CHAPTER V

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In the previous chapter, the detailed cases of the eleven women administrators in higher education system of India has been presented. In this chapter an attempt is being made to identify the emerging themes out of the eleven cases which are discussed here. To identify the themes the researcher analyzed the cases and looked at some of the themes that cut across the participants. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, the researcher identified the following three themes: Career path, barriers and strategies.

5.1 CAREER PATH OF WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS

The career path of the women administrators can be understood in terms of their family background, qualifications, entry into profession and how they progressed further. In the formative years the family background and its contribution is very important. Family background has lots of influence on a persons’ life. It helps in guiding our beliefs of what is good and desirable and what is harmful and unacceptable. The personal and social background shapes our actions and behaviour and often without us being aware of it. There is an assumption that individuals from similar social class origins think and act alike. Social, economic and personal characteristics do play some role. Whether one’s family lived in an urban or a rural area influences both opportunities for social mobility and social attitudes. This may be particularly important in the case of India where there is a tremendous disparity in the availability of educational, cultural and professional resources between urban and rural areas. Most of the women administrators’ described their father’s and mother’s origin as rural. Most of them later migrated to urban areas so that they can provide better education to their children. Most of the women administrators’ belonged to the families where parental income was too less and had faced much economic constraints during their childhood. In few cases, they even had the problem of having two meals a day and the parents borrowed money from neighbors. They have even
sold their belonging for making their daughters' study. One thing which was common among almost all the participants was their inclination towards education. They all wanted to study in spite of opposition from the extended family for girl's education. In this study out of eleven women administrators, two of the women administrators belonged to illustrious and aristocratic family. Another two belonged to a very poor background and belonged to backward community. They did not even had two meals a day properly. However, most of them were from middle class and upper middle class background.

Most of the women participants in this study belonged to the family where the parents were not highly educated. Very few participants' father had completed Graduation or Post Graduation. In almost all the cases the mother was illiterate or studied till primary classes except in one case. Inspite of being less educated it was observed that except in one case all the families had a very liberal thinking and believed in giving higher education to daughters. That was the period when the girls' education was not promoted but these parents fought against odds to provide better education to their daughters. The higher education gained by these women with the efforts of their parents and a strong zeal to study later created a strong base for their career. This is in contrast to the study of Twombly and Moore, (1991) who found that many of the women administrator's mothers had pursued a higher level of education. They had even reported that women who become administrators are more likely to come from highly educated, two career families. Even this finding do not support the findings of Touchton Shavlik and Davis (1993) who reported in their study on women Presidents that “mothers of most of the women Presidents had worked outside the home at some time when their daughters were in elementary or high school....the mothers of these Presidents seem to have served as early role models for career pursuit and achievement”. All of the participant’s families were supportive of obtaining a College education even though many of the parents did not have a College education themselves. The families stressed the importance of education, provided emotional support during troubling times and stressed their confidence in their daughters’ abilities (Beaty & Pankake, 2001; Ballentine, 2000; Mockelstrom, 2000; Ohlott et al., 1994). There was lots of opposition from the society for educating the girl child but the parents of these women administrators supported them a lot.
Vice-Chancellors are expected to be highly educated, with all of them having earned advanced Post-Graduate degrees. Majority of the women participants attended government schools for their school education. Very few of them went to elite schools for their elementary or secondary education. All the women participants were having Post-Graduate degrees and even the Doctorates except one. Most of the participants had continuity in their studies. But some of them had a break. One participant was not allowed to go for further studies by her parents and hence after a long break of around ten years she later took up her higher education with the support of her husband. In two cases, they had break because of financial constraint but later with a gap of just one or two years resumed their studies. Most of them completed their Masters’ degree before marriage. Many of them did their Doctorates after marriage. The women administrators studied were not very brilliant academically but they were inclined to get higher education without any aspirations to be a career woman. None of the women administrators knew what they want to do in future. Only one of the women administrator admitted that she wanted to be like her College ‘Principal’. The entry into teaching profession was also not planned. As they were into the system of higher education for doing their Doctorates, they got an opportunity to work in their institutions where they studied and they took up these opportunities. In one case, it was her father who made her enter the teaching profession though she was not interested. On analyzing the career path of these women administrators after entering into the profession, the common path which has emerged is that (except two) all started their career as teaching faculty and later progressed gradually into the profession and became Reader and Professor and also got opportunity to be Head and Dean. Before becoming Vice-Chancellor, all the women administrators had administrative experience of being Heads and Deans. The two women administrators who started their career as ‘Project fellow’ also later came to the same path as others, they also after being project fellow entered into teaching as Lecturer and moved up similarly. Before entering into the profession, we do not find similarity in the career path of these eleven women participants, as many participants had continuity in studies, many had break due to economic constraints, the streams of Graduation and Post Graduation differed, some completed full education before marriage and some after marriage. After entering into the profession, we do find commonality among their progression. The path which emerged was entering into teaching profession as a
faculty and then progressing slowly by proving their credentials. This supports the finding of Ironside (1983) which points to College teaching as a common starting point, followed by the pursuit of the Doctorate, then attainments of administrative experience, as career path choice for women. But this is in contrast to what Moore and Sagaria (1981) found in their study sample that “no single career ladder predominates”. None of the women administrators in this study had planned their career progression but when their journey to being a Vice-Chancellor was analyzed by the researcher, it was found that all the women administrators had systematically progressed in their career. They all started their career as teaching faculty and gradually climbed the hierarchy by being Head, Dean and being the member in various committees. One of the participants had reported that unless she became Head and Dean she had never thought to attain administrative positions. After reaching to these administrative positions she thought of other higher administrative positions. Whereas the other participants even after reaching to the positions of Head and Dean, had not thought to be Vice-Chancellor. They just grabbed the opportunities which came their way. This was supported by the findings from other research by Kreps, 1974; Freeman, 1977; Moore and Sagaria, 1981; Murrel & Donohue, 1982; Ironside, 1983; Fennema and Ayer, 1984; Evans, 1985; Hill & Ragland, 1995; Hartman, 1999; Bolt, 2001; Orman, 2002; Waring, 2003; Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003; Waring, 2003; Storey, 2005; Steinke 2006; Whitaker, J 2006 and Williams, M 2007 that successful women leaders did not intentionally look for leadership positions but instead worked hard in their current jobs and performed to the best of their abilities. The women administrators after entering into their profession took up all the challenges which came up their way and proved their capabilities. Their success in the task assigned helped them in getting many more challenging tasks which helped them to be known in the University system. Apart from this, they also continued contributing a lot in their academic field. They were also made members in various committees and attended national and international seminars and conferences. These activities helped them in expanding their social circles. In some cases, they by being a particular caste got an opportunity to be Vice-Chancellor as the government wanted the Vice-Chancellor from a particular caste to maintain social justice. In many cases the political linkages of the participants helped them to get the administrative position. In one case the participant belonged to a background wherein her parents are well known and their family connected with Congress Government. In another case the husband
of the participant was close friend of the then Chief Minister of their state where she was appointed as Vice-Chancellor during his tenure. Another participant's brother is an IAS officer; one participant is closely connected to ABVP group during whose rule she was appointed as Vice-Chancellor. One Vice-Chancellor had political linkages in her family as well as in husband's family. Most of the women had some political linkages which may have helped them to attain the top most administrative position in the University. The other participants who did not have political linkages got an opportunity to be Vice-Chancellor because of their academic contribution in their field, hard work and sincerity. Being Vice-Chancellor was not planned by any of the women administrator. Majority of the women Vice-Chancellors had never aspired to be at this post. They all were asked to submit their biodata's by some of their colleagues or well wishers and they were selected.

A path which emerges to be at top most administrative position is that one should acquire all the necessary academic qualifications and then enter into the Higher Education system as a Teaching Faculty and prove oneself worthy of the position by taking up all the challenging task which comes in the way. One should keep contributing in the academic field through research and publications. Many women belonged to upper-middle class family, some affluent background and some poor family but still all could achieve the top most position which shows that economic and social background has no impact on administrative positions. The support of parents does influence the achievement of women as all the women administrators had supportive parents.

5.2 BARRIERS FACED BY WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS

As per the second objective of the study, the barriers faced by the women studied are presented here in a collated manner. A woman has to face lots of barriers by just being a "woman". In our traditional society the woman is expected to be at home and take care of the family. Family is the prime responsibility of woman. If at all a woman wants to go out and work then also the prime responsibility of looking after family is with her only and she does not get any relaxation. The most common barrier one faces is balancing family and work. Apart from this there are various other barriers which a woman has to face such as gender stereotypes, lack of mentoring, lack of support.
system, lack of networking. The common barriers found in most of the cases are discussed as follows:

5.2.1 FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

The women administrators have to face cultural barriers as they are expected to perform a traditional role of mothers and wives along with their professional roles. Women are expected to shoulder a majority of responsibilities at home and the overall welfare of the family takes precedence over personal interests and desires (Varghese, 1990, Singh, 1992, Grewal, 2002). The uneven burden of child care and household responsibilities that women shoulder has been a major barrier to their advancement to administrative positions (Edson, 1981; Parkway & Curie, 1992). In this study, the most common barrier faced by all the eleven cases is balancing work and family. All women administrators expressed dissatisfaction in personal life, as they were not able to devote sufficient time for family and social role fulfillment. They shared that many times they used to have a guilt feeling of not being able to devote more time to their children. This is mainly because of their major involvement in child bearing and child rearing and other domestic activities. The ultimate responsibility for organizing and planning childcare and home tasks invariably seems to rest with women. One of the women has reported that her career progression has come at the cost of her personal life. Many of her colleagues also did not appreciate her of giving more importance to work than family. She also feels guilty now of neglecting her child. Women tend to show a major concern for family matters. Particularly among mothers of young children, time constraints associated with children’s responsibilities appeared to be key factor leading to work-family conflict. All women interviewees except one (as she was unmarried) expressed concern about striking a balance between family and professional life as a serious constraint especially after marriage. The dilemma which many of the women faced was what comes first, family or career? Most of them gave family the first priority. Many did not initially take up challenging task when their children were small as it needed more time to be devoted to work place. One of the participants took her career after around ten years of her marriage. She gave importance to her family responsibilities as her in-laws did not like her studying further and work outside. She kept quiet and took care of her children and waited patiently for the right time to come. Another participant progressed fast in her career
as she did not have child in the initial years of her career. When her son was born, at that time she had already become Professor and a Dean and then with these responsibilities she could not devote time to her child because of which the child has developed some psychological problem and this she regrets till date as she had given priority to her career than family. Some of the participants felt ‘guilty’ leaving their kids to go to work. It is evident that one of the major factors affecting women’s career experiences is family responsibilities. The women administrators also identified the expectations of family responsibilities as a strong influence in their professional lives. Marital status had an impact on their ability to carry out the responsibilities inherent to their positions. Concerns about balancing family and career were frequently mentioned by the women and is described as one of the key challenges. These women indicated that there was always a struggle to maintain a balance emotionally and physically between professional and personal life. Balancing the family and work responsibility was the barrier which was faced by the women administrators more during the initial phase of their career. That was the period when they had entered into the profession and were newly married and planning for family. Balancing career and family as a barrier is also supported by Boyum, B (2006), Black G, (2002), Wilking K, (2001) and Kreps, (1974). Married women had more responsibilities as they have to play the role of mother, wife, and daughter. Marital responsibility is also found as a barrier by Bolt, M. (2001), Role conflict between career & family (Edwards, N 2002), Personal balance between family and career (Wootton, P 2006), major family responsibilities like demands of motherhood, marriage and the extended family (Chitiga, M 2001). It was also reported that women especially married women and those with children; face significant institutional barriers in their struggle to attain administrative positions by Mancini, (1993). This is all there because women continue to be responsible for the majority of family responsibilities such as care of dependent children (Hochschild, 1997; Wirth, 2001; Singh 1992). Child rearing was the most common barrier being found in this study and this view is supported in the studies by Warner and DeFleur (1993) and Hill and Ragland (1995).

Balancing family and work has emerged as a common barrier in almost all the cases. Married women have more difficulty in balancing this as children are the prime responsibility of women. The root of this barrier lies in our traditional value system where the women is expected to look after the family and children.
5.2.2 LACK OF SUPPORT SYSTEM

The barriers related to family responsibilities were majorly faced by the women administrators due to lack of support systems. Most of the family related barriers are faced because of the lack of support system. To cope up with all these multiple tasks, the support system is needed. The women administrators lacked support system. Many of the participants stayed in a nuclear family so there was no support from the family members. Both the parents were working, so taking care of children becomes a challenging task. Due to lack of support system, in many cases the women did not take up the challenging positions in the initial years of their career due to response. Lack of support system emerges as an important barrier in the life of women administrators which is also reported in the studies by Moody, B (2004), Katundano, T. (2005), Willbanks, J (2005), Long, J. (2008), Willis, R. (2004), Scott, T. (2005), Groch, E (2005), Marshall, S. (2002), Moore, R (2003; Cahalan (2007); Cook (2007); Santee (2006). This barrier is felt mostly when they had small children and balancing the work, family and children becomes difficult. After the children were grown up the intensity of this barrier was reduced. It was very difficult to leave the small child in the care of just the maid. Almost all the eleven women administrators in this study stayed in the nuclear family and had no support from the elderly people in the family. Most of the women administrators were doing their Doctoral studies along with work. They had multiple tasks to do, studying, teaching and looking after children. That was the period which was described as “The Most Difficult Phase” by almost all the women participants. All the tasks were demanding and none could be neglected.

Some of the participants were lucky enough to get the support from their family members. In most of the cases the mother of the participant helped them a lot. In one case her brother left his studies and stayed with the case to support her in taking care of children while another participants sister came to help her in sharing her responsibilities towards her son. One of the participants was fortunate enough to be always surrounded by elderly people who used to take care of her children. Husbands of almost all women administrators always supported them and encouraged them to take up the career.
Lack of support system is a barrier faced by many women administrators as they do not believe in outsourcing the work and would like to do most of the tasks on their own. This barrier was faced as many of the women administrators stayed in nuclear family.

5.2.3 GENDER STEREOTYPES

Women are socialized to be the nurturers, and the emotional caretakers. From childhood, women are socialized in believing that domestic tasks are women’s work. Even in this study almost all women were brought up with this orientation. Though the parents supported their education and even encouraged them to work but they were taught from the beginning that family is their prime responsibility. The sex role stereotype is being experienced by the women administrators from their childhood days. In many cases they faced objections from the society for education, as girls’ education was not promoted. In case of one of the participant even the parents also did not encourage her for education and marriage was given first priority. Some of the women administrators reported that at home also they could feel gender discrimination. The mothers expected the girl child to help in domestic work and the male child to study. Even in selection of stream in school and College they faced the stereotypical attitude of people. The girls were expected to opt for Arts or Humanities stream. The Science stream was thought to be meant for male candidates.

One women administrator was not allowed to continue education due to the orthodox mindset of her father and was married at an early age. In most of the cases the parents of women administrators supported their education and fought against such gender discriminations. The gender stereotype was the common barrier faced by almost all of them throughout their journey. During College days the society and some of the relatives objected to their going for higher education as higher education according to them was only meant for male child. Even during the subject selection, the stereotypical attitude was reflected. As reported by Kusumakumari (Case: 8) “I wanted to continue my Post graduation course with Science stream as I had done BSc. Even I applied for Veterinary, Agricultural science and many other fields and even got admission but I was not allowed to join M.Sc as my family was of the opinion
that being a girl I should opt for Arts stream as I was not expected to take up a career"

These women administrators were suggested to take up Arts field and the selection for science stream was not appreciated. In some cases even the parents wanted their daughters to select Arts field. After entering the profession also many women administrators reported that they experienced gender discrimination at different stages of their life. One of the women administrator Sudharao (Case: 4), who applied for a senior post was appointed for the junior post just because she was woman and the selection committee thought that she would not be able to take care of the job responsibilities. She was asked “this job demands much of traveling and tour, will you be able to manage that?”, “How will you manage family and children?”

One woman administrator also shared that she was not easily accepted at administrative post by her male colleagues because their male ego was hurt. They had till then not worked under any female boss. Stereotyping and gender discrimination has thus emerged as one of the barriers faced by women administrators. This has been supported by the study of Henning (1978) and Bower (1993). It was reported by Ramsunder (2006) in his study on eight women administrators that “Gender proved to be major obstacle for them in getting to their present positions”. Even the study by Ononiwu (2001) on women Educational Administrators, has found that there are serious societal stereotypical hindrances that need to be completely removed.

Gender stereotype lies in our socialization process. The society had different ways of looking at male child and girl child. The grooming of girl child is done in a way wherein the marriage and household responsibilities are focused rather than education and career. The whole mind set of the society needs to be changed that even woman has the potential to do all the tasks which a man can do.

5.2.4 LACK OF CAREER PLANNING

Planning makes the task easy. If one knows where one has to go then selecting the path becomes easy. Similarly if the career is planned then it systematizes the path and one knows what qualifications to gain and which skills to learn. In this study almost all women administrators shared that they had not planned their career. Even they had not planned their education. They had never thought what they want to be in life.
Career aspirations were absent. The reason for lack of career planning lies in our socialization pattern, the way the girls are being brought up. Professional women’s socialization to work generally begins with parental expectations that although work and careers are important and highly regarded, they will always be secondary to marriage, husband and children. For women the career of their spouse always remains priority and they will sacrifice their own career for the career of their spouse. After marriage the women is expected to shift with the husband and they might have to leave the job. Because of these reasons the women do not plan their career as planning will not work so its better not to plan, than to plan and not be able to achieve.

Only one of the women participant shared that she wanted to become a ‘Principal’, as one of her Principal was her role model. She has not aspired to rise above Principalship. The position of Vice-Chancellor came to her by chance. Two of the women administrator took the career seriously and started planning at the later stage after achieving the initial administrative positions. Almost all women administrators lacked clarity regarding their career. They had never planned for their career. They took opportunities as it came to their life. Even while taking education they lacked clarity as to what course they will take up. In most of the cases even the choice of stream for their Graduation and Post Graduation was influenced by their parents or societal pressures. This happened because they themselves were not clear what they want to do in life. Even after entering the profession, they were not clear, regarding their career progression. It emerged from the study that none of them had clear career goals. One women administrator shared that she wanted to take up career but what career, she wasn’t sure of it. Lack of career goals was also cited as a barrier by the women administrators’ (Evans, 1985) in his study. The studies demonstrate that female administrators do little for career planning. Lack of career planning by women administrators is documented in number of studies, suggesting that this may be a factor in women’s apparent slow progress in climbing administrative ranks (Epstein, 1970; Pfiffner, 1975; Murell and Donohue, 1982; Ironside, 1983; Williams and Piper, 1988; Hill and Ragland, 1995). Even here in this study it has emerged that these women administrators did not plan their career. It is interesting to note that all the eleven women administrators did not start off their career in higher education with an intention of becoming a Vice-Chancellor. This lack of career planning is influenced
by lack of socialization, barriers and the lack of grooming. A woman may be unlikely to plan for her career and without a “push” from a mentor, may never get set on a clear career path in administration. Most of the women administrators in this study were asked by others to apply for Vice-Chancellor. They themselves never thought of becoming a Vice-Chancellor. Even after being suggested by some of their friends, colleagues, they were not sure whether they had the capability to be Vice-Chancellor. They lacked in confidence. One of the woman administrators even shared that after being Vice-Chancellor she used to cry a lot as she could not handle the pressure but later emerged as a strong person with time. Lack of self confidence as a barrier has been reported in many other studies also such as by Groch,(2005) and Storey, (2005).

5.2.5 LACK OF ROLE MODELS OR MENTORS

Over the last couple of decades, mentoring has been advocated as an important career development tool for women (Burke and McKeen, 1990; Missirian, 1982; Ragins, 1999). Formal mentoring is a new feature which has come up but informal mentoring was always there. There is a body of research that suggests that mentoring does contribute to women’s career success. The Women administrators in this study saw very few women in high level administrative positions in higher education. In case of one of the participant, she was the first women Professor in her entire state. Another women administrator was the first women Dean in her University. Only the women who belonged to women University has seen some women working at top administrative positions, even in her case the former Vice-Chancellor never played any role to encourage other women to aspire for administrative positions and put efforts towards it. Most of the women administrators were the first women Vice-Chancellors of their respective Universities. These women administrators had no one to follow. Females see few women in high level administrative positions in higher education, especially those who are married and mothers, and struggle with how to travel on the career journey without examples to follow. One of the women administrator had reported that she found her role model in one of her Principal of College and she wanted to be like her and become ‘Principal’ in future. The key role model which was reported by most of the women administrators were their mother and this can confuse the matters more as the mother stays at home and the daughter is thinking of a career. Very few women administrators had reported that they had
mentors or role models in their life. It emerges from this study that the parents of participants acted as a mentor in the initial phase of their life. The Guides of many of the participant has also played the role of the mentor. They guided them at various stages of their career. Some had said that they had some teacher who had a strong influence over them. But none of them had reported that they had somebody to guide them to achieve the administrative positions. As discussed above, many of the women’s career paths are characterized by the “first” – first female Vice-Chancellor, first female dean, first female professor. Being the first women at the administrative positions, they lacked role model. These women administrators had no female role model to emulate. It is observed in case of these eleven women administrators that many of the participants had found the mentor in their guides but these guides were male. The women administrators lacked female mentor. This is also supported by Carlson and Schmuck (1981) who stated that the scarcity of women role models affects the contingencies of counsel, encouragement, and socialization, at least to the extent that women choose women as sources for these things. Proper mentor to guide them and initiate into the administrative positions was found lacking. Paul, Sweet and Brigham (1980) also supports this view by stating “since there are very few females in top-level administrative positions, there are very few role models for aspiring administrators to emulate”, this view is later on supported by Kuhnle, (2007); Wilbanks, (2005); Brown, (2003). Mentors were most seen during childhood days, when their mother played the role of a mentor. In school days and higher education days some of their teachers became their role model and mentor and in the initial phase of their career their guides played the role of mentor. This was informal mentoring which took place at different phases of their career. Each of the participants valued their informal mentoring. One participant found her mentor in his guide and a senior teacher who helped her to overcome the professional stress and on their guidance and encouragement she went abroad for her post doctoral work. In another case also when the participant was planning to resign from the job, her guide played an important role of mentor to boost self-confidence in her. At the later stage of career, the women administrators do not find any mentor or role model who can guide them in the administrative positions and they find themselves alone. Formal mentoring process is missing in all the participants.
Role models or mentors help an individual in guiding them. These women administrators lacked role model but now they should act as role model for other aspiring women administrators. These women administrators should arrange formal programmes on mentoring.

**5.2.6 LACK OF SOCIALISATION AND NETWORKING**

Each individual has a network of contacts consisting of everyone he/she knows, everyone he/she does has ever known, and everyone who knows him/her though he/she does not know them (Burt, 1992). Later definitions by Whiting and De Janasz (2004) point to a network as a system of information, contact and support created by networking, which is the building and nurturing of personal and professional relationships, which altogether are believed to be vital for career and personal success. Men has more fully developed informal networks than women which could affect women in their lack of advancement to high levels of management (Powell, 1993). Several studies suggest that women in particular may experience range of barriers to networking. One such barrier is exclusion from key networks traditionally composed of individuals who hold power in the organization (Henning and Jardim, 1977; Fagenson, 1986; Goffee, 1989). Networks provide a critical support for the career advancements and capability of an administrator (Angles 1990). It is observed that men have support networks such as clubs and other groups but women do not have such networks outside traditional areas (Connie, 1988). These networks of men bar women from accessing positions of leadership. Lack of networking was one of the barriers which emerge in this study. Women had less fully developed informal networks which could affect their advancement to high levels of management positions. There is a need to penetrate male networks to a greater extent to become sufficiently visible to win institutional promotions. Women with family responsibilities are at disadvantage in network participation, as they have less time due to home and family commitments. Most of the women administrators had reported that they did not give much importance to socialization outside family. For them family was very important and whatever free time they used to get from work they used to prefer to spend it with the family rather than socialize outside. It was reported by some of the cases that they even faced problem in their promotion from Lecturer to Reader and from Reader to Professor because they lacked socialization.
They did not socialize with their Heads of the Department and this was the reason quoted by them for not being promoted.

The women administrators though knew the importance of socialization and networking did not indulge into it as according to them their family was their priority and career was secondary. Whatever little free time they used to get, they preferred spending it with their children and family rather then socializing and networking outside. Many of the women administrators even reported that they were not comfortable in the late night parties and dinner diplomacy. Networking is not perceived to be a good quality by the participants of this study and it was thought to be against Indian culture for women to socialize outside family. Lack of networking is also reported by Wilbanks (2005) in his study as barrier faced by women administrators. Some women administrators shared that they feel uncomfortable with men group and they don’t know what to talk to them.

Women administrators lacked networking and socialization because they themselves did not believed in the concept of socialization and wanted to spend the free time with their family instead of socializing outside. Women always kept family as first priority.

5.3 STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS

Strategies here refer to kind of activities the women had undertaken, and continue to undertake to advance their development. Inspite of the barriers many women administrators have come to the top most administrative positions and even sustained the position. These women could do that because they could overcome the barriers which they encountered. The strategies could be evolved to face the barriers. It was the opinion of many of the participants that “no one is going to come and help you (women administrators) but you yourself has to fight your battle and design your strategies to overcome the barriers”. The main strategies which emerged across all the cases are support system, personal qualities, political connections and networking.
5.3.1 SUPPORT SYSTEM

The major barrier which the women have to face is family responsibilities. Family responsibility has been a barrier because of lack of support. To overcome this barrier, the women administrators should mobilize the support system. The participants in this study could overcome the barrier of family responsibilities by mobilizing support system. The mothers of most of the women administrators supported them during the initial phase of their career by taking care of children. Women administrators even hired the services of maid to help them overcome this barrier. One of the Vice-Chancellors reported that she used to take care of the maid a lot and even did not mind paying them more as maid is very much important for working women to balance both family and work. Most of the women administrators could overcome the barriers by creating support systems for themselves. In many cases the parents were support system before marriage wherein the parents did not care about the societal pressures and encouraged the girl child to pursue higher education in spite of so many economic constraints. In most of the cases parents and husbands enhanced career/family balance by helping with home and children. In almost all the cases, it was the mother of the participants who came to support them, than the mother-in-law. By many of the women administrators the children were also cited as a source of support by being proud of their mothers’ accomplishments. Almost all took help of the domestic servant to balance a strike between family and the profession. An emphasis was seen on outsourcing domestic responsibilities and rejecting the mythical notions of “superwoman” that “does it all”. The emphasis on outsourcing leads to “new motherhood” where career and mothering roles are maintained but domestic responsibility is subcontracted. Almost in all the cases the husbands were very cooperative and they encouraged their wife to take up challenging tasks and even shared the household responsibilities. The women in this study drew on personal support from parents, children and spouse. The parents played an important role in encouraging their daughters’ academic achievements and professional pursuits. Participants described how they were raised to believe they could achieve anything and rarely had their choices questioned. Finally, husbands were cited as a significant support source in both personal and professional realms, providing professional and emotional support.
Though family was the major barrier being faced by the women administrators, but the same family also emerged as a strong support system. It emerges from the cases of these women administrators that the support from their parents in the initial stage and later after marriage the support of their husband proved to be very encouraging. Almost all the women administrators shared that they had supportive husband. Husbands in particular have played an important role as influencer for the women administrators. Even the women administrators in the qualitative study conducted by Williams, (2007), attributed their success to strong family background. Many studies reported the importance of family support especially, encouraging husband as important for sustaining administrative positions (Adams, 2006; Cook, 2007; Johnson, 2005; Katudano, 2005; Ashbyscott, 2005; Storey, 2005; Evans, 1985; Atteberry, 1985). Female leaders tend to utilize support systems (spouses, parents and other family members) for career growth and development (Ballentine, 2000; Beaty & Pankake, 2001; Mockelstrom, 2000). Although participants’ immediate families provided significant support during their upbringing, their spouses became their main support once they were married. For many female senior leaders, their husbands have been a constant source of support (Ballentine, 2000; Bruegman, 1995). Katundano (2005) studied the Associate Deans and found that the immediate family support & work supports emerged as important factors for personal growth of women, career choice & success in her administrative work. Strong support system from family has been attributed to success in many other studies also by the women administrators (Santee, W 2006, Adams, E 2006, Sipple, B 2007, Johnson 2005, Atteberry, 1985).

For any working women, support system is must to take care of dual responsibilities of family and work. The women administrators should be capable of mobilizing support system. They should not always take all the responsibilities themselves but should outsource some of the task. The parents are the major support system for any women administrator.

5.3.2 PERSONAL QUALITIES

Personal qualities play an important role to sustain the administrative positions. Most women referred to being able to overcome many of the above mentioned barriers through a combination of personal characteristics such as determination, hard work,
perseverance, strong personality and devotion to work. There are certain traits which are needed for an administrator which will help them to fulfill their responsibilities effectively and efficiently. The women administrators in this study could reach to the top most positions because of their above mentioned personal traits. The women administrators believed in doing their job to the best of their ability. Almost all the women administrators had the quality of taking up the opportunity whatever came their way. They never said “NO” to any work as they believed that it’s their responsibility to contribute to their institutions. This habit of not saying “no” to any work has worked as a strategy though it was not consciously used. These small opportunities which came to their way and successful completion of these tasks gave them recognition in the higher education system and were known in the outer circle.

Being a Vice-Chancellor is a very challenging task for a woman. Everybody is looking at the woman as they have not expected a woman to be at such a post and they are continuously under screening. Woman Vice-Chancellors are not easily acceptable to the traditional male dominated society and because of this people are always there to create trouble and see that they commit one mistake and they are out. Many of the women Vice-Chancellors in this study faced problems of agitations, dharnas, strikes etc. The women administrators faced such situations boldly. One of the participant was appointed as Vice-Chancellor of a University which is very political in nature which has a history that very few Vice-Chancellors could complete their tenure and most of them were ‘Bhagoda’. In such a University the woman Vice-Chancellor could complete her tenure. The women administrators could sustain to the administrative positions because of their personal qualities of being firm, abiding by principles and rules and having administrative skills.

The women have to fight their own battle. Barriers are bound to be there and nobody can help them unless they help themselves. The personal qualities of women administrator will help them in achieving the administrative position as well as in sustaining the same. The women administrators should be bold to face all the challenges, they should be determined and also be well aware of rules and regulations.
5.3.3 NETWORKING AND SOCIALISATION

As seen above lack of networking has been a barrier to the women. Networking can help in increasing their visibility in the public. Two of the women administrators in this study had consciously utilized networking as a strategy to their benefit. One out of these two, one was single and had no family responsibilities so it was not difficult for her to network and spend time for socialization. She even did not hesitate in entering the group of male. She frequently used to invite people at her residence for lunch, dinners or breakfast and used to create network. This kind of socialization according to her has helped her a lot in getting funds to Universities and even in getting work done and reaching to the administrative positions. She could devote more time for socialization but still had some limitations of being women but was in a far better position compared to others in terms of socialization. The another participant shared that she was very well aware that if she want to move ahead in career she has to be known in public and she deliberately made attempts to be visible in public forums and attending various meetings and being a part of different associations. She even used to address the old women forums so that she could be known to people by being socially active. The other women administrators did not consciously worked for socialization and networking but due to their being part of various committees and their contribution to their own field, they were known to people and this little bit of informal networking also has helped them in getting challenging responsibilities which later became one of the step in the ladder to reach to the position of Vice-Chancellor. This exposure of working in different committees had later helped them in their career. If these women had consciously worked towards socialization and networking then they might have achieved the administrative positions earlier and with little difficulty. Networking has been reported as an important strategy in many of the studies for career progression. Santee (2006) has reported in his study that “The women who could succeed had created a network which helped them”, this has been supported by Nakama (2005), Rosynsky (2003) and Sudduth (2003). The women leaders studied by Nakama (2005) in their interview agreed that they were benefitted from networking strategy. Even the women Directors which were selected for case study by Storey (2005) supported this view that creation of networking has helped them in their career advancement. Twale (1995) points to competition for top leadership roles and suggests, “Networking with colleagues at
conferences and regional meetings could have a positive effect on women’s upward career mobility and professional development”. Le Blanc (1993) states that “Networking is a key method for establishing a personal system of support...By establishing and maintaining a strong internal/external support system, a woman becomes more resourceful. The greater her resourcefulness, the greater is her sphere of possible positive influence in higher education”. Leconte (2005) in a study conducted on five women administrators in higher education reported that “women in higher education who engage in networking stand a better chance of landing a senior administrative job than men who do not”. Ausejo (1993) also speaks about networking that “Networking is an informal support system that can be used by women administrators in the development of a career plan. Hubbard and Robbinson (1994) find that nearly fifty percent of the women administrators they studied stated that “networking helped them to obtain the position they currently held in administration”; and over 96 percent “believe that networking is helpful to individuals and new professionals in reaching career goals”.

To be recommended for the highest post such as Vice-Chancellor one should be known and visible. To be known and visible one should have a strong social network. Women administrators should expand their social networks and keep attending various seminars and conferences to make themselves visible.

5.3.4 POLITICAL SUPPORT

Top positions in Universities are political in nature. One has to be politically well connected if one has to reach to these top most positions in higher education system. Men because of their networking and socialization have an entry into the political group also. This helps them to get an entry into the influential positions also. It is observed that in the Central Universities till now we did not have any women Vice-Chancellor being appointed. Recently in the upcoming new Central Universities two of the women have been appointed as Vice-Chancellor. The reason here can also be because the University are to be established and women are hard working so they must be thought to be the right person to do all the ground work and once the University is established may be the position will be given to male. In this study also it is observed that one woman was not appointed for the post of Vice-Chancellor since
many years but when the University was facing some serious problems, a candidate was ready to take up the position, this female women administrator was thought of. The same woman was also given a charge of another University crisis period in the other University and once the problems were settled, she was removed and a male was appointed.

In this study though all the women administrators reported that they had not used the political connections for becoming Vice-Chancellor, it is emerged by interacting with the other sources and analyzing their background that some of them did had political connections which helped them to achieve the top administrative positions. Almost all women administrators agreed that Vice-Chancellor’s positions are political. Two of the women administrators had politically related relatives. One had her husband another had her brother-in-law and father politically well connected. A third one had her husband very closely associated with the Chief Minister of the state which may have helped her in achieving the top most position as she got appointed as Vice-Chancellor during his regime and as soon as Government was changed she had to resign. One of the women administrators had a very strong influential background which helped her achieve that top most position in University, her family had strong connections with Congress Government as her father was close to Pandit Nehru. She also got appointed as Vice-Chancellor when Congress Government was in power both in Centre and State. One of the participants had an IAS brother, which might have helped her to achieve the position of Vice-Chancellor. One of the participants has emerged to be closely associated with one of the political group ABVP and she was appointed as Vice-Chancellor when this group was in power in that particular state. These incidences shows that political connections has helped many of the women administrators in achieving the position of Vice-Chancellorship.

Highest administrative position is political in nature. Women administrators should be known to political circle through their networking and contribution in their field.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The women administrator’s studied were not academically very brilliant. They all got the basic qualifications to enter the teaching profession. These women administrators
belonged to different economic backgrounds, some were having illustrious family and some very poor. Three of the women administrators belonged to backward community and many from the upper caste. It seems that Social and Economic background has no influence on the women to get up to the position of Vice-Chancellor. After entering into the teaching profession, they did their best in their field. Then they slowly and gradually moved up the ladder by proving their capabilities and competence. Most of the barriers faced by the women administrators were socio-cultural in nature. The parents of all the women administrators have emerged as a strong support system, especially the mothers of all the administrators. All the women administrators stayed in a nuclear family which increased the barrier of balancing family and work. Informal networking due to being a member in some association or committees has helped women to be known to people and this led to the recommendation of their names during selection of Vice-Chancellors. Most of the barriers are faced by women because of their marital status. Married women have more barriers compared to the unmarried women. The one case (Prof. Munniyamma) in this study who was unmarried could devote more time for professional work as well as for networking and socialization by inviting people for dinners and lunch and even herself attended parties in evening. The family responsibility is the major barrier faced by all the women administrators. The family responsibilities do not remain the same throughout the career. This is more acute in the initial phase of the career when the children are too small and needs more attention. After children grow up they become part of the support system.

5.4 FINDINGS

The findings which emerge from this study are:

1. Socio-economic background had no influence on the women administrators’ career progression.

2. Women administrators took up all the challenging tasks which came their way and proved themselves competent which led them for further opportunities of administrative positions.
3. Informal networking helped women administrators in achieving the top position. Though the women administrators did not consciously put effort for socialization and networking, due to being part of various committees and member of associations and their participation in national seminars and conferences they earn a name helped and increased the chances of being recommended for the post of Vice-Chancellorship.

4. The family/society related barriers were major barriers but it was intense only during the initial phase of their career and in the later stage the same family emerged as support.

5. Parents of all the women administrators were very supportive. The in-laws though did not object to their career but neither supported them.

6. The Guides of the women administrators emerged as a part of support system.

7. The women administrators through their personal qualities of being bold, determined and having administrative skills could reach to top administrative positions and could also sustain the position.

8. By being strict and adhering to the rules, statutes, ordinances and by being firm and not getting succumbed to pressures the women administrators could sustain their positions.

5.6 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR ASPIRING WOMEN ADMINISTRATORS

As women form a formidable part of the education system, their active participation at all level is essential. To enhance their participation, the following implications are derived from the study.

1) Women should take up all the challenging tasks which come their way and give their best.
2) Women should mobilize support system. They should outsource some of the domestic responsibilities to balance the family and work responsibilities.

3) Women must become more politically aware and active at all levels — local, state and nation.

4) Women should contribute academically in their field and prove that they are not less than their male counterparts. They should make optimum use of informal networks created due to being part of some associations, committees.

5) Women should not lose confidence and face the challenges with boldness and determination.

5.7 IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY MAKING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

1) As women are no less competent than anybody, more female teachers be recruited in the system and should actively seek to promote more females into positions of leadership such as Heads of the Departments, Deans, etc.

2) There is need of flexibility in timings for women so that they can balance both family and work responsibilities, especially when they have small children and need time for feeding and child care.

3) Institutions should provide training opportunities for women and ensure the provision of social facilities such as creches and day care centers for children of staff.

4) University chairs, professorships and head of Department posts should be filled by men and women on an equal basis. As many women now hold the required qualifications, the institutions should target to regularly increase their appointments.
5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Following are certain suggestion for further studies which can be conducted.

1) Studies on different aspects can be taken such as Networking and Mentoring.

2) Comparative studies between men and women administrators can be taken up.

3) A similar kind of studies can be conducted on more women administrators region wise to create a strong data for meta analysis.

4) A Comparative study of women administrators in India and other countries can be taken up. This will help us to see whether we have any similarity in the barriers and also understand how they overcome them.

5) Study on leadership style of women administrators can be taken up. Most of the women were found to be demonstrating more of feminine qualities. An indepth study on leadership style will help to know how effective it is.