88% of the respondents being firmly and blindly dictated by cultural expectations of patriarchy and who treat every other aspect of life secondary to family. Although they attach importance to career, such importance is economic in nature. That is, it is for the stake of salary. They are, no doubt, professionals; but bereft of any serious professional zeal, activism, commitment and creativity. But there are inspiring women like Asha, Chapala and Manorama, who vindicate the truism that it is possible to
• fight against patriarchy,
• neutralize inhibiting forces and attenuate familial constraints,
• call one’s own shots,
• cobble contradictory roles,
• harmonize work and family, and
• resplend as a career woman

It is preposterous to presume that such resplendent career women have less familial constraints. What is notable about their life is that they are not only firmly ambitious and determined in their journey, but also they have mastered the art of conquering both the world – private and the public.

e. Male Chauvinism in Perception and in Practice

As the fieldworker begins to explore the issue of male chauvinism in academics, it tickles his memory and nudges his attention back to revisit the section on policewomen. Both the professions of police and academics share a strong similarity. Like policewomen, cent percent of the academic respondents constate that male chauvinism pervades academia. All the informants intromit that women in general are seen as casual, non-serious, lackadaisical and salary-minded lecturers. It does not matter whether they are sincere/serious in their profession or not. Every female lecturer feels that regardless of her performance, male colleagues perceive her as a just, manageable, decent/casual lecturer. As a respondent opines:

Men think, a women lecturer does not teach well. She cannot perform her task satisfactorily. *In academics, it does not matter how serious you are. What matters is your biology: whether you are a male lecturer or a female lecturer.* Irrespective of your performance, you are dubbed a money-minded workingwoman. It is not that teaching is an exclusively male-friendly job. It is absurd to speculate that all male faculty members are good lecturers. There are also many bad male academicians: some of them control college administrations/examination and by-pass their primary responsibility. Some of them indulge in college politics. And some of them do nothing. Even among men, there are very few persons who are seriously academic.

Patriarchal considerations still call the shots. A woman lecturer is first seen as a woman, then as a lecturer. She is perceived through the ideology surrounding gender, which stipulates her primary location in family. Howsoever brilliant her
academic endeavour is, it receives no encomium. To be counted as a reputed, high-sounding and happening faculty, one has to be an overactive professional even beyond teaching hours. But kinship constraints do not allow a married lecturer to take part in college activities beyond her teaching schedule. But, men are at their liberty to get involved in extra-teaching activities of the college and get noticed. As one of the interviewees speaks:

In our college teaching community, men are numerically small. But the community/college is male-dominated; because, men have time to contribute to college affairs/politics beyond their class periods. But a female academician cannot stay for an extra minute in college as she has got important responsibilities that are integral to her identity as a woman: that of a bahu, maa, stree and homemaker.

The question here is not ascertaining who is a better lecturer. The moot query lies in comprehending the stigma that is traditionally attached to a class of individuals (especially women) on biological grounds that consequently obscures their fame, image and identity as a lecturer. Even in public domain, a woman still resides as a soft, feminine, sweet and sequacious being in men’s imagination. Men are yet to reconcile with her competent professional image. She lives as a typified Bharatiya Naree in men’s obscurantist psyche. As an informant aptly asseverates:

The superiority men show is false superiority; that is rooted in their racial unconsciousness. Even professors with Ph.D./D. Lit./D.Phil. degrees have male chauvinism. They are still under medieval shadow. Males do not like to come and sit before a female HoD (head of the department). They see her as less competent and less serious. Men usually extend favour, help and appreciate those women who become docile. They resist those who are assertive.

On the one hand, it is true the germ called male chauvinism, which stigmatizes its female constituents and their contributions and tends to glorify its male members and their efficiency, has infested academic sphere. On the other hand, it is not untrue that patriarchy very often puts woman in disadvantage. A married workingwoman is trying to ride two horses at one time. It is more a social compulsion to harmonize kinship and career, which she cannot evade. Contradiction is an inevitability. As she sets out to carry both ends of the log, it is natural that most often she is susceptible to make compromises. As one of the interviewees informs:

Those who think that a particular lady lecturer is not hundred percent serious, should also sensitise that she is not idle either. Men spend time in
more futile ways by gossiping at the tea stall against the Government affairs, university affairs, about lady lecturers, girl-students, ladies’ hostel and the like; whereas, during that time a lady worker goes back home to serve her family members. That is, to do some household work. In the evening, male co-workers visit others’ residence for light talk, sit on culverts, go to movie hall or for shopping, throng liquor shop. Whereas, female workers do all the household work, teach children, supervise their homework, and look after their family. In the morning the male worker goes for morning walk, reads newspaper with tea; whereas, his female counterpart prepares morning food. She does not have any time to criticize others. She is burdened with household work where men and money are not involved. It is far more a difficult task to update her knowledge and engage in higher learning, writing and research.

The message of the above paragraph is really very profound as well as thought provoking. It is observed that familial responsibility is integral to woman’s identity, constraining in nature and found in general throughout the life-world of all married women. Integral constraints notwithstanding, one’s undying zeal for career growth and one’s familial circumstances (i.e., nature of husband’s support, nature of in-laws support, number of children, other surrounding demands/constraints) vary from person to person and from family to family. And this variation substantiates why

• some professionals feel stinted to flourish in the desired direction,

• some professionals resplend astoundingly and cumulatively,

• some professionals adorn the vesture of a typical teaching employee, or

• some professionals develop casual-professional approach,

• some professionals develop guilty-mom syndrome,

• every professional feels some sort of inadequacy/insufficiency or the other.

Another manifestation of concrete male chauvinism relates to the assignment of administrative responsibilities to exclusively male personnel, which, in turn, assassinates women’s professional verve and dissuades them from being academically active in college life. Cent percent of the respondents constate that administrative responsibilities in educational administration are usually assigned to male academicians. Females are yet to be deemed fit to hold administrative positions. Be it the charge of examination-head, co-coordinator of examinations,
heads of various committees etc., the person in chair is always a male. Only the position of the HoD (head of the department) is an exception. This is because, it is not a nominated post; one assumes the charge on rotational basis. Says one respondent:

Men hold all the top posts. Men head all the committees. There is a conscious conspiracy against women to keep them away from educational administration. Men think, it is below their masculine dignity to accept women in positions of authority. Vice-Chancellors and Principals are a strong party to this conspiracy. It appears, as if women are bereft of the qualities to function in positions of educational administration. In colleges/universities, power is always with men.

It is ludicrous to imagine that women do not like administrative responsibilities. It is far more premature to assume that the segregation of women from positions of educational administration is peculiar and confined to Orissa only. Rather, the scenario at the national level in India is not much different. As Padma Ramachandran appropriately puts it,

In the field of education in India, one finds very few women at top levels such as Vice-Chancellor/Principal/Dean/Director of Public Instruction, even though there are large numbers of women who choose teaching as their profession. The reality is that women’s participation at decision-making levels in any field is dismally low, considering the fact that they constitute almost half of the population. The picture is the same in educational administration... In 1992, there were seven women and 98 men as Vice-Chancellors, two women and 28 men as Pro-Vice-Chancellors, two women and 100 men as Registrars, and one woman and nine men as Directors of Continuing and Adult Education. As academic heads, 57 women and 603 men were Deans.... That women are lagging behind men in taking to educational opportunities possibly contributes to the fact that women are not visible in large numbers at higher echelons in educational administration. But there are many within the profession who are very capable and could wear the mantle of leadership easily.... The power structure in institutions quite often inhibits women.49

f. Conquering Career and the Consequent Transformation

Although it is true that joining career implies assuming a life of perennial stress, it is myopic to conclude that career, for a woman, is devoid of any positive

implications. As the totality of interviewees concur, career inculcates a series of effects in one’s personality. For instance, let us read the following:

- It gives rise to in-built confidence.
- Outlook, liberty and awareness.
- Growing intellectual horizon.
- Parental promotion: that is, every parent wants that his/her daughter should excel in education, be qualified and take up a career. In all probability, this is to fetch her a good matrimonial match with minimum gift (dowry)
- Men’s intransigent gender belief is gradually being substituted by flexibly tolerant attitude. As women continue to knock the socks of men in all domains including those of education and employment, men gradually feel compelled to elasticize their attitude and transcend/hush up their hostility, as they realize that there is a risk in not being apparently accommodative. One of the informants rightly makes it:

There is a growing sensitization among men that women can perform equally well. There is an increasing consciousness regarding the rights of women. An educated/employed woman can deal with harassment or torture much more efficiently. Most importantly, women’s gradual intervention in domains of education and employment has become one of the irreversible postulates of human civilization. So, the only option left before a man is, ‘accept, appreciate, adjust, accommodate, cooperate, co-exist or be silent’.

Despite metamorphic changes in men’s prejudice and women’s location, one ideology remains almost unaltered: that is, the ideology of the breadwinner. In the opinion of all married professionals, their earning is supplementary to family income. Such professionals feel to be contributing to the common economic pool. With their earning, they cannot claim to be the guardian, indeed, financial guardian of the family over and above their husbands. The upshot that erupts from respondents’ view is that a married workingwoman may have a high income, but she does not claim to be the financial guardian of the family. Moreover, it is culturally as well socially considered undesirable for a woman to assert her superiority over her husband or claim to be the breadwinner (except in cases where the husband is a parasite) of her family. Says an informant:
Husband is always regarded as the murabi (guardian) of the family. He is both the breadwinner and financial guardian. Although the wife contributes financially, it is unethical on her part to preen to be the breadwinner.

One of the important contributions of career to women’s life-world is their growing acceptability, desirability and demand in matrimonial market. In particular, women lecturers are on a high demand owing to the nature of their work as discussed earlier. There is an increasing preference for working brides in matrimony. The ideal domesticized, docile, soft-speaking bahu is gradually giving way to educationally qualified, employed and decent bride. The primary reason for such preference for workingwomen is double income. It is her economic worth that attracts considerably good proposals than her individual womanhood. To schematize in Marxian paradigm, economic value becomes the very basis for the consideration of other values/relationship. As one respondent puts it:

Man’s needs have escalated. He prefers to marry a workingwoman primarily for the attraction of double-income. The family can afford to maintain a decent standard of living. One can provide good education to his children. One can also maintain a conspicuous life style.

In what appears to be a surprise for a student of Indian society, marriage, which is considered as a sacred social institution, is often guided by economic considerations (that is, double income). Pursuing a career opens up the door to a series of marital proposals, wherein the bride’s family gets the chance to choose the best one from among the received ones. Every career woman feels, she is no more a liability on her parents and she is in a position to take her own decision. She is an economically productive being who can even, under special circumstances, afford to remain spinster for the rest part of her life. The workingwoman gets a sense of self-sufficiency and she feels confident to lead a dignified living in society, either as a married woman or as an unmarried one.

Concluding Points: After making a thorough perusal of the issue of work and academic women, it is essential to recapitulate some of the important points in a nutshell before moving on to the next section.

50 Marx constates economic relationship is the very basis of other type of relationships. For an intense understanding, read, Karl Marx, Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy, edited by T.B. Bottomore & M. Rubel, (Penguin Books; New York: 1984), pp. 67-89.
Chapter Four

• As regards economic background, around 70% of the academic women hail from families having good and/or decent financial backbone. 28% of the informants belong to the average category. And the representation from the poor category is palpably insignificant.

• Academic women's marital status reflects an amazing congruity with that of the doctors. It's no more a secret that lecturer brides are on high demand. Therefore, it is no more astounding to find more than 90% of academic women as married.

• As regards their conquest of the profession, 80% of the respondents emphasize that they are in this pursuit out of their volition. The remaining 20% have taken up the profession not out of their passion, but it has come as an accident or as a matter of chance; Their sole objective is to pursue any desirable career with a view to be financially secured and independent. Even as 80% of the population speak of volition, the factors that have shaped their volition are not necessarily to resplend academically: others being i.e.

  - it's a hassle-free job,
  - its flexi time/ part time character with full-time salary,
  - peace

• In contradistinction to the 'distinction' of the profession, nearly 90% of the respondents seem to be teaching employees and not academic professionals. That is, a majority of academic women appear to be teaching employees rather than serious academicians. Profession stands to be a mere perfunctory act. People have a reductionist attitude to teaching. Volition gets reduced to velleity. Academics is seen like any other salaried job. One's approach is one of quid-pro quo, purely salary centric.

• This is not to conclude that sincere professionals in the serious sense of the term never exist. There do exist serious professionals who are passionate academicians: teachers, researchers and writers; all rolled into one. But then they constitute just 12%. They stand significant by their presence although their numerical proportion is insignificant. They prove to be a dab hand at teaching, research, writing and publications.
• At the level of preference, most women prefer lectureship because of its flexi
time/part time character. Moreover, the character of its timing is fluid. This
helps women integrate home and work slightly better.

• The thesis that emanates from the discussion is that job-flexibility and work­
family conflict are negatively correlated; in other words, they are inversely
proportional to each other.

• Job-flexibility notwithstanding, a workingwoman’s life is studded with stress
and constraints. Of course, it varies from one workingwoman to the other
depending upon the following factors;
  - the nature of one’s familial pressure/demands/support system,
  - the character of the paid work and
  - one’s own approach (including one’s determination)

• At the level of supremacy, more the 90% of the employed women asseverate
the prepollence of family over one’s job. This implies, the ideology that
family is the culturally sanctioned sacrosanct resort for every married woman
reigns supreme. Family is sui generis. It plays dual role: it extenuates and
also accelerates one’s performance. Such extenuation and acceleration differ
according to the following conditions:
  - nature of financial support and encouragement,
  - volume, density and intensity of familial commitments and
  - one’s own approach to the situation.

• *Breadwinner* still stays a male term in women’s imagination.

• Motherhood is the highest of all constraints for a workingwoman. The
presence of small children tots up to the problem.

• Juggling dual role remains the perennial contradiction for every married
professional.

• As regards the role allocation in educational administration, Academics
continues to be a male-hegemonized profession both in perception and
practice.
Constraints and contradictions notwithstanding, career is a major boon for women. Its effect on their life is evolutionary, revolutionary and reformatory in nature.

SECTION-IV
WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS

Under the rubric of women and work, we have so far trawled deeper into the issue pertinent to policewomen, lady doctors and academic women. This section explores the case of women administrators quite extensively. Traditionally, the phrase ‘woman and officer’ has so far been incompatible with public perception; whereas the phrase ‘man and officer’ fits quite convenient to people’s thinking. As women are increasingly entering the domain of government administration in the capacity of officers and successfully jockeying up for higher echelons of bureaucracy, it is stimulating to study such women who plump for the so-called men’s preserve setting aside all stigmas and by breaking the glass ceiling.

Marital Status: The marital status of women administrators shares certain degree of similarity with that of the policewomen. Around one-fourth of the respondents are unmarried. Like policewomen, the marital prospect of a woman administrator is not that bright, easy and smooth going. Despite achieving positions of administrative importance in government administration, nearly one-fourth of them remain unmarried.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As regards the age level of the spinsters, excluding one who was 29 all others were in their 30s, 40s and 50s. This implies in a region like Orissa, which is almost traditional in nature, all the spinster respondents have crossed their marriageable age. Marriage turns to be a daydream in spite of their astounding success at the
professional front. The reason, as such respondents utter, is understandably heart wrenching. It can be, at a broader level, located in our patriarchal set up that shapes individual’s psyche, prejudice and socio-psychological considerations. The reasons that account for women’s spinsterhood are the following.

- Women officers are perceived to be authoritarian and dominating in nature. Thus, men are usually indifferent/averse to get married to such women who are perceived as such.

- Men are disinterested to marry those women who are superior to them in official rank.

- A man of the equivalent official rank hesitates to marry a lady officer. He is afraid, he may not be able to establish his supremacy; he may fail to subjugate her. As she is also an officer with administrative raw power, she may defy his familial *patidev-patiparameshwar* (husband as God) authority. Every man naturally wants to marry a woman who should be a docile wife as well as homemaker. His parents do not wish to bring a *bahu* (daughter-in-law), who, in all likelihood, would not obey them and their son and over whom they can have no control.

- Lack of proper match also compels the lady officer to stay spinster.

_The prejudice against this class of women runs contrary to their marital prospects._ Women’s aspirations and the patriarchal prejudice that impinges upon men’s perception are antithetical to each other. Consequently, this prevents women from receiving considerably decent matrimonial proposals. And, in the absence of a decent proposal to get married, the only option left for an achieving woman is to take the bull by its horns and remain a spinster. Although it is galling to come across this sort of unusual phenomenon, yet it is chimerical to ignore it completely; because, such a variety of patriarchal milieu is not specific to Orissa only. This may be found in other parts of the globe as well. For instance, recently a study carried out at the University of Michigan (Washington) reveals two generalizations: one, powerful women are at a disadvantage in the marriage market because men may prefer to marry less accomplished women; two, men are more likely to want to marry women who are their assistants at work rather than their colleagues or
The insight obtained from Orissa is another significant finding that goes one step forward to vindicate many other similar findings like those of Michigan University. In a milieu where marriage is regarded as a cultural quintessential for every Indian woman, staying spinster implies an invitation to a squillion of stigmas and criticisms. And it is really a great challenge for such women to tough it out.

Financial Background Of Respondents: There is a clear congruity in the financial background of lady officers and that of the academic women and lady doctors. The proposition 'what an individual aspires for/aims at coincides with and is conditioned by what he/she is' gets reconfirmed in the study of women doctors, academic and administrative women. It is starkly luculent in the following table that around 90% of the administrative women hail from good and/or decent financial background. The rest comprise of women coming from families having average financial background. What is conspicuously missing and demands attention here is that not a single respondent in the group of administrative officers belongs to the financially poor category.

Table 4.13
Financial Background of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decent</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Women in Administration: Exploring the Predilections

The factors that have shaped women's choice of the profession are quite unique. Table 4.14 is self-explanatory in this respect. What is interesting to note is that not a single respondent has opted for the profession out of her volition, passion and inner zeal to serve the public. The factors that have attracted women into the

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51 The finding of the study has been published in a national daily. See "Men are attracted to Subordinate Females" in The Pioneer. December 11, 2004.
profession are purely extrinsic in character; not owing to any intrinsic penchant for public service. However, for 20% of the respondents, administrative job comes a lucky coincidence. This has been one among many jobs that they have applied for and the first one that they have got through. For this section of respondents, the principal objective has been to attain financial independence.

Table 4.14
Respondents’ Inclination for Administration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volition</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Freedom</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lure of the Job</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Astoundingly, 80% of the respondents have been enticed by the lure of the profession. The lure that has completely moulded women’s decision to slobber over administration consists of the following attractions:

- Power
- Prestige
- Networking
- Provision of accompanying perks, monetary benefits, scope for extra income and other governmental entitlements such as vehicle, attendants, etc.

Thus it is perspicuous from the information supplied by the informants that women have taken up administrative profession solely to enjoy its power, prestige and privilege (3Ps). They have been driven by the glamour associated with the job. In other words, the 3Ps have been the sole attraction for which majority of the women choose this profession; the approach is one of quid pro quo. It relates exclusively to the 3Ps rather than to any inner passion for public service. Thus, professional performance represents a mere formality, a perfunctory act, and an assigned responsibility that has to be willy-nilly performed as a part of one’s official task.
b. Blending Job and Family: Stress, Constraints and Compromises

As we have already noted, women administrators feel gung-ho about the glamour quotient of their profession. Although they are overwhelmed by the 3Ps (i.e. power, prestige and privilege) of administration, they also feel equally underwhelmed by its stressful repercussions. Stress compounds when the incumbent in question is a woman, especially a married woman. Lady officers consider their job stressful for the following considerations.

- It is a strictly 10-5 job.
- Unlike teaching, this is a job sans time-flexibility.
- Frequency of transfer.
- Commuting is almost a part of the job, which is again time-consuming.
- Administrative position is not always a desk job; very often it involves tours, inspection, routine field visits and beyond the office hours.

For a woman, particularly a married one, all these aspects are constraining in nature. For instance, commuting has its own share of demands. The time consumed in commuting falls outside the schedule of 10 to 5. Things become much more challenging if one has to commute in public transport facilities. This is more so when one is not provided with official conveyance. Cent percent of the respondents opine that time is the greatest constraint of all. It is really difficult for a married woman to follow the strict timing and remain away from family everyday. Family receives insufficient attention as one begins to combine family and job. Says a Deputy Director:

I leave home at 7.30 am and reach home at 7.30 p.m. I spend the active hour of the day outside home. Although there is a domestic help to take care of household chores, no one can substitute a mother's role. I am completely a non-performing guilty mother. Once you take up these kinds of jobs, you can neither be a perfect officer nor a perfect homemaker. I am mentally at my home (with my children) when I am in office.

The married professional is in a constant nisus to stave off stress and institute a reconciliatory formula in order to harmonize the pursuit of opposites: kinship and contract. To schematize in Tonnies's terms, the former relates to Gemeinschaft and
the latter to *Gesellschaft*.\(^{52}\) *Gemeinschaft* (that is, family) is the world of emotional bond, close and face-to-face ties, intimate and primary relationship. *Gesellschaft* (that refers here to profession to which one has a quid-quo attitude) is linked with *public life* that is deliberately entered upon and it is based on impersonality, heterogeneity and secondary relationship. Unlike Tonnies's paradigm, for a woman professional it is *not a passage from Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft*; rather she is in a perpetual endeavour to retain the two simultaneously; juggle their divergent demands, jostle for drawing an equilibrium kind of situation whereby both the worlds co-exist with minimum conflict. However, it is also a truism that drawing a perfect balance between the two worlds is a myth. What every professional strives to gain is a *manageable balance*. Again, such *balance* does not emerge without any cost. One has to make many compromises in order to blend and balance; because, as the respondents reveal, to be a perfect homemaker and a perfect professional is an existential impossibility. Homemaker itself is a round-the-clock engagement. Therefore, going for a paid job implies cutting down on one's primary engagement, that is, familial commitment. On the other hand, cent percent of the married respondents aver that although both job and family are important, yet family for a woman is of paramount importance. In family, one fulfils, for oneself, a whole range of interests/needs; whereas, job satisfies only one specific end, that is, financial need (along with achievement need). Thus, the importance of family is more vital than that of the employment. On the contrary, as neither can be completely sacrificed, the choice gets narrowed down to striking a middle path. When it comes to the issue of priority, family is the priority number one. Therefore, although a woman perseveres to de-stress her by fulfilling both the commitments — familial and professional — she tries to make as less compromise as possible on the familial front in order to perform the balancing act. In the process, she makes more compromises on the professional front. The reasons are obvious. One, family is paramount. Second, it consists of her kinsmen, i.e., husband, children and in-laws, whom she is supposed to love and take care of; therefore it cannot be neglected. Third, job also fulfils certain vital ends. Fourth, balancing act is the only way out.

\(^{52}\) For an extensive illumination on the theme, see Ferdinand Tonnies, *Community and Association* (1887. English Trans; London: 1955)
There are a number of constraints that disrupt the balancing act, which a married professional struggles to achieve. It goes without saying, family implies a series of commitments that one is obliged to perform. All the working mothers concur that motherhood emerges to be the biggest constraint that affects and attenuates every woman’s career. And the irony is that, ‘being a mother’ is the greatest happiness for a woman and, as it is aptly said, there is no substitute for it. Working mothers cut down on work to spend time with their babies. They are in a regular attempt to avoid tour and travel, work less and manage schedules. As one officer asserts:

I feel guilty going out, my baby waiting all the day. I am his world. It is natural that I cannot work full-time in office. Yet I am persevering to be both, a mother and a career woman too. My baby requires that I be with him throughout the day. On the other hand, my office requires that I be in my office all the day. But I try to arrange maximum time to be with my kid.

Noursling tiny tots in family along with accomplishing tasks in office is really a tedious one. Although it jogs our memory about the rhetoric of employment as one of the roads to empowerment, yet we fault often in identifying the ordeal being their attempt to cope with their assignments. Even if one’s children are grown up, she has also a chain of household responsibilities that accompany her identity of a homemaker. The ideology of the homemaker presupposes that a good homemaker is one who performs all the household works herself. Thus today’s workingwoman hesitates to ask her husband to help her in housework. Empirical insights prove that even where her partner is supportive of her career and takes on a share of household tasks, the fact remains that it is the woman who has to fit maternity into the scheme of things and who almost always has to juggle schedules and commitments smoothly for the whole family. It does not matter whether a woman is a career woman or not; what matters is, family is her primary department, whereas others in it are almost non-sharing members, so far as the burden of homemaker’s role is concerned. The plight of married professionals in other parts of the world may not be much different. For instance, Mary Saso, based on her study of Japanese working women offer similar findings.53 Recently a national daily reported, women in general have

53 Mary Saso concludes that it does not matter what profession a woman pursues. Housework is her task. She has to perform everything at any cost while her partner may be wallowing in his own career and leisure activities. See, Mary Saso, Women in the Japanese Workplace, (Hilary Shipman; London: 1990), p.263.
been observed to put in fewer hours of work than men; avoid risky or unpleasant jobs. The situation noticed in the case of married women administrators is no different. The reason is simple. A woman divides herself into many. She does several things at the same time. She represents a confluence of divergent roles and her contribution to each role is contingent upon the degree of priority that she attributes to it. Thus, it is usual that some roles receive greater attention and some others get lesser.

It is true that family support is a crucial strength for married professionals but that does not necessarily mean that the family members physically come forward to share her familial burden. Ultimately, making compromises on the professional front becomes a familial compulsion. Therefore, it is no more surprising to listen to married officers who justify their occupational negligence on the ground that it goes in their familial interest. Says an Executive Magistrate:

Starting a family necessarily means cutting down on the quality and quantity of work. I have certainly cut down on work that involves traveling and demands longer hours. Because, my child insists on me being there for her; my societal (familial) role supposes that I do my household duty myself.

A married professional dons many incarnations to blend the demands of both the domains and minimize the resultant clash and conflicts. One can constate that she is biting off more than she can chew. Unfortunately, no other option is left and neither side can be completely ignored. At a fundamental level, she cannot afford to nettle her kinsmen nor can she abruptly gall her significant others at the workplace. She is highly vulnerable to ending up with helpless compromises. She relies heavily on her informal-personalized rapport/equation with her superordinates, colleagues and subordinates. It is this informal personalized understanding with the fellow workers that

- facilitates her efforts to make compromises on her professional front,
- takes care of her truancy and absenteeism,

54 "Where Are All the Women Gone" in HT Power Jobs/ Hindustan Times, February 17, 2004, p.1
- sets aside all sorts legal problems that otherwise would have been detrimental to her career;
- helps her reach and leave office flexibly and
- makes her effort to integrate job with family possible. Says an officer:

It is possible to manage double work with the cooperation of significant others in respective spheres. She has to win the goodwill of people in both the domains: office and home. Yet, it is difficult to be a perfect housewife or an officer.

Although the burden of balancing act is almost absent in the case of spinster professionals, it is premature to proclaim that their life is de-stressed and unproblematic. For instance, the on-the-job gendered experience is equally underwhelming and frustrating for women professionals in general: married and unmarried alike. We shall delve deeper into this dimension in subsequent analysis.

To recapitulate what has been thrashed out in detail, the life-world of a working mother represents a perpetual state of stress. She is bogged down by her endless effort to de-stress herself, guilty-mum syndrome and physical exhaustion. This renders herself a perennial agonistes, who perseveres continually to resolve conflicts and reduce contradictions. All the day, stress and tension pile up. She is in a constant endeavour to practise the art of multitasking: a professional, mother, wife, daughter-in-law. She knows when to say no to work. Prioritization and selective performance are the means she employs to de-stress and harmonize. That’s the only way she gears up to face the burden everyday.

c. Prepollence of Family

It is true that women scotch the ideology of domestication, join public employment and build up their professional identity independent of kinship. It is also surprisingly true that they situate family over and above their job. This is symbolic of the fact that family still rules the roost even after women breaking the shackles of patriarchy, pursuing employment in public domain and attaining financial liberation. Cent percent of the married professionals reiterate the predominance of family over employment. Says an administrative officer:

Office work is a contractual work. It is a mechanical, duty-bound occupation. Family is a protective institution. Working for family is always
a pleasant experience. Even if you overwork, there is joy in it. Although a married woman pursues an occupation, her 100% involvement lies always in her family, not in her profession. The reason is simple. Job exists to support family and not vice versa.

To stress the obvious, although a woman carries the double work burden, family remains always paramount. Despite several household chores, it is also a space for social support, emotional strength, ultimate resort, rest, relief, respite and recreation. Says an officer:

Family is an emotional unit. You cannot delegate your emotion. Once you start this unit, wherever you work, you can’t suppress its attachment. Even if you excel in your job, your ecstasy comes from your contribution to familial responsibilities. Profession is important in the sense that it meets certain specific needs. But family fulfills a wide range of requirements that can’t be duly met by any other agency.

*Women professionals’ emphasis upon family signifies the superiority of ascriptive loyalty over achieved ones, of kinship over employment.* As it is closely observed, commitment to employment is truncated in order to fulfill one’s commitment to family. In other words, occupational commitments revolve around one’s familial responsibilities and not vice versa. As one officer candidly admits:

I cut down on work to spend time with my children. I avoid traveling, work less and thus manage schedules. I have to reach late or leave early whenever required. It is equally important to have a career and a family. But I can’t afford to neglect my family. Once you start a family, it becomes your priority. I shall work as per its convenience.

The thesis that emanates is quite vivid. *A woman’s work schedule revolves around her familial commitments.* She has compunctions about compromising on duties of homemakers. But she has no compunction about compromising on her professional assignments.

d. The Competency Conundrum

It is conventionally rhetorized that men are more competent in matters of public employment as compared to their female counterparts. One is no more flabbergasted to ken the view that competency and competition are essentially masculine terms. It is no more startling to come across studies that theorize that competition improves the performance of males more than that of females, creating
a gender gap, which does not exist in non-competitive environment. As one begins with these kinds of assumptions and studies real workingwomen in organizational settings in the field, one notices that most of the hitherto held theories stand controverted. What is discovered from the field is that competency is not sex-linked. It varies from individual to individual.

It is true that traditional gender role affects woman's time allocation to her professional sphere, decision-making, fullest realization of her potential and career growth. Very often she faces pressures from family and career and neglects her career in the wake of family responsibilities while the same is not expected of a man. Juggling diverse roles stays her singular burden. But it is also true that instead of being bogged down by such burdens, women do continue to function and perform with equal competency as like their male colleagues.

Cent percent of the respondents subscribe to the view that their workspace ambience is masculine in nature: that is, men continually intimt the impression that administrative job is a male’s job and they are naturally predisposed to do it competently. And this ambience trammels women’s spirit more than their other pressures. What women professionals argue is that competency is sex-neutral: they are as competent as their male colleagues. Says an officer:

It is a prejudice that women are not competent. Competency has to be gauged on the basis of one’s performance on the job. Rather, I shall say women are predisposed with traits to perform more competently. We perform more tasks than men. Our work even goes beyond our office. Our performance is seldom extolled.

It is absurd to imagine that all male officers are sincere and competent as also to assume that all female officers are insincere and incompetent personnel. If competent officers do exist, they exist among both males and females. Competency transcends sexual boundaries. The case of Rekha, an administrator, is a classic example. Rising from a typical patriarchal set up, she has firmly planted herself at

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55 For a candid clarification of the issue, see, “Gender and Competition” in Times Ascent/The Times of India, November 17, 2004, p. xiv


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the heart of bureaucracy with an assertion of her dignity, making every bureaucrat, quietly or pronouncedly, acquiesce her functioning, and at the same time retaining the tag of being the surprise/successful woman bureaucrat.

The shibboleth that ‘women are incompetent’ is not perceptually unfounded. All the informants aver that they are perceptually pestered by the stereotype that they cannot be that competent like their male colleagues. It not only baffles their professional verve but also compels them to struggle more in order to prove their competency. Puts forth an officer:

Snootiness and prejudice are the two negative traits that people (males) need to shun before they judge women’s savoir-faire. Men think that women are pursuing job for money only; that women administrators are not experts like them. This is symptomatic of their (men’s) real intention as to what extent they sincerely prod women into being themselves and frame their own decisions, identity and future.

Despite the prepollence of androcentric ambience, it is alleged by many women respondents and has also been observed by the fieldworker, not all male officers are always sincere. Some of them often reach late and leave early. The point that one intends to intromit is that if some women officers at some phases of their career resort to insincerity, their male colleagues are also no different in this respect. It is observed that at times certain male officers are absent in their chair but present in the register; they also, very often, indulge in gossip. But the irony is that their insincerity is never counted; whereas women’s activity is always seen with suspicion and kept under surveillance. Says an Orissa Administrative Officer:

Men actually supersede us in some respects: absenteeism, dullness, gossip and doziness. They come office late; go at 12:30 for lunch (lunch hour starts at 1 pm) instead of 1 pm, return at 3.30 pm; Then they leave office after some time. In their derived extra time they remain engaged in networking, impression-management, politics, telephonic prittle-prattle and lobbying for promotion. As we refuse to accompany them in these kind of light-hearted, loose, lackadaisical and extra-professional activities, we are stigmatized as unapproachable, rigid, inefficient and incompetent.

Although all odds are stacked against women, it is a heartening development that women do not hesitate to take the bull by its horns. Despite their excellence, professional acumen and cumulative advancement, their merit hardly receives any approbation. Yet they continue to pervade public domain, resplend in their career, contribute to their family and draw satisfaction from both. That ultimately and
sufficiently fills their psyche with the conviction that their competency is unparalleled.

e. Male Chauvinism and Anticipatory Sexual Behaviour

India preens to be one of the leading countries in the world championing the cause of women's empowerment. Starting from academics to politics, the discourse on gender is omnipresent. But the reality of women's experience is very grim. Even the domain of bureaucracy, which is very often eulogized as the Steel Frame of Indian administration, is stained by anti-woman cheap stereotypes. Like police, the domain of administration is equally fraught with male chauvinism and commodifying shibboleths. Insights obtained from the field on this score are quite shocking. Workplace is usually viewed as a place to perform officially assigned responsibilities. But for a woman, task is further compounded. It is also a men's domain where she has to perpetually guard herself, dissociate herself and keep herself away from the leering eyes of her male colleagues/bosses masquerading as her well-wishers/self-proclaimed wardens. Anticipation of sexual favour constitutes one of the hallmarks of many men's attitude towards their women colleagues. This has been the experience of every workingwoman interviewed for the purpose. Reveals one respondent:

It is true that modern education carries the potential to do away with the primordial anti-women perceptions/practices. But male chauvinism is yet to disappear. Still there is resistance to and revolt against woman's entry into top jobs, though not expressed manifestly. It is an inner and indirect resistance. Men are yet to view us seriously. Even though their demeanour is polite in professional dealings, they have an inner desire to win cheap sexual favour. Male ego is manifested in other terms (in their speech): that is, she is extra strict, bad-tempered, unapproachable and inefficient.

Howsoever, sincere a woman is, she is usually seen as casual non-serious and salary-minded. Although women are increasingly making their way into this profession and there are women who display extraordinary performance, yet bureaucracy stays a male-hegemonized profession. The traditional stigma that it is a masculine domain gets confirmed rather than being confuted. Cent percent of the respondents feel that higher education and higher employment have hitherto not been able to completely change men's anti-women stereotypes.
Co-existence does not necessarily imply concinnity and congruence. Although the workplace composition comprises both men and women, men are yet to see women at par with them. A woman professional is seen first as a woman (carrying an opposite sex) and then as a professional. There is a tendency to trivialize her careerist identity and focus on her gendered image. The outward hostility has been transformed into inward uneasiness/intolerance. Thus, women's negotiation with their everyday professional challenges is really arduous. Replies an officer:

There is a feeling that women are unfit for this job. There is also a feeling that we do not need this job. Prize posts do not normally go to a woman. Women are posted in softer areas. At another level, certain male officials expect us to entertain them sexually. These kinds of people tend to be protectionist: they assign fewer tasks to women. They extend proactive favours, both professional and personal; in this way, they try to be closer in anticipation of a physical relation and gradually make their intention clear; they resort to direct indirect requests. Once the woman refuses to accede to their demands, they immediately turn hostile and start calumniating her character. Once you tend to be assertive, no body will come forward to help you; but if you allow yourself to be soft, you have to draw a boundary line and ensure that none of your male colleagues/bosses cross this limit.

Despite snooty and trivializing attitude it is true that men and women assist each other in the accomplishment of their professional tasks. As the profession itself has been integrative as well as accommodative of both the sexes, accommodating each other has become a professional imperative, which cannot be disrespected. But such accommodation does not denote negation of anti-women stereotypes. As all the informants constate, men adjust due to professional compulsions. Even the plight of a workingwoman goes beyond the four walls of office. As an OAS (Orissa Administrative Service) officer utters:

It also happens that at times the male officer assigns tour duty to a woman official in which she will accompany him in the tour. A tour of this kind is at least more than an overnight tour in the sense that it requires night journey and at least one night/more than one night stay in lodging/hotel. The very assignment of such tour is not without any hidden intention. While on tour, he expects that the lady official would entertain him sexually both in the lodge during their stay and in the vehicle during journey.
To put it bluntly, the typical workingwoman is presumed to resort to the easy option of obliging her boss or significant co-worker (and we know what this means). The very anticipation of sex is not only symptomatic of man's attitude to reduce woman to a mere sexual being (regardless of all her achieved distinctions), it also reflects his inability to transcend his pent-up feelings in public domain. This also implies poor degree of psychological maturity of man to co-work with a woman in collaborative enterprises. This also denotes the subjection of man to his concupiscence, his ultimate vulnerability to his passion irrespective of his temporal-spatial location and consequent perceptual insecurity of women in public work domain. While talking about the phenomenon of anticipatory sexual behaviour in administrative domains, it is myopic to conclude that the phenomenon is confined to Orissa only. Sex, it is said, is a basic human instinct; it would be an act of sheer fatuity to think that it is region-specific. Rather, the experience of workingwomen pursuing jobs in other parts of the country is no different. For instance, The Times of India, one of the leading national dailies, reports, women are not safe even in government offices. The cases of sexual harassment are steadily increasing. Very few victims of sexual harassment come forward to lodge a complaint. Recently, The Pioneer, a leading national daily, reports DDA (Delhi Development Authority), a mega governmental organ in New Delhi, is not safe for women. Passing lewd remarks, making indecent proposals and open reading of pornographic literature seems to be a way of life inside DDA Office. It is no more a safe working ambience for women. The newspaper states:

In some countries, admiring even the skirts of a female colleague could tantamount to sexual harassment at workplace. But depravity seems to have struck certain workplaces with such abandon that many women can no longer leave for office without the fear of their modesty being outraged by male colleagues everyday.

57 The report reveals that most of the workingwomen do not report regarding their victimization owing to the sheer fear of further social humiliation and loss of dignified image. See, The Times of India, September 10, 2003, p.3

58 The report states that sexual harassment is what women face everyday at workplace. Many women are going through the trauma but very few choose to take up the issue with the appropriate authorities. See "How Safe is DDA for Women" in The Pioneer, New Delhi: March 19, 2004, p.1 Also See "DCW to Take Sexual Harassment at Workplace" The Pioneer, August 11, 2004, p.3

59 Ibid. "How Safe is DDA for Women", p.1
It is owing to the prevalent apathy to the issue of sexual harassment that various women’s and human rights organizations increasingly come forward to cope up with the growing menace at workplace. However, cent percent of the respondents propose that the inherent problem integrally associated with the issue of sexual harassment is its relative invisibility. As the woman faces the menace at her personal level individually, she hardly feels motivated/confident to raise the issue. She tries to be avoidant; may seek band-aid solution to the problem. Many of them cope up with the menace by getting willingly transferred to another office; some women refuse to genuflect before man’s desire and try to settle the issue politely and amicably. Women usually avoid making it an issue. The reason is simple. First, as they are already under double burden, they avoid taking recourse to extra tension. Second, workingwomen are very poor in terms of time and extra-energy to lead a battle, mostly for a public (though personal) cause. Each woman makes effort to solve her problem at a personal level. Third, putting up a fight with the boss or with a co-worker implies an invitation to another set of humiliation and stigmas. Fourth, as the workplace is usually male-dominated, putting up a fight may result in further losses at the professional front.

As one raves about the issues of male chauvinism and anti-women ambience at workplace, it is enthralling to discover that there are gritty women who make their way into this profession despite knowing its adverse reality and who retain the zeal to confront, negotiate, withstand and yet remain significant and simultaneously make their presence felt. This is certainly a revolutionary change in congruity with the direction of women’s empowerment. If this trend persists it is not chimerical to predict an epoch when the adverse workplace will growingly turn into a woman-friendly as well as woman-sensitive workplace in reality and rhetoric, where professional companionship will replace accommodation and where harmony will expunge hostility, inter-sex harassment/acrimony/exploitation will be replaced by mutual honour, assistance, and comradeship.

f. Lady Boss and the Question of Acceptability

The distinctiveness about patriarchal male chauvinism is that it remains impervious to the winds of change and it continues to cast its shadow either implicitly or explicitly. Despite traditional power bastions breaking down and women assuming roles of importance, getting acceptability is not coming easy for
them. Cent percent of the respondents put forth that although they continue to serve in their respective positions, their acceptability in men’s (read male colleagues’/bosses’/subordinates’) attitude/circle still remains a mirage. Manifestly, men co-ordinate, cooperate and carry out primarily due to professional compulsions. But latently, they do not prefer to work under a woman boss. Male superordinates give scant regards to a woman’s competency. The male colleague thinks he is superior. The male junior thinks it is below his masculine dignity to carry out a lady’s order. For instance, the following utterance of a respondent is quite mind-boggling:

Men think we are inferior. The boss thinks, we are inefficient. The co-workers think they are supercilious. Lower rank employees cannot accept a woman as their boss. Thus, the verity about a woman’s acceptability in administrative sphere is that it is not simply absent; rather it is alien to this sphere.

Male employees usually prefer to serve under a male boss. The reasons are far more intriguing than they appear. To begin with, it satisfies male ego. Second, they think male bosses will cooperate in the commission of dishonest financial transactions i.e. corruption, bribery and financial shenanigans. This is a kind of cooperation where both the officer and the employee grab mutually. Third, the male employee thinks that it is difficult to persuade a lady officer in such kinds of shenanigans where he can be a trusted partner and get his share. Fourth, there is a feeling that women are impulsive, short-tempered and unfriendly. Although all these and many other factors shape man’s perception, the one that predominantly impinges upon his perception is the phenomenon of male chauvinism. Even if a woman is his boss, yet he feels superior to her on the basis of his gender. It is this gendered psychology that still governs man’s behaviour and makes women officers unacceptable in his imagination. As one OAS officer honestly puts it:

Four bench-clerks have got themselves transferred in a single year. The obscurantist feeling is, who will work under a lady officer? Another reason is, they are comfortable at striking manipulative dealings with a male boss. But it is difficult with us. They think we will skirt around. Getting posted under a male boss is a shot in their arm. Because, activities like skullduggery, bribery, corruption, sharing of dishonest income can be comfortably done. They are sure, male officers will not shy away from such dealings.

In the backdrop of the abnormal realities that we confront in contemporary administrative domains, classical sociologist Max Weber stands discepted when he
schematizes that the rules that govern modern bureaucracy are the rational-legal rules.\textsuperscript{60} But our empirical findings suggest that along with such rules, the other equally important forces that dictate bureaucratic functioning are the ideologies surrounding patriarchy and gender. This is more so when we peruse the issues of women’s acceptability, competency and recognition. Moreover, it would be a blunder to conclude that such menace is confined to the sphere of administration in Orissa only. Rather a scrutiny of the existing literature proffers the fact that the non-acceptability of women officers has been existing as a modern trend in administrative domains.\textsuperscript{61}

g. Career and Its Consequences in Personal Life

As one ferrets out the ‘effects’ of profession in one’s personal life-world, it becomes impossible to remain nonchalant to what lady officers wish to thrash out. The finding is quite flabbergasting. That is, the effects of employment is not uniform everywhere. It has cast mixed consequences on women: boon for some and bane for others. Although it is often rhetorized that employment is the road to women’s empowerment, yet it must be acknowledged that the very employment is replete with both positive and negative effects. Before analyzing the negative implications, it will be wise to comprehend the positive ones that workingwomen do experience in their everyday life. The positive implications of employment can be listed as follows.

- Exposure to the outer world.
- Economic freedom.
- Dignified identity independent of kinship.
- An access to a forum to work beyond kinship.
- An access to a kind of work that is paid as well as acknowledged.


\textsuperscript{61} A recent survey indicates that a majority of men and women would rather work for a male boss than a female one. Women professionals supersedes men in job performance and in many traits. Still women bosses are seen to be “demeaning taskmasters” and are given a thumbs-down by a majority of males and females. Most professionals, especially men, are still reeling under the effect of the ‘gender spillover’. Men still remain true to the image of women as homemakers. Women, who blaze a trail into the workplace, do also grapple with a new competition, that is, acceptability competition, for a sound understanding of the striking finding, see, O’Brein Allen, “Women on Top” in \textit{The Times of India/Delhi Times}, August 23, 2004, p.1.
Enhanced living standard/ life style.

Employed woman is an asset rather than a liability in her parental family.

Career checks dowry effectively

Men increasingly prefer employed brides in matrimonial matters. This adds to women's marital prospects. The sole factor that governs men's growing choice for earning women is double-income, which assists in leading a good life style or a conspicuous living standard. To quote a respondent:

At one level, men who have hitherto indulged in the practice of domesticizing women, choose to marry workingwomen exclusively because of double-income. At another level, employment makes a woman complete, more full-fledged, mature and adult. It enables her to face the bright and bleak side of her life. It inculcates in her the confidence that she can afford to live the rest period of her existence without a man in her personal life, that too, in a dignified way. Employment has metamorphosed our personality and life in a constructive way. We now feel that we hold some grip over society. More over each minute of a working lady’s time passes productively.

While such positive effects appear quite fascinating, there are certain other negative repercussions, which are equally fashing. In other words, career is both fulfilling and frustrating, promising as well as pestering. Its negative ramifications can be delineated in the following manner.

For married professionals, each working day is an exhausting day. Life is full of care, duty, responsibility, confrontation and adventure; there is hardly any leisure.

‘Peace’ remains an alien word.

Profession has plundered the marital prospect of certain women. This finding has been elaborately illuminated in foregoing discussions. In sum, marriage has been a casualty for some women administrators. To echo a respondent’s voice,

I am unable to attain my personal happiness. Creating a family is now foreign to me. Job has completely conquered my private life, ravaged my peace and ruined me emotionally. I have paid a hefty price for choosing this profession.
As regards the question of financial contribution of married professionals to their families, the discovery is in the anticipated line. Breadwinner continues to be a male term. Although women perpetually contribute to the common financial pool of the family, yet their income is regarded supplementary to family’s income (that is, husband’s income). As we have already elaborated this fact in earlier sections, it will be only a repetition if we delineate it further.

Therefore, it is luculent in the preceding discussion that career is not a bed of roses only; it has also its share of thorns. It is blissful, as well as baleful; fascinating as well as fashious, fulfilling as well as frustrating; evolutionary as well as excruciating; inspiring as well as inflicting. But what is enthralling to observe is that despite its mixed consequences, there are women who take up the gauntlet and gear up to conquer career to their advantage.

**In summary:** As regards marital status, administrative women show certain degree of resemblance with that of policewomen. The prevailing prejudice against this class of women affects their matrimonial prospects.

- As regards the financial background of administrative women, around 90% of the respondents hail from families possessing good and/or decent financial backbone. The postulate that erupts from the findings is that *rich financial background and high ambition are positively correlated*. This finding also shares a kind of similarity with those drawn in the case of lady doctors and academic women.

- At the level of preference, not a single professional has chosen the job out of any intrinsic propensity/volition for public service. Rather 80% of the respondents have been attracted solely by the *lure* of the job. The rest section of women has got the job fortuitously, whose prime intention remains to acquire a prestigious paid job and attain economic independence.

- For women in general, administrative job is especially stressful because of its character of transferability and its peculiar assignments like tour, travel, inspection and the like.

- Balancing home and office continues to be the Himalayan puzzle for every married professional. Juggling divergent demands and jostling for managing
an equilibrium between home and job stay the perpetual ordeal for working mothers. They are constrained to make many compromises in order to secure a manageable harmony between family and profession. Making compromises remains a kinship compulsion. Woman’s informal-personalized-rapport with her superordinates, co-workers and subordinates at workplace and familial support enable her to coordinate and harmonize both job and family and manage to meet the demands of both.

• At the level of constraints, motherhood is the biggest constraint that impinges upon her career. It can’t be ignored as it is considered to be the ultimate accomplishment of womanhood and ecstasy for every ‘normal’ woman.

• Married professionals don many incarnations to blend the demands of both kinship and career and minimize the resultant contradiction.

• However, guilty-mom syndrome haunts many married professional due to their inability to give sufficient quality time to their children.

• Although both job and family are important, family is regarded paramount. Hence it calls the shots.

• Talking about the issue of anti-woman prejudice, howsoever competent a woman is at her workplace, fellow male workers persistently intromit the impression that they are naturally predisposed to accomplish administrative tasks more competently. A woman’s performance and competence hardly attract any plaudit from men.

• Administrative sphere reflects the hegemony of men. It is masculine in ambience. Male chauvinism is deeply entrenched in men’s psyche that makes them think that they are supercilious. Anticipation of sexual favour constitutes the hallmark of men’s attitude towards women and of the workplace. A woman is viewed first as a woman, then as a worker.

• At the level of acceptability of women bosses, the mental acceptance of woman officer in general and that of woman boss in particular still remains a problem area. The superordinate thinks, she is not competent. The co-worker
thinks, he is supercilious. And the subordinate feels it is an insult to work under a lady boss. Thus, acceptability is a problematic concept here. It has been taken hostage by primordial patriarchal prejudice.

- Employment, for women, is a mixed basket; bundle of opposites. It is not all about income, ecstasy, and ebullience. It is also about agony and ordeal, constraints and compromises, support and sacrifices, blending and balance, prioritization and physical exhaustion, accomplishments and unacceptability, rapport and reliability, patience and perseverance, dodging and dependence, grit and guilt.

Epilogue

This chapter delves deeper into various issues confronting working women in four professions, namely police, health, academics and administration. For methodological convenience, each profession has been dealt with independently. That is, the study of working women has been deftly analyzed profession-wise. Accordingly, this chapter classifies itself into four sections whereby each section devotes itself to the comprehension of one category of women professionals working in the federal unit called Orissa. While constructing a section for a category of women professionals, attempt has been made to thoroughly thrash out a great deal of issues concerning the topos 'women and work'. In other words, the four sections developed in this chapter sociologically represent the entire life-world of women professionals working in four domains of work respectively. Interestingly, all the questions raised in the introductory chapter of the treatise have comprehensively been investigated, debated, delineated and answered in the chapter section-wise. Fascinatingly, apart from the questions raised, certain other important questions have emerged in the sociological imagination of the fieldworker during the course of his fieldwork, which have also been sufficient enquired, explicated, interrogated and represented. Thus, the scope of this thesis goes beyond its initial central focus of research. In other words, although most of its discoveries are related to the initial questions of the research, some of its discoveries are in response to certain other questions (which have emerged out of rich inputs from the field), which have not been initially thought of. That makes the effort of the fieldworker as well as the chapter an enriched one.
A classificatory delineation, *per se*, is methodologically important in the sense that it enables the reader to acquire a comprehensive understanding of each domain of work in itself from a women's perspective. As it is evident, the four sites of work chosen for the purpose vary to an enormous extent from each other in terms of their nature, task, identity, societal recognition etc. Correspondingly, the experience of workingwomen differs from profession to profession. And it is to ken this *difference of experiences*, this chapter devotes one separate section to each category of women professionals in order to study them in a systematic way. This is not to assume that women workers of differing professions share no similar experiences. Rather, the findings of our study is quite revealing in this respect. Thus, after making a thorough exploratory understanding of women professionals in four professions in a classificatory framework, it ultroneously impels the fieldworker to go for an integrated understanding of women professionals across professions. In sum, the *classificatory/analytic framework* needs to be accompanied by an *integrated/synthetic framework* in order to grasp a holistic conspectus pertaining to the research. It is in this context, chapter Six of the thesis assumes its importance.

However, in the process of ‘integrating’ the data gained from hundred women professionals across the professions, it is very difficult to remain indifferent to the life histories of certain extraordinary women professionals, which are deeply appealing. In fact, the lives of such extraordinary women are replete with the messages of adventure and agony, grit and gumption, joy and zeal, pride and patience, success and sacrifice. Therefore, in the researcher’s judgment, their lives are worth documenting. It is in this context that the next chapter, which presents select life histories of eight women professionals (two from each profession), claims its relevance. It is expected that a delineation of such qualitative data in chapter five in the form of narratives will facilitate our understanding of chapter six, which in turn takes a synthetic/holistic view of women professionals in all the four professions.