

**ROLE DIVERSIFICATION AND CHANGE IN THE STATUS  
OF EDUCATED INDIAN WOMEN :  
A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE ✓**

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**RITA SOOD**

**CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL SYSTEMS  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI-110067, INDIA  
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# JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF  
SOCIAL SYSTEMS

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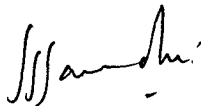
Telephone : 652282  
652114

New Mehrauli Road,  
NEW DELHI-110067.

## CERTIFICATE

This dissertation entitled "ROLE DIVERSIFICATION AND CHANGE IN THE STATUS OF EDUCATED INDIAN WOMEN: A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE" submitted by RITA SOOD for the Master of Philosophy has not been previously submitted for any other degree of this or any other University.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for their consideration for the award of M.Phil. degree.

  
Supervisor

  
Chairman

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*Rita Sood*  
Rita Sood

## CHAPTER - I

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant developments in the post-independent India is the speed with which women have challenged men in various walks of life. Nowhere has this challenge been more visible than in the field of educational and occupational participation. The significance of the challenge lies in the fact that traditionally women were not supposed to go in for white collar jobs at all and in no case be employed alongwith men. The strict segregation between men and women practiced by Indian society did not permit that kind of inter-mingling of men and women. Nor would the ego of the Indian male permit him to accept a situation where women also became bread winner in their families. Indian society, had not, until recently looked with favour upon women working in offices. The working women, however, is not a new addition to the Indian scene. Women in the lower strata of society have been working since long for wages in factories as menial servants or as unskilled labourers. It is only the middle or upper class women, who were confined to homes and taking up jobs, was considered derogatory for them.

Post-independence period has witnessed a big change in this. The expansion of woman's education has resulted in producing thousands of women graduates with modern views. Educated middle class women's taking up out of home gainful employment has significant implications for social change. In

order to study the important subject of social change, it is very essential to study the changes that are occurring in society due to the education and employment of women, because, as Hobhouse has rightly pointed out in his *Morals of Evolution*, "the education of women and their position in society are a sure index of the advancement of society".

The general change that has taken place in Indian society since independence has also emboldened many educated women to seek jobs in professions, in which they would have never thought of entering, such as engineering, law etc. Therefore, for the first time we are having a significant number of women seeking the available jobs. This change was the initial starting point which generated my interest in the area.

#### PROBLEM

The problem examined in this study is the role of education and employment in raising the social status of women. Traditionally, women's position in our society has been one of general subordination to man. The demand for equal status for women with men has been of recent origin. So is the employment of middle class woman. The question then is whether the holding of job by middle class educated women has contributed to raise their status in the society. The further question is whether education and employment are the sole or even the major factors contributing to raise their status. The most important of this is age. Factors like place of residence, level of income, family type etc. also have

been shown to reinforce status. But neither of these studies have attempted to see the impact of education and employment exclusively on the status of women. Our study aims at filling this gap. We have tried to see how far education and employment have contributed to the status of women. Therefore, our objectives in this study will be as follows:-

1. To trace the traditional role image of Indian woman.
2. To identify education and employment as the major factors responsible for diversification of roles of Indian women.
3. To trace the growth pattern and to find out the extent of disparity in participation rate.
4. To see the extent of change due to new roles.

#### HYPOTHESES

The major hypothesis put forward in this study is that education and employment are the main factors responsible for diversification of roles of women which in turn buttress their social status.

To test this major hypothesis several subhypotheses have been put forward:

1. Role diversification leads to better status within the family and the wider society.

2. New work roles are likely to effect the traditional authority structure within the family.
3. New roles among women are likely to result in role-conflicts as between their commitment to work and their traditional social family commitment.
4. Education and employment among women create in them a new sense of identity and awareness.

### METHODOLOGY

Since there are not many studies on this aspect of Indian woman, the methodology adopted for this study is based on the analysis of available studies and materials, i.e., books, journals, newspapers, woman's magazines, census report and other relevant documents. I have also consulted several unpublished reports and studies which are available at some of the leading institutes in Delhi such as, All India Women's Conference (AIWC), Jigyasa, Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IMR) etc.

### DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS

#### Role Diversification

In this study role diversification refers to widening of woman's roles due to education and employment. In other words, in traditional Indian society role sphere of the Indian woman was rather limited, closed and of a static nature. But, introduction of education started facilitating woman to participate



in areas which were closed her before. This started producing changes in the traditional role-definition of women. One would have expected naturally enough that this will step up her social status and status within the family. This naturally should make her socially more mobile and capable of taking certain decisions on her own - a prospect which was not foreseeable before.

### Social Status

The sociological definition of status is that it refers to a position in a social system and sub-system which is distinguished from and at the same time to other positions through its designated rights and obligations. Social status may be defined as the position according to functionalities or role occupant's placed in the same or similar situation, viz-a-viz other functionalities or role occupants placed in other situations in the society. Status is, therefore, a relative concept. In our study the purpose is not to identify various aspects of status or to categorise persons and groups in terms of status. Our purpose is to examine the influence of education and employment on the status of working women and to compare her status with the traditional ideal Indian woman's role. Therefore, instead of attempting to give a comprehensive definition of status, we thought it better and more relevant to examine the areas where change in status is discernible. Since we are concerned with the status of woman<sup>in</sup> traditional society only these

areas where there was discrimination on the basis of sex are identified. Again once we are studying status, in relation to education and employment, the employment based factors in status also have been examined. As a matter of fact, employment has been taken as the critical factor in her status and non-employment has been studied only to bring out the contrast, if any, in status. In this way the social status of a woman employee is measured at home and in wider society. Since higher status for woman is supposed to be a deviation from the norm in the traditional society, the extent of deviation from the normative pattern is examined. In this way the status of woman at home is measured in terms of change in the traditional authority pattern, type of household, the amount of conformity to or deviance from sexually determined and socially inferior behaviour pattern imposed on her by tradition.

The status of women in the larger society is examined in terms of the departure accepted by society.

Having stated the problem and also briefly the methodology, I shall briefly give below an outline of the chapters that follows. This dissertation is divided into six different chapters. In the first chapter, we have discussed regarding the formulation of problem, methodology adapted, objectives of our study etc. The second chapter deals with certain biological, anthropological, Freudian and Marxist perspectives which serve to justify the existing position of women today.

Third chapter is an attempt to trace the cultural-structural correlates of women's inferior status in Indian society. We have discussed here about the image of Indian women in scriptural texts. Secondly, how other factors like caste, family structure etc. play an important role in determining the status of women. And finally, when and how status consciousness grew among women? What were the major factors which played an important role in creating new status consciousness among women. All these questions have been raised in the third chapter.

In the fourth chapter we have taken up the socio-demographic picture of Indian women. The history of any movement for improving the status of any section of a society all over the world, has always emphasized education as being the most significant instrument for changing their status. Our main emphasis in this chapter is on literacy and employment. This we have discussed from three points of time, that is 1950-51, 1960-61 and 1970-71. This chapter gives us clear picture of the participation trends existing among women in these two areas.

In the fourth chapter of our dissertation we have used the statistical facts to examine the change in the status of women, but in the fifth chapter we have used the recent sociological literature to examine the change in the social status of Indian woman due to education and employment. And final chapter, that is chapter six of our dissertation, is the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER - IITHEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN

The question of why women are everywhere the "subordinate sex" has never failed to interest both men and women and many interpretations have been advanced to explain the phenomenon including the interpretation that women are not really subordinate at all. Some people view that the original division of labour has resulted from the physical differences that woman's role in reproduction is responsible for the earliest forms of the division of labour and that male supremacy flows from this division. Whereas others believe that early societies were sexually egalitarian and that male supremacy arose with the growth of class societies. Still others assert that the division of roles between male hunting and female mothering has always included some amount of male dominance. Thus theorists have divergent explanations regarding the role differences between male and female. It will be useful to review the evidence for the subordination of the female from the point of view of various theorists, therefore, in this chapter major theoretical framework for explaining woman's unequal status and subordinate role, has been attempted.

Biological Perspective

(Proponents of this view say that there are some fundamental biological differences which not only distinguish women from men but are also responsible for their secondary role in the society.)

Physical strength was a significant variable in helping to establish the subordinate position of women in early development of human society. As J.S. Mill, the nineteenth century advocate of rights for women held that reason for women's submissiveness was the superior strength of man.<sup>1</sup> Also says Beauvoir, "When two human categories are together, each aspires to impose its sovereignty upon the other. If both are able to resist this imposition, there is created between them a reciprocal relation, sometimes in enmity, always in a state of tension. If one of the two is in some way privileged has some advantage, this one prevails over the other and undertakes to keep it in subjection."<sup>2</sup> This also explains how man because of superior physical strength has succeeded in establishing superior position.

In terms of the body physique there are sex differences between men and women which are very real and quite visible. Males have greater size and physical power to the comparatively lesser size and physical power of the females. Differences of personality follow the biological differences of sex. Men are more aggressive and independent than women, they are more outgoing and extrovert, confident in their own ability to control and manipulate the external environment. Women on the other hand are more perceptible in their relationships with others, they

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1. Mills, J.S. (1977), The Subjection of Women, MIT Press, London, p.9.

2. Beauvoir, S.D. (1953), The Second Sex, Penguin, London, p.89.

are more dependent in their relationships, they are introvert and domesticated and emotionally liable.<sup>3</sup>

(This being true, man has taken advantage of it and used it for placing women in the subordinate position. Regarding the role of women Simon de Beauvoir in the "Second Sex" says that the original and rest cause of woman's oppression is in the biologically given unequal distribution of reproductive function. Because of reproduction and associated child-care burdens, woman has always been restricted to maintainancy role, while men has appropriated the creative role.) "The golden age of woman is only a myth. To say that women was the other is to say that their did not exist between the sexes a reciprocal relation - Earth, Mother, Goddess - she was no fellow creature in man's eyes; it was beyond the human realm that her power was confirmed and she was therefore outside the realm of society. Society has always been male; political power has always been in the hands of man."<sup>4</sup>

"Physical differences between a man and woman become the basis of building a system of reciprocal roles and in the process the wife's role, including the nurturing, subordinated her, while the economic function of man was defined as superior and superordinate, and boys and girls are socialized to fulfil these roles."<sup>5</sup>

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3. Oakley, A. (1972), 'Women, gender and society'. The Pitman Press, Bales, Temple Smith, London, p.49.

4. Beauvoir, op.cit., p.64.

5. Oakley, op.cit., p.70.

Because of the child bearing and child rearing function, woman was forced to be sedentary. Because during pregnancy woman is dependent on others, on man, for the fulfillment of her requirements. Since during this interval she cannot move freely, her experience become limited to her children, preparing meals and performing other domestic activities, little time is left for her, for any other kind of experience. Whereas man is always free for free movement. He does not have any such interruptions like females.

(Parsons<sup>6</sup> also talks of theory of the sexually determined instrumental expressive division of labour. According to this theory the woman plays the role of the emotional or "expressive" leader in the family whereas the husband is the instrumental leader.)

Thus the division of roles between the sexes has its origin in the biologically different functions of males and females. But this does not mean that the man is biologically the more active one or he is biologically determined to be hunter. It does not mean that these roles are the consequences of the biologically determined reproduction differences between the sexes.

Criticising this, biological approach, Montague says that it is an error to assume that the female is by nature sedentary,

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6. Parsons used these concepts for the development of a general paradigm of the nuclear family which he considers to be universal, in T. Parsons and R.P. Bales (eds.): Family, Socialization and Interaction Processes. Glencoe (III), 1955. p.45-47.

whereas the male is by nature active, mobile and superior. Such activity differences do not exist between male and female but to a large extent these would seem to be secondary differences, not primary.<sup>7</sup> He further says that "the division of roles between the sexes is a cultural expression of biological differences, the society or cultural, forms which this expression may take in societies is enormous. In some cultures men and women may engage in common activities which in other cultures are strictly separate along sexual lines."<sup>8</sup> (The important point to grasp is that the prescribed roles "according to Montague" are assigned to the sexes are not determined biologically but largely culturally.) As also Professor Linton points out, "All societies prescribe different attitudes and activities to men and to women. Most of them try to rationalise these prescriptions in terms of the physiological differences between the sexes or their different roles in reproduction. However, a comparative study of the statuses ascribed to man and woman in different cultures, seems to show that while such factors may have served as starting point for the development of a division of actual ascription are almost entirely determined by culture."<sup>9</sup>

The biological differences between the sexes obviously provides the grounds upon which are based the different social

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7. Montague, A. (1954), The natural superiority of woman, p.51.

8. Ibid., p.70.

9. Ralph, Linton. (1936), The Study of Man, New York, p.47.



roles which the sexes are expected to play in a society. But the significance of biological differences is often interpreted in such a manner as to convey the appearance of a natural connection between conditions which are, in fact, only artificially connected, that is by misinterpretation. For example, in almost all cultures pregnancy, birth and nursing are interpreted by both sexes as handicapping experiences; as a consequence women have been made to feel that by virtue of their biological functions, they have been biologically, virtually placed in an inferior position to men. But as we know it very well that in modern times these biological functions of women are only minimal, if at all handicapping.

*9. 10* Critiques argue that biological determinism is insufficient to explain the subordination of women only due to simple brute strength, it would seem logical that as civilization progressed and physical strength became less important, the position of women should have improved. On the other hand Ruth Winter<sup>10</sup> argues that no one can deny that men are stronger than women as far as muscular power is concerned. However, the need for physical strength is fast abating in modern life. Furthermore, in any subsistence economy, women are always considered as fit as men for hard manual work. Similarly, Reed<sup>11</sup> observes that biological subordination is not the result of a predetermined

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10. Ruth, Winter. (1977), p.44.

11. Reed, E. (1976), Problems of Women Liberation: A Marxist Approach, Pathfinder Press, New York, p.16.

biological handicap. She says that child bearing is represented as the external handicap of female, the source of her status as the second sex, but the child bearing as a disability is relatively recent and exclusively social. It did not exist in primitive society. Thus according to her attribution of inferior status is false proposition. Simon de Beauvoir<sup>12</sup> says that we must view the fact of biology in the light of anthropological, economic, social and psychological context. The enslavement of female and limitations of her various powers are extremely important facts. The body of woman is one of the essential element in her situation in the world but the body is not enough to define her.

#### Anthropological Perspective

Biology is not enough to give an answer to the question that is before us; why women is an inferior sex? Our task is to discover how the nature of woman has been affected through the course of history.

(Many anthropologists have sought to explain the inferior position of woman.. Some anthropologists explain male dominance by arguing that it existed from the very beginning of human society. While talking about the inferior role of women, Levi-Strauss assumes the subordination of women during the process of the creation of society.<sup>13</sup> According to him, "culture began

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12. Simon de Beauvoir, 1949, op.cit., p.59.

13. Levi-Strauss (1971), 'The Family' in Man, Culture and Society. ed. by Harry Shapiro.

with the exchange of women by men to cement bounds between families, thereby creating society. For him, kinship system does not merely exchange women. They exchange sexual access, geneological statuses, lineage names and ancestors rights and people - men, women and children in concrete systems of social relationships. These relationships always include certain rights for men and others for women. Exchange of woman is a shorthand for expressing that the social relationship of a kinship system specify, that, men have certain rights in their female kin, and that women do not have in the same rights either to themselves or to their male kin. In this sense, the exchange of women is a profound perception of a system in which women do not have full rights to themselves. Moreover, following Levi Strauss, because it is man who exchange women and women who are exchanged, in creating social bounds, men benefit more than women from these social bounds and thus the division of labour between the two sexes is a hierarchical one.

Comparing the public-private split in a study among the Kung,<sup>14</sup> a hunting and gathering people in South-West Draper found that sex roles were maintained with more rigidity. (Boys and girls come to be socialized differently and man begun to feel their work superior to the woman.) Man began to consider property theirs (rather than jointly and with women) and ranking

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✓ 14. Draper, Patricia. Kung Woman: contrasts in several egalitarianism in work. ed. by Raiter, Towards an anthropology of woman. 19

of individuals in terms of prestige and differential work had begun... Overall result according to Draper was a decrease in the status of women. The delineation of public, public and private spheres placed men in the public and women in the private sphere and public sphere came to be valued more. Thus creating superior position for man and inferior for woman.

One of the early theoretician who wrote about the nature of superiority and woman's place was Sir Henry Maine whose work appeared in 1961. Maine<sup>15</sup> held that the patriarchal system of authority was the original and universal system of social organization. The family was the original unit and the eldest male parent held supreme authority in the household. From the family such authority had been extended into clans, from clans into tribes and so on. Almost always men had been the rulers, although occasionally when for some reasons or other, women had outnumbered men, matriarchy temporarily existed but only as an instable and degrading form of organization.

### Freudian Perspective

Chief proponent of this theory is Freud. He is known as the father of psychoanalysis. Freud's theory of woman is part of his entire treatise in psychoanalysis based on sexuality and like Firestone<sup>16</sup> puts it "Freud captured the imagination of whole

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15. Maine, Henry. (1943), "Ancient Law", Penguin.

16. Firestone, S. (1970), "The dialectic of sex: the case of feminist revolution". William Mirroson, New York, pp.48-49.

continent and civilization for a good reason. Freudianism is so charged, so impossible to repudiate because Freud grasped the crucial problem of modern life - sexuality.

The cornerstone of Freudian theory of womanhood is the masculine conviction that a woman is a castrated man. Freud's entire understanding and analysis of Feminism is based on one anatomical factor that is the lack of penis in women, what he called the "penis envy". It is in explaining the acquisition of femininity that Freud employs the concepts of penis envy and castration, the term penis envy had more than symbolic meaning to him. According to him, this envy in woman grew out of a feeling of biological lack beginning with the little girl's discovery in early childhood that she lacks something possessed by the little boy. Because of this, according to Freud, she believed she had been castrated. It is assumed that she considers herself to be thus deprived and that much of her motivation stems either from the attempt to pretend that this is not so, typical of the immature female who indulges in clitoral sexuality, or from the attempt to compensate herself for this lack by having children.

The penis envy from which the female child suffers and the way the latter equates the penis with a child, give rise to the traits of passivity, masochism and narcissism which make up the female character. Before her discovery of the missing penis, she is masculine in character, that is she shares the same interests, genital and nongenital as boys. After her sight of the male organ, she acquires feminity almost as a compensation (at this

point things may go wrong and she may be either neurotic or masculine).

A basic weakness in the whole of this approach is as Kate Millet<sup>17</sup> has observed, is its male bias. Freud and his followers build up a theory of feminine sexuality to account for the differences they observed between the sexes in their own sexually repressed and male-dominated society. A host of unsupportable assumptions prop up this theory of sexuality in females. The assumption that a female child believes herself to be anatomically inferior to the male (or believes the male to be superior) the assumption that while females envy males their penis, males do not envy females their womb and their maternity, the assumption that the female child blames her mother for failing to provide her with a penis and so on. Hence the theory is open to attack on many grounds. Not only was Freudian theory developed within the framework of a patriarchal system, it fits only a culture where masculinity and femininity are defined in a particular way.

According to Thompson<sup>18</sup> Freud was a very perceptive thinker but he was a male, a male quite ready to subscribe to the theory of male superiority prevalent in the culture. This for Thompson must have hampered his understanding of experience in the woman's life especially associated with her feminine role. She goes on to

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17. Millet, K. (1973), Psycho-analysis and women, Penguin Books, p.5.

18. Thompson, C. (1973), quoted in Millet's "Psychoanalysis and Women", pp.58-59.

say that one can say that no human being can readily know about anything. However, the presence of similar organs justifies as in thinking that we can at best approximate an understanding of another person's experience in many cases, say for instance, a headache, cough, pain in the heart, weeping, laughter, joy, sense of wellbeing, we can assume similar to another person, to what we ourselves experience under those titles. But in the case of sexual experiences, however, one sex has no adequate means of identifying with the experiences of other sex.

Criticising Freudian explanation, Horney<sup>19</sup> says that in viewing penis envy among women, and the overcoming of it which gives rise to the desire for child and thus forms the linebound to the father, Freud had neglected the real insight into the feminine development.<sup>20</sup> She says the genital differences between the sexes which have been made the cordial point in the analytical conception, we have left the coin side into the other great biological differences.<sup>21</sup> Namely, the different functions played by men and women, emphasising the important motherhood function of woman, she says, "From the biological point of view woman has in motherhood, a quite indisputable and by no means negligible physiological superiority."

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19. Horney, Ibid., p.6.

20. Ibid., p.9.

21. Ibid., p.15.

Criticising Freudian theory Erich Fromm<sup>22</sup> says, Freudian theory has serious limitation that he could not recognise the nature of erotic love, since it is based on male-female polarity which is only possible if male and female are quite equals, not different. Thus his whole system is centred around sexual but not erotic love. Thus, we find that Freudian theory is also full of limitations.

### Marxian Perspective

Marx as such has not built any elaborate theory of woman's emancipation. Of course, one finds only a few vital passages in the works of Marx about family, about changing sex relations and about women's participation in the capitalist production process. Marx had noticed the importance of the female as an economic production unit in the social organization of society until the emergence of bourgeois society. In the Communist Manifesto, he and Engels predict the dissolution of the family in its old form, not only of family, but all precapitalist forms of exploitation and oppression and visualise that gradually those who have no access to the means of production will be ruled by the laws of motion of capitalism, i.e., by the labour theory of value. In German ideology, Marx makes a statement: "The slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with the increase of population..."<sup>23</sup> This statement is not worked out further and hence cannot be taken as

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22. Fromm Erich, Crisis of Psychoanalysis.

23. Marx, 1976, p.44.

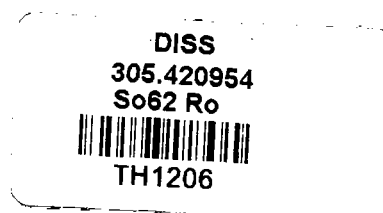


a proof of his vision on woman's question.

While assuming Marx one must be aware that in developing the labour theory of value, he was interested in developing a theory of the process of capital accumulation and exploitation. He was trying to understand the dynamics of an epochal tendency of the capitalist mode of production which hold tremendous potential for accumulation of surplus and thus expansion of productive forces. Marx was working at the highest level of abstraction and thus trying to eliminate complexities of concrete situations. Therefore, he didn't go into the analysis of implications of this process for women.

The so-called Marxist theory of woman's question was developed by Engels in a later period, of course on the premise built by Marx and by him together for the earlier theorization. Following Morgan, an evolutionary anthropologist, Engels traced the link between the rise of private property, monogamy patriarchal family and the state.<sup>24</sup> This was an attempt to show the origin of subordination of women by man and based on that locating determination of woman's subordination analytically.

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24. Engel's book "Origin of family, private property and the state," has been considered as an authority on women's question by all the Marxists all over the world. The work has been written after the death of Marx and based itself in anthropological writings of that period, when the science had started developing and the systematic study of the primitive society had been taken up by some anthropologists like Morgan which was influenced by evolutionary ideas of Darwin.



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The main thrust of Engels' work is to oppose the widely prevalent notion of woman's inferiority that she was made so by the creator. Engels presents historical process by which woman is transformed from free and equal productive members of the society to subordinate and dependent wives. The growth of private property with the family as the institution that appropriates and perpetuates it, for Engels, is the cause of this transformation. In the stone age when the land belonged in common to all members of the class, the rudimentary character of the primitive shed and hoe limited the possibilities of agriculture so that women's strength was adequate for gardening. In this primitive division of labour, the two sexes constituted in a way two classes and there was equality between these classes while man hunts and fishes, woman remained in the home. Through the discovery of copper, tin, bronze and iron and with the appearance of the plough, agriculture enlarged its scope and intensive labour was required for that man employed other men, whom he reduced to slavery. With this appeared private property and with this man became the proprietor of women also. This was the great historical defeat of the feminine sex. It is also to be explained by the upsetting of the old division of labour which occurred as a consequence of the invention of new tools. The same cause which had accused women the prime authority in the house namely, her restriction to domestic duties, now resulted in the domination of the man, for woman's house work henceforth sank into insignificance in comparison with man's productive labour. The latter became everything the former

nothing. Thus material authority resulted in perpetuating authority, property being inherited from father to son and woman no longer had any claim over it. Here we see the emergence of patriarchal family.

As Engels pointed out, all societies have rested upon the two pillars of production and procreation. Thus it was the woman, the producers of both new life and the material necessities of life who became the leaders of their communities and they were also to accomplish this because they worked together into separate households where each individual woman was bogged down with the same task for their individual children. They could do so because there was no ruling power standing over them telling them what to do or restrict their efforts. This explains why earlier society was matriarchal in constitution. The productive activities were the source of their power.

This reversal according to Engels is resulted from the just changes in the structure of society and the breakdown of the original communistic system. So long as woman retained their collectivist system, they could not be overthrown. But with the rise of the new system of private property, monogamous marriage and the family, woman were dispersed, each of them to become a solitary wife and mother in an individual home. So long as they kept together they represented a great social force, separated from one another and confined to individual kitchens, they were rendered powerless. Thus introduction of private property, production for exchange led to women's domestication and subordination.

✓ Borrowing heavily from Engels, says Reed, it was the drastic social changes brought about by the patriarchal class institutions of family private property and the state which produced the historical downfall of the female sex.

Something special about this approach is that it not only explains the downfall of female but also provides us with the solution of this problem in the development of Socialist Community. But Simon de Beauvoir criticizing this perspective says that Engels slighted the problem simply by remarking that the socialist community would abolish the female inferiority, certainly is an abstract solution.

Thus we find that no individual approach is sufficient and accurate explanation of women's subservient role in society, but of course, to some extent collectively they do provide us with a picture of woman's subordinate position in society.

Under this chapter, an overall attempt has been made to review the various theoretical perspectives in relation to the subordinate role of female in society. We have discussed biological, anthropological Freudian and Marxian perspectives. According to the biological perspective, due to the biological differences, and inadequacies, women are placed in subordinate positions. Their anthropological perspective emphasizes the role of culture rather than of biology placing the woman in a subordinate position.

Freudian perspective is based on the crucial problem of modern life - sexuality. According to Freud, it is the lack of

penis in woman as penis envy, which is responsible for placing woman in an inferior position. Therefore, according to this perspective, woman is a castrated man.

Last of all, we have discussed about Marxian perspective. The main thrust of this perspective is to oppose the widely prevalent notion of woman's inferiority that she was made so by the creator. According to this perspective material, inequality is the basis for inequality in roles among sexes.

CHAPTER - III ✓WOMEN IN INDIAN SOCIETY - TRADITIONAL  
AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

In the last chapter we have discussed theoretical perspectives regarding woman's inferior role in society. In the present chapter we shall be taking up the case of women in a specific context of India. To quote Committee Report, "Any attempt to assess the status of women in a society should ideally start from the social framework. Social structure, cultural norms, and value systems are important determinants of women's roles and their position in society. They influence social expectations regarding behaviour of the two sexes, both as individuals and in relation to each other. Social traditions are a major influence in shaping attitudes as well as behaviour patterns of human groups, emerging trends of society cannot be viewed in isolation from them." <sup>1</sup> Therefore, to start, we shall first analyse the socio-cultural determinants of female roles and role-norms in India. In their ideal typical form, these role-norms are found in the scriptural texts. Social ideal of Indian woman cannot be understood without a knowledge of these. Therefore, first of all, we shall discuss the image of Indian woman in these scriptures. Secondly, we shall take up the

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1. Government of India (1974), "Towards Equality", Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India. Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Department of Social Welfare, New Delhi, p.37.

cultural-structural correlates of woman's inferior status in Indian society. And finally, we shall briefly discuss about the changing scene.

#### WOMEN AND THE SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

The ancient Indian scriptures played prominent role in degrading and lowering the image of women in Indian society. The tenets of Manu, the ancient Hindu Law givers have fostered a deep rooted belief in the intellectual and otherwise inferiority of women. This inferiority complex rooted deeply in the psyche of Indian women has left deep scars on the growth and development of her personality. However, men expect women to be in sophisticated sexual partnership; for wife is "ardhangini" for all ritual purposes.

Religion has deeply affected and grievously damaged the image of a woman in Indian society. The fact that India hosts major religions, each with different myths, ideologies, beliefs and ritual practices, also suggests that the status of woman would vary according to religion.

#### Hinduism

The concept of 'Dharma' which is often translated in English as religion, has continuously moulded the life and the role of men and women amongst the Hindus. Hinduism, which comprises of several phases, the Vedic period is said to have witnessed a high status for woman, where they had the right to study the Vedas and offer sacrifices and enjoy considerable

freedom in marriage. There was no bar on widow remarriage or woman remaining unmarried.<sup>2</sup> In the Vedic age woman enjoyed equality with the man, in all spheres of activity. She had equal right to participate in sacrificial rites, to undergo the investiture ceremony, and to be man's equal in upholding "dharma". She could fight wars, join in festivals, take part in philosophical discussions, like Gargi and Maitreye.

But there is no overall appraisal of a woman's personality in the lore of Hinduism. She is viewed only in specific role. With the conception of marriage as the true destiny of woman and with her important obligation to bear a son, the roles of wife and mother emerge as the proper roles for woman.

Under the impact of images created and sustained in Hinduism, women are regarded on the one hand, as the highest embodiment of purity and spiritual power, on the other hand, they are viewed as being essentially weak and dependent creatures who are in need of constant guardianship and protection of man. While the former view occasionally gets overt expression, covert norms defining her actual position are essentially determined by the latter.

During Vedic period, a man without woman was considered to be incomplete and unfit for performing religious rites and rituals. Not only that, a woman in Vedic time had a right to

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(1930)

2. A.S. Altekar, /The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization: From Pre-Historic Times to the Present Day. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p.49.



the highest knowledge, even the knowledge of "Brahma" the absolute. Some of the hymns of the Rig Veda itself are attributed to women 'rishis' or 'rishikas', as they were called. These 'rishikas' or 'Brahmavadinis' were the product of the highest educational discipline of 'brahmacharya' for which women also were eligible. But the Rig Veda while referring to young maidens completing their education as 'brahmacharinis' and then gaining husbands, also talks of their merging in their husbands like rivers in the oceans.<sup>3</sup>

This underscores the basic concept of man woman relationship as stipulated in the ancient 'Hindu Dharma'. Male superiority over the female is unquestioned even here. Males of the society are 'oceans' where women are only too happy to lose their identity achieving complete merger. In the later vedic text, the Atharva-Veda, notions of hell and heaven along with those of 'Karmic Continuation' leading to the continuation of 'Jiva' or 'being' after death were clearly and categorically accepted. It was conceded that to save the dead from burning perpetually in hell, a son and only a son, could offer ritual oblations on their behalf. Women were beginning to be considered generally impure and thus not competent to perform the highly clean and spiritual function of offering oblations to the souls of the dead. Besides, a man could not hope to go to heaven unless his funeral pyre was lit by his son. Thus in addition to the old incentive for having sons who

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3. Radha Kumud Mookerji (1958), "Women in Ancient India" in Women of India, ed. Tara Ali Baig (Delhi: A Govt. of India Publication), p.2.

would act as a shield for their family and clan, there arose an all important use for male children, i.e., to safeguard the post-death purity and happiness of the departed-from-the-family. Thus says a hymn in the Atharva Veda, "O Prajapati Anumati, give a daughter elsewhere, but here a male."<sup>4</sup>

In addition, there was a general denunciation of female children as unwanted inputs into the family. Thus the Atharva Veda deprecate the birth of a daughter, even though it does not prescribe, recommend or approve infanticide. In some texts such as the 'Brahmanas', we find instances of unwanted girls being disposed of in their infancy.<sup>5</sup>

During Mahabharata period, the character of Draupadi speaks clearly the setback the status of women had suffered during that period, where she was publicly disrobed, kicked and dragged to the court by the heir, while the elders including Bhishma, whose discourse of morals run into several sections of the epic, sit blinking, saying or doing nothing. The fact remains that Draupadi did not submit to all this degradation with the meek resignation peculiar to Sita in the Ramayana. She contested her right to freedom to gamble her away, as at the time of the last throw of dice, he had already lost freedom and was not free agent to stake his wife. The

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4. P. Thomas., Women Through the Ages (New York: Asia Publishing House), p.57.

5. Ibid., p.58.

incident points to be a very important development. It shows that women were yet fighting and resisting total submission to man.

It was, however, in the Ramayana period that woman abandoned all hopes of reclaiming her lost status. She thus conceded to man his superiority over her, embracing complete servility. One can see in Sita, woman at the lowest ebb of her self-esteem without any hope whatsoever of an upward climb. With Sita and with the Ramayana the 'Brahminic' ideal of wifehood was established. 'Pativratyam' as an ideal became a coveted goal for every Hindu woman. The 'Swayamvara' type of marriage was already going out of fashion and child marriage was gaining currency.

Sita's greatness lay in the annihilation of her individuality. In Sita, the prime virtue of self effacement finds its fulfilment. Feminine virtue came to be identified with obedience to one's husband even when he happened to be an uncritical slave to a blind masculine tradition. Sita's virtue lies in the fact that she bore without a word of protest every insult that her husband - her god wrought upon her. She climbed the funeral pyre to prove her innocence, she even appreciated Rama's neglect of her in the larger interests of state. And when she could bear it no longer, she prayed to the mother earth to gape open and take her into her bowels.

During this period all the liberties of women had been curtailed one by one. Due to the strict enforcement of moral codes her virtue was strictly guarded first by her father and

then by her husband. She was not allowed to venture out of the four walls of her home without a chaperone. A life of strict bondage, therefore, was decreed for her. The Ramayana, especially, had come to be worshipped as a holy book in every Hindu household. Women, thereby were constantly fed on the virtues of meekness and servile obedience, 'Pativratyam' and silent suffering. For centuries it was drilled into her ears and thus the Sita image came to be entrenched deep into the psyche of an Indian woman as an ideal. Self-effacement, worship of her husband as god and bowing before his wishes and needs became the hall marks of womanhood. By this time, all these ideals had been hammered into her head for so long and with such force, that she had lost all power of independent thinking and decision making. She willingly and voluntarily accepted the subordinate role.

### Sikhism

Sikhism condemns formal ritual, idolatry, and superstition and emphasizes simple devotion to God. In the pursuit of religion both men and women have a place as individuals. Sikhism emphasizes that householder's ideal and demands respect for women as men's helpmate and sharer in his domestic life. It does not look upon woman as an agent of sin and evil, nor does it regard her as an object of pleasure. Guru Nanak asks women to have a pure way of life and not indulge in extravagances of wealth. Association of impurity with the cosmic natural processes like birth is condemned. Man is exhorted not to condemn woman

who is his companion and of whom are born great men and all men.

For the purpose of devotion there is no difference between men and women. In social life, however, sikhism in practice did not concede equality for woman. Her domestic roles, as mother and wife, are emphasized.

### Muslims

Among Muslims also the position of women was not very different as it is clear from the writings of Lakhandwala,<sup>6</sup> where it was expressed "in Islamic law.....not only the woman is subservient and subordinated by man but is pronounced intellectually defective, mentally unsound, morally corruptible and deficient in religion." The traditional image of muslims women is that of the veiled women<sup>7</sup> (burque). Quaran emphasized modesty, decorum and chastity for women and advised not to display for women and advised not to display their beauty or ornaments.<sup>8</sup> Also among Christians the Biblical image of woman as the tempter and seducer has strengthened the husbands rights to control the wife and her property. However, the emphasis on the mutually dutiful and respectful relationship between the husband and wife has helped to weaken the authority of the

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6. Lakhandwala (1967), Status of Women, Indian Journal of Social Work, 31.4.

7. Op.cit., p.46.

8. Mehta, Sushila (1982), Revolution and Status of Women in India, Gopal Printing Press, p.21.

extended family and thus accorded a relatively higher status to women through the nuclear organization of the family. Though these women enjoy greater security of home and the company of their children, they are more subject to the husband's authority being deprived of legal rights and independent existence. Although the taboos imposed on Christian woman are fewer yet their inferiority cannot be doubted.<sup>9</sup>

Thus we found that scriptural tradition has played an important role in determining the status of woman in India.

CULTURAL STRUCTURAL CORRELATES OF  
WOMEN'S INFERIOR STATUS IN THE  
INDIAN SOCIETY

Apart from scriptural texts other factors have also played an important role in restraining the personality of women. For instance, family structure and caste system. Traditionally Indian society has been characterised by the joint family system with male being the dominant figure in the family. This family system has contributed to the differential status between men and women. Within the joint family there was a strict hierarchy based on age and sex. Several considerations contributed to daughters being less highly valued than sons, i.e., financial (daughter requiring doweries) and emotional (daughter would leave to join another family on marriage). Only with the attainment of the position of mother-in-law, did a woman attain a position of respect in the joint family.

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9. Op.cit., p.70.

The joint family discouraged public participation of women because the greater authority of elder women prevented younger women from breaking out of traditionally approved female behaviour patterns. This discouragement was stronger in the areas where purdah was practiced.<sup>10</sup>

The roles that an Indian girl has to play in the course of her life are determined not only by the general social status of women in the Indian social system but also by the structure of the family.<sup>11</sup> One who is born in a certain society as a girl is socialised from the very first moment of her life into a culturally defined sex position. This position is defined in most societies, as subordinate to man.

To a certain extent, the image and role of a woman would vary according to the caste and religion or even social class to which she would belong to. Often it has been found that the higher the status of the caste group, lower the status of women in it. Amongst the high caste Brahmins, for example, women suffer from great disabilities. Their marriages are restricted to a limited sub-caste group of 'Kulin' Brahmins who demand heavy dowries. They have also to observe a severe code of moral conduct. Similarly, among high caste groups, girls have to be married at an early age and they have to offer heavy dowries.

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10. Evertes, Jana Malson. (1981), Women and Social Change in India, New Delhi: Heritage Publishers. pp.39-40.
11. Maria Mies (1979), Indian Women and Patriarchy, Rajdhani Press, p.73.

If any of these girls becomes a widow at an early age, she is not allowed to remarry. On the other hand, women, who play an important role in economic activities, amongst the lower caste groups, have more freedom to move out of their homes. They enjoy better status and role in their limited world. Often these women are boisterous, talkative and gay. They would decorate themselves to their heart's content and even smoke! No one would object to it. Stokes<sup>12</sup> in her study of Bihar, found Harijan woman more open, expressive, joking and willing to mix greatly than the upper caste women, who according to her have nothing to do except fight with one another.

Apart from these structural factors woman's status has also been influenced by factors like religion, scriptural texts, customs, norms, beliefs, prevailing in Indian society regarding the ideal role of woman in Indian society. Viewed empirically, two themes appear to be basic in the general area of attitudes covering the relative status of man and woman. They are (a) the male is more desirable than the female, and secondly, (b) the male is qualitatively superior to the female.

While girls are considered necessary, the birth of the boy is undoubtedly considered more desirable. Ritual considerations materially add to the desirability of the man. In the traditional scheme of Indian life the attainment of salvation occupies the places of highest importance. For this it is

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12. Stokes, O. in Jain, D. (ed.), (1975), Indian Woman, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India, New Delhi, p.218.



absolutely necessary to complete all the rites and ceremonies prescribed by dharma. In the Indian society, only a male heir can offer water to the spirits of ancestors, a son alone can perform the essential rites ensuring passage to heaven or attainment of salvation. This makes a male offspring very desirable. Besides the possession of son offers many other advantages. Parents can depend upon them for support in old age. They are expected to continue to live with the family unlike the daughters, and are also looked upon as potential builders of family prestige and prosperity. Daughters on the contrary, are regarded as birds of passage, their upbringing is all worry and work for the parents. When they grow up and get married their loyalties are changed. As a popular saying goes: Bringing up a son is like manuring and watering a plant in your own courtyard, for when it grows up it will give you shade and fruit but bringing up a daughter is like manuring and watering a plant in some one else's courtyard for her services and affection are destined for others, while her qualities and tenderness are recognized.

The superiority of male theme has many latent and manifest dimensions. Woman is regarded as more susceptible to pollution, her defilment is easy, purification is difficult. Man on the contrary, is not so easily defiled and when defiled, the removal of his pollution is not as difficult as in the case of women. In a pollution-purity conscious society the significance

of this view is crucial indeed. It is perhaps at the root of the prevailing double standards of morality, one set of principles, governing the male and another governing the female. Because man is relatively pollution-resistant, he is allowed certain freedom which is denied to the woman. Implicit in this conception of superiority of the male is the assumption that "Man is strong and woman is weak or Man is capable of looking after himself, but the best security for woman is in dependence." This assumption regarding the strength of the male has built up the ideas of male dominance and female dependence. Out-door activities and most of division making roles are thus the domain of man. Under the protection of man and in the security of the home the sphere of woman has been strictly limited.<sup>13</sup> All these cultural notion along with structural factors have played an important role in reinforcing the status of woman.

✓ GROWTH OF STATUS CONSCIOUSNESS  
AMONG THE INDIAN WOMEN IN THE  
CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL CONTEXT

It was with the arrival of Britishers that the conditions of Indian women began to change. When the Britishers came to India, the condition of Indian women was deplorable. They had no individuality of their own and were clearly discriminated as a weaker section of the society.

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13. Dube, S.C. (1963), quoted in Barbara Ward's edited work, "Women in the New Asia", UNESCO, Paris.

With the arrival of Britishers, western education also came to India and the introduction of English in India opened the eyes of the Indian elite <sup>14</sup> to the disgraceful conditions of their own people especially the position of their women folk. This introduction of western education, thus resulted in national consciousness among educated Indians.) This educated group began to feel the practices of killing female children, the practice of Sati etc. as a shame, which in turn, resulted in many social and religious reforms.) In the nineteenth and early twentieth century the efforts were concentrated on the introduction of laws for social reform and on woman's education. ✓ Thus during the British rule only women got the opportunity to get education.

The economic conditions of this period compelled the lower income group to work outside home. ✓ It was Mahatama Gandhi who realised the plight of the Indian womanhood and who worked for their emancipation. ✓

During this period only Industrial Revolution took place in West, which resulted in great upheaval. Women left their homes for work in factories and mines in a large number. Migration took place. Hand made things were not preferred and used in the presence of factory goods. Industrial revolution in the West had its repercussion on the Indian economic and

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14. Majumdar, R.C. (1961), An Advanced History of India, Macmillan, London, Melbourne, Toronto, p.812.

social set up. The setting up of various factories and industries in India provided an opportunity to women for seeking employment in these. However, it was mainly the women of the lower class and castes who availed of this opportunity because of the still prevailing social taboos regarding the employment of women. Industry provided more employment but it offered low wages to the men and supplementary wages to the women and children. "Women came to occupy the position of marginal worker in the new economy."<sup>15</sup>

Thus the British rulers, who introduced a new type of economy and educational system created, thereby, the pre-conditions for the transformation of the position of the Indian women. The real advance which took place during this period is actually in the revolution that has been brought about in the outlook with regard to the conception of the status of women and her role in society. Now women is no longer looked upon as a child bearing machine. She has acquired a new social status.

During this period only the purdah ridden women came out of their age-long seclusion when the nation was fighting for freedom. They defied lathi charge, faced bullets and courted jails for the sake of motherland. The new women slowly realised the fact that home is not the only centre of activity.

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15. Adyanta, N.K., "Woman's Employment in India", Ministry of Labour, Govt. of India. Reprinted from the International Labour Review, July 1954, p.2.

During this time only, upper class women also thought that she should associate herself with some social activity and should not while away her leisure.

The growth of social consciousness stretching beyond the needs of the small family or caste people is the greatest achievement of the era.

Then the new Constitution of independent India further provided opportunity for Indian woman by granting equal status by the Constitution.

As declared in the Constitution, "the state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, place etc."<sup>16</sup> Further in the sixteenth Article of Constitution, it is mentioned that, "there shall be equality<sup>17</sup> of employment or employment to any office under the state." The new Constitution of independent India also provided franchise right to women. The introduction of adult franchise along with the removal of all discrimination on sex, ground, provided towards the complete emancipation of the Indian women. Franchise granted to woman implies admission of the fact that she is not inherently inferior to man in capacity and that, if given free and adequate opportunity, she can also function in responsible post. Thus we see that after a hard struggle woman has succeeded in acquiring equality in the sphere of law at least.

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16. Ibid., p.2.

17. Ibid., p.7.

The story of Indian feminist movement is unique only because the cause for women's freedom was first expressed by enlightened males who had imbibed liberal ideas. Social reforms in India whether they were modernising liberals or revivalists also emphasized the crucial importance of education of women to improve their status in society. Although, initially education for women was regarded as a means to improve their status within the family, yet, ironically for them, the problem of reaching education and health services to the women of this country led to the realization of the need for women teachers and doctors. Since this was not possible without training women in these professions, the importance of these two vocations outside the familial roles had to be incorporated in the programmes for women's education and this gave the first impetus for women to enter into professions. The encouragement women got in these two areas is perhaps one reason why we find a larger number of women concentrated in these two professions even today.

While it is true that the status and discrimination of women constitute a problem in all societies and has now emerged as a crisis in human development, yet sex equality cannot in reality be differentiated from variety of social, economic and cultural inequalities in Indian society. The inequalities inherent in an traditional structure, as has been mentioned earlier based on religions, family structure etc. have a very significant influence on the status of women in different spheres. Socially

accepted rights and expected roles of women, norms, governing their behaviour and of others towards them vary among different groups and regions. Therefore, it would be misleading to make broad generalization regarding the status of women.

In present circumstances, today, the structural changes in the economy as a result of commercialization, and technological change in the methods of production combined with the growth of urbanization and education, has to some extent reduced the prevailing inequality traditionally in our society. The post-independence era has witnessed the emergence of the educated new middle class woman in India. The stress is on the word educated, because working women as such are not a new addition to the Indian scene, as we have seen earlier that the lower class women have worked from time immemorial on the agricultural land. The difference now is that earlier only the women belonging to lower classes were participating in economic activities but after independence women from all classes have come out to participate at various levels. Thus the spread of new education and franchise rights, women became conscious of their status. "Along with men, women of India have also begun to realize that the supreme goal of women's life is not circumscribed to merely love making, dutifulness to husband, child bearing and domestic work. They have begun to realise that women's life has a higher and a more serious objective."<sup>18</sup>

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18. Ref to Stree Bodha and Social Progress in India, p.137.

The fact that women have started getting education have posed another problem in the form of a growing restlessness among women to utilize their education and seek employment rather than involve themselves in domestic work. Education and sometimes economic necessity has created a vacuum within the educated women, which cannot be sufficiently filled by giving way to domestic chores. In many ways, the kind of feeling she experiences, is close to one of Frieden's respondents in her book who wondered "just what was this problem that has no name? What were the words women used when they tried to express it? Sometimes a women would say "I feel empty somehow... incomplete" or she will say "I feel as if I don't exist."<sup>19</sup>

In a way it is this kind of emptiness which made many educated women seek work. Thus through the independence movement, and consequently due to attainment of education the women came out of their suppression and entered the arena of public life by participating outside home activities. But the question arises whether the astonishing progress of the Indian woman during this period helped them to liberate themselves from age old sexual suppression and economic exploitation?

#### Growth of New Work Ethos

In the post-independent India, educated women have started working. Of course, their number is increasing but it has not solved their problems. Instead, they have started

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19. Frieden, Betty. (1963), The Feminine Mystique, Dell Publishing Co., New York, p.16.



facing new problems. Consequently it resulted in the growth of new work ethos regarding women and their problems. In the following pages we shall make a brief review of the works dealing specifically with status of women, which are as follows.

Ross's <sup>20</sup> study of Hindu family in an urban setting gives a vivid picture of educated women and their interpersonal relations in the family in the city of Bangalore. In most city studies conducted under the auspices of the Research Programmes Committee of the Planning Commission, there is scant reference to women. In only three of them, i.e., Chandigarh, Kanpur and Delhi, we find scant references to them as part of the working force.

In his study of Ranchi, Vidyarthi <sup>21</sup> has devoted attention to a survey of married women and their attitudes towards parental authority, marriage preference and free mixing, qualities required in a husband, opinion towards divorce and participation in economic activity. In his survey 113 married women were studied, 59 through the questionnaire method, 18 through biographical and 36 through geneological methods. He discovered that out of the 59 women to whom the questionnaire was administered, only 19 were working. It is remarkable that

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20. Ross, A.D. (1961), The Hindu Family in its Urban Setting. Oxford University Press, Bombay.

21. Vidyarthi, C.P. (1969), Cultural Configurations of Ranchi. JN Basu & Co., Calcutta.

47.5 per cent women in the lower class, and 25 per cent in the upper class contributed to family income. In the middle class only 6.7 per cent worked. Vidyarthi's sample represented a cross/section of tribals and non-tribals in various income brackets. In a separate section he also surveyed women's attitude towards fertility, sterility and family planning.

Only recently the Government of India appointed a committee to study the status of women throughout the country. The Indian Council of Social Science Research has also formed working group to plan studies covering all aspects of women by experts. The studies would generate a vast amount of data in course of time. The scientific study of Indian women has been recognized on a poorly research area in Indian social science.

In 1960, Sen Gupta<sup>22</sup> published a book on Women Workers of India. It covers women employed in mines, factories, plantations. The earlier chapters deal with unskilled or menial labour while in the later chapters she deals with semi-educated and educated women. She touches upon the numbers, conditions of work and the problems in each employment. The data on educated women is however scanty and the questions with which the present researcher is concerned are not to be found.

Hate<sup>23</sup> has produced a number of works on women in India. Her first work was on the socio-economic condition of educated

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22. Sengupta, P. (1960), Women Workers in India, Asia Publishing House, Bombay.

23. Hate, C. A. (1969), Changing Status of Woman in Post-Independence India, Allied Publishers, Bombay.

women in the Bombay city. She also dealt with the social position of Hindu women in course of another book. Her third book was a study of the Hindu woman and her future. She feels that a deep and vital change has taken place in the economic condition and personal status of women. Hate's subjects suggested compatibility of husband-wife temperament and common objectives in life as a criteria for happy marriage. This is also an indication of the changing view of women regarding marriage.

In her latest work she examines the changes in the status of women in India with the advent of independence. She analyses the political, economic and social background of this change. Her samples were drawn from middle class working and non-working women living in four cities of Maharashtra, viz., Bombay, Poona, Nagpur and Sholapur. She also attempts a comparison between Indian women and their counterparts in six advanced countries of the world to give an idea of their relative positions and role they play in shaping the destiny of the countries they live in. Her findings reveal a positive though incomplete change in women's status. She finds that the chief motivation for working appears to be family support. The dual role of women is still not fully re-organized by society. Many working mothers experience role conflict and live with a feeling of guilt.

She emphasises that the modern Indian women have to play a complex role. The rights given by law, the freedom that

she is enjoying and the education that she is receiving should prompt her to make the best of the chances open to her and thus contribute her mite to the welfare of humanity. At the end of the book she makes a number of valuable suggestions. She pleads for the provision for creches and for better transport facilities from the place of residence to the place of work. Part-time jobs can also be extremely useful for a large number of married women who cannot afford to go in for full time work. In improving the conditions of work and opening of fresh avenues of employment, women's organizations have to play an important role. She also stresses the fact that educated women on her part must also help this process of change through a series of compromises. Only through that her role conflict can be resolved.

The most significant contribution to the study of working women in India has been made by Kapur.<sup>24</sup> Her first work was a socio-psychological study of the attitudes of educated Hindu working women. Later she produced a bigger work on marriage and the working women in India. This study aims at discovering and analysing the factors that contribute to maladjustment or adjustment in marriage of the educated working women and seeks to find out ways of harmonizing the increasing need of educated Indian women for achievement and self-expression on one hand and their pressing economic need on the other, the call of duties towards the family. It provides a scientific understanding of the emerging social pattern.

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24. Kapur, Promila. (1970), Marriage and the Working Women in India, Vikas Publications, Delhi.

The universe for this study was the city of Delhi. The type of detailed information required for the purpose precluded any attempt to obtain a truly representative sample of working women. The sample covers three hundred drawn equally from the three major occupational categories viz., teachers, office workers and doctors. The sample were evenly distributed all over Delhi and included South Indian, Bengali, Punjabi and Gujarati women. For measurement of marital adjustment, a marriage adjustment form largely based on an American model was used. Some of the questions in this form were also to be answered by husbands. Besides this an interview guide was used for an intensive case study of specific cases. The book is interspersed with a large number of revealing case studies.

The book gives for the first time a careful analysis of the situation in India. It involves women who represent the part of the population that provides a model for millions of others. She shows that women's happiness in her marriage is determined mainly by what she was when she entered the marriage. If she was maladjusted and resentful to life as a girl, she is more likely to be maladjusted and resentful as a wife.

The book brings out many factors in marital adjustment, such as educational level of husband and wife, income level, the discrepancy between their occupational status, the kind of marriage, the role of caste, religion, etc., the age of the couple, the number of the children and family composition, etc.

Where the husband earns very well, extremely well adjusted marriages were the highest, probably because the working wife had

no household chores and worked by choice. Among women whose husbands did not want them to work, all cases were maladjusted. Among women who always disregard with husband on sharing household jobs, 100 per cent were maladjusted. The section on sex is an eye-opener in that wives who have been very frank on husband's infidelity, their incompatible sexual approach and their coarseness.

Kapur acknowledges, towards the end, that a wife's being employed does make marital interaction a little more complicated and creates more problems in the family and so more efforts on the part of the spouses are required to make adjustment and to achieve marital harmony. With multiplicity of roles, her behaviour becomes complex in terms of 'expected' and 'actual' conduct and she faces the major part of confusion with regard to her status and role.

In later chapters she examines the premarital context and the role of personality and sex in marital adjustment. The circumstances in which the couples were placed after marriage are also examined. Husband-wife role and status are examined in detail and the reasons for maladjustment and adjustment have been spelt out. Working women themselves, their husbands and their in-laws react in diverse ways to their being employed. The way these reactions interact affects marital relationship.

Kapur shows that educated working women are being influenced by egalitarian ethos while the traditional authoritarian and male dominated set up of the Hindu social structure

continues to be basically the same. This is bound to produce tension and conflict situations. These can only be avoided if there is harmony between the pace of change in the attitudes of women and that of other members of her role sets on the one hand, and between the attitudes and the social family structure on the other.

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Singh working on data from Punjab says that only 25 per cent of the working women were fully satisfied with the time they were devoting to their children. 75 per cent felt that they really could not devote proper attention to their children and home as the major part of their day was spent outside the house.

Among women who were working out of sheer economic necessity, the majority were greatly dissatisfied with the time they devoted to their children and home. She generally feels that her children are neglected in her absence when she spends the major portion of the day at her working place. She is worried when there is no satisfactory arrangements for their children. 57 per cent of working women had some arrangements for their children. Either a mother or a mother-in-law or a servant looked after their children. It was discovered that educated and highly paid women had this kind of arrangement. In some cases where there is no satisfactory arrangement the children were bold enough to look after themselves.

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25. Singh, K.P. (1972), "Career and Family - Women's two Roles".  
A Study of Role Conflict, Bombay.

The significant point was that working women who did jobs due to their own interest left children at the mercy of servants. Very few women left them with relatives. Some working women were in jobs to supplement the family income and were satisfied with the time they devoted to their children. Their children were either grown up or left with a servant and or relative to look after them.

Majority of the working women mentioned that small children require the personal and intimate supervision of the mother but they worked when their children were small because they thought and felt that children could be brought up somehow. Those women who were working to supplement family income had small children but were satisfied with their arrangement.

Among the factors generating role conflict the age of the children is important because the mother's personal attention is most essential to the children when they are small. Family size can be another factor in role conflict. Women having greater number of children may feel the conflict than those who have small family. The nature of occupation and the amount of time spent outside the home are taken to be the other factors associated with role conflict. Among those who did not feel any role conflict were college teachers, women in independent professions and school teachers. The incidence of role conflict is quite low among clerks and telephone operators. The awareness of utilising time or sitting idle comes early in highly educated women. Hence they enter into employment even though their children are small and have no financial difficulty. They,



therefore, do not feel the conflict.

A small percentage of respondents felt that they could certainly look after their home much better if they left their jobs. But among those who felt satisfied, 78 per cent held that they really could not look after their homes any better. They preferred to depend upon servants and attendants and felt that housework could be somehow managed.

Singh comes to the conclusion that the motivation to employment and role conflict are closely related. It is because these women work simply because they get bored at home or because they have a special interest in some work or because it gives them a sense of economic independence. They do not perceive their employment interfering with child care responsibilities irrespective of the age of the children or child care attendants. On the other hand, those who don't have any inner urge but forced by circumstances, do perceive that their outside work interferes with child care responsibility.

A study dealing with the similar theme emphasizing on Role conflict was done by Kala Rani. The study was conducted in Patna and 150 respondents were mainly married and educated working women. The conclusions of this study were, that, most women took up jobs to make use of high or professional status and despite the fact that most of their husbands approved of their taking up

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26 Kala Rani (1976), Role Conflict in Working Women, Chetana Publications, Delhi.

jobs, yet 60 per cent of the respondents felt guilty that they could not pay as much attention to their husbands as they would have liked to. Conflict was seen to be a result of high perception of the two roles held by the women. At the methodological level the study revealed that in a work of this kind the data could be collected only through interviews and observations since the questionnaire would not yield the kind of intimate details needed.

Another study dealing with modernization among women entitled 'Modernization of Working Women in Developing Societies', by Raj Mohini Sethi is an attempt to observe the trends in the cognitive structure related to the position of women in modernizing societies of India and Turkey. The study proposes to show the congruence between the structural factors and the value patterns that cohere with a particular social system. The book is divided into two parts. Part one concerns with the definition of the problem and concepts used—devising a measure of modernity and finding out the level of modernity of women and showing how attitudinal modernity is associated with socio-demographic characteristics. Part two analyses the attitudes towards the position of women in the two societies. It comes to the conclusion that there are striking similarities in the attitudes of women, and in either case they are in the direction of modernization.

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37 Sethi, R. (1976), Modernization of Working Women in Developing Societies, National Publishing House, New Delhi.

The problems of the growth of new consciousness among Indian women have also figured in some prominent works of fiction as well as literary studies. Illustration of it is Mohinder Gandhi. She has attempted a study of the image of women in literature, by analysing aspects of Kamla Markandaya's perception of the Indian woman through a study of her selected novels. Focus of her study is on some of the prominent roles played by the Indian woman as a mother, as a wife or as an individual in the context of traditional values, norms and prescriptions as well as the contemporary changing structure of interpersonal relations and social expectations.

A review of the studies on working women in India provides us with many valuable insights into the diverse aspects of the problem.

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<sup>28</sup> Gandhi, M. (1981), Image of Woman as Reflected in Kamla Markandaya's Selected Novels. Unpublished M.Phil. dissertation, Punjab University, Chandigarh.

WOMEN IN THE INDIAN SOCIETY:  
A SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

(a) Background

The culturally standardised role conceptions that women of India come to adopt and accept as legitimate, are totally a matter of her socialization. In the male dominated Indian culture all law givers have so far been male and it has always been man's right and privilege to decide what role a woman is to be assigned. For centuries now man has decided how his women are to behave. Code of conduct that Manu provided for women had the support and corroboration of many other law givers. The image of women acceptable to all these law givers and through socialization and conditioning of women themselves come to be that of one who stays obedient to her father before marriage, her husband after marriage and to society always. In an ideal typical situation, an Indian female naturally falls into the various pigeonholes assigned to her by society. There is little or no clash between role expectations and role performance. But during independence struggle many factors emerged to create a new awareness among the women. As we have seen in the last chapter that in the post independence period education and employment have emerged as the major factors responsible for change for creating new awareness among women of their rights as "individuals", especially among those women who move out of doors to work for their living. Thus we have

seen that education and employment has resulted in role diversification of women by widening the extent of their interaction from family circle to wider society. Earlier the role structure of woman which was somewhat closed in nature, has become open now. Women have become more mobile than ever. Earlier her life was static, just limited to interaction within the four walls of the household. Now it is much more dynamic since she has also to cope up with the problems of her work. Now the important question here is how far this diversification of roles have helped in raising the status of women in the family as well as in the society. In other words, whether the new roles have contributed to higher status of women. Our major hypothesis here is that education and employment of women, i.e., higher education and employment outside the family, raises her status within the family as well as in the wider society. Employment along with education brings change in the traditional structure of authority within the family. Similarly, it results in redistribution of the work within the family. Correlatively, all this also creates in women new attitudes which buttress the new status provided by employment. Since this study is mainly based on secondary sources, relevant data from all the available studies have been used for our purpose. But before we go into detail it will be relevant here to see the demographic, social and economic characteristics of Indian women.

**(b) Socio-Demographic Differentials**

(i) Sex ratio: The sex ratio of the Indian population, defined as the number of females per 1,000 males, was always been adverse to females. Table 1 below shows the chronological fall of the sex ratio from 972 females per 1,000 males in 1901 to 930 females per 1,000 in 1971.

**Table 1****Chronological fall of sex ratio**

Census year	1901	1911	1921	1931	1941	1951	1961	1971
Sex ratio	972	964	955	950	945	946	941	930

Source: Census of India, 1961, 1971.

Assuming that the sex ratio of a closed population like ours should normally be near to unity, reasons for the imbalance in the sex ratio may be (i) relatively more omission of females in Indian Census, and (ii) adverse mortality conditions for females.

(ii) Marital Status: The Indian female population has always shown early marriage and universality of marriage. Since the primary role of Indian woman has remained that of mother, about two-thirds of the female population is married. The table below gives the percentage distribution of female population aged 10 and above by marital status according to the 1961 and 1971 Census.

Table 2

Percentage distribution of female population aged 10 years and above by marital status

Marital status	Year	Rural	Urban	All areas
Never married :	1961	15.8	24.2	17.2
	1971	20.2	29.2	22.0
Married :	1961	67.5	61.1	66.5
	1971	66.3	59.3	64.9
Others :	1961	0.9	0.7	0.8
	1971	0.6	0.5	0.6

Source: The Population of India (1974, World Population Year, R.G. Office).

The increase in the proportion of never-married in 1971 compared with 1961 and the lower proportion married in the period indicate social change with widening educational and economic opportunities available to Indian women.

(iii) Literacy: A considerable advance had been made in the area of literacy. But in spite of all the efforts for the advancement of woman's education since independence, a wide gap remains between the percentages of men and women, receiving education, whereas at the time of independence female literacy was only 6 per cent and the total number of girl students enrolled at all levels of the educational system numbered a little over 4 million, sex ratio being 36 in primary school, 22 in middle school, 14 in secondary schools, 12 in universities.

The sex ratio at the different levels of system registered marked improvement going up by 78-79 to 69 at the primary, 51 at the middle, 30 at the secondary and 34 at the university level.<sup>1</sup>

Literacy rate among men and women have improved steadily in the period after independence going up from 24.95 per cent (men) and 7.93 per cent (women) in 1951 to 39.45 per cent men and 18.70 per cent (women) in 1971 (see Table 3). But at the same time the number of illiterate women has also increased at a faster rate than the increase among illiterate males. In 1971, 80.64 per cent of women over 15 were illiterate as against 52.31 per cent men.

Table 3

Progress of literacy in India  
in post-independence period

Census year	Literacy rate		Total
	Males	Females	
1951	24.95	7.93	16.67
1961	34.44	12.95	24.02
1971	39.45	18.70	29.45

Source: Census of India, 1971, Series I, India, Part II(A); Union, Primary Census Abstract Register-General and Census Commission, India, New Delhi, 1974, p.xxiv.

1. Majumdar, Veena. (1975), Women and Educational Development in India, 1947. ICSSR.



The fact that even the modified target of extending school education on a free and compulsory basis, set by the Education Commission have not been realised, is a sufficient indication of the sad state of the educational situation in India. Not only the literacy rate very low for women in India but there has also been a persistent gap between the number of boys and girls enrolled at every stage of education. At the primary level whereas 97 out of 100 boys are in school, the corresponding figure for girls is 62. This gap continues to widen at higher stages, thus leading to a qualification gap between boys and girls.

A more serious problem in the field of women's education is early withdrawal of girls from schooling. Thus even though enrolment figures at the elementary stage are quite high, they do not reveal the real state of women's education.

There are various factors responsible for the low-spread of education among girls and their early withdrawal. Though the large proportion of parents have accepted the need for education of their daughters yet the subordinate status of a daughter in comparison to the son in the family leads to the disparity in education of boys and girls. The discriminatory attitude stems from the fact that in Indian families girls are expected to assume responsibility for household work, at a relatively early age. Ordinarily a girl is expected to help her mother in the household chores as well as in looking after the young siblings. In the case of family crisis such as the illness of the mother or even of a relative, the first victim is girl. The partial

burden of housework into the changed circumstances falls entirely on the daughter and she is compelled to discontinue her education. The present structure of education with its single point entry where a boy and girl of six or five can only enter class one with fresh admission, practically prevent the re-entry of girls at a later stage. A girl who has been withdrawn from the class two, for instance, has to join in the same class even if she is twelve years of age. In short, the social conditions as well as educational system do not provide a congenial atmosphere for education of girls.

For our study, the analysis of growth and extent of participation in higher education is of great importance. Higher education particularly professional higher education is of special significance in so far as the entry into professions are concerned. Enrolment figures are relevant to us because they indicate the trend of student's preferences for different subjects as well as availabilities of facilities for higher education and training in different subjects. The enrolment figures would throw light not only on the trends of man's and woman's future occupational choice but also on the expansion of higher education especially in the case of women. On the other hand our figures indicate the actual position of persons who are just on the threshold of entry into professional life equipped with degrees and diplomas which they earn after a considerable period of education and training. At the time of out-turn a person is believed to be maturer than when he enrolls; better involve in the area of activity and is likely to earn the

profession because he has already spent a part of his life for it. In the following section an attempt has been made to analyse the data concerning the enrolment and out-turn figures of men and women, in higher education. Here the aim is to find out the rate of disparity existing among men and women in the area of higher education and also to find out the trends of subjects choices by women which may also reveal their preferences or possibilities for future career.

#### Enrolment Pattern among Women In Higher Education

It may be noticed that apart from the fact that only six lakh women i.e., barely two per cent of women in India have been able to take advantage of higher learning, the pattern of enrolment seems on traditional lines. The faculties of arts, education and medicine are still preferred faculties, while engineering, science or law hardly interest women. This is highly significant in terms of modernisation of economy. Job opportunities are available to those who are technically trained. Though women are given education, it is scarcely that education which qualifies them for employment, the lack of appreciation of vocational and specialized training among the girls leads to the overcrowding of girls in the arts faculty, which by itself is not sufficient to equip students for higher jobs. Perhaps the need for the training and employment of women has not been realised because of the restricted growth of economy.

This brief review of the pattern of women's education will be incomplete if we omit to mention the gradual realization on

the part of parents of the need for education of their daughters. This realization is a very significant achievement in recent times. Parents, particularly in the urban areas recognise the usefulness of giving education of girls so that they may become more eligible as marriage partners as well as for taking up employment if any such need arises in the family. The demand for educated wives, builds up personality are various factors which have encouraged spread of women's education.

In the following pages relevant facts related to women's higher education have been presented.

During the post-independence period the educational status of women has improved steadily as it is clear from Tables 4 and 5. During the last two decade there has been an increase in the population of women in all faculties. A special mention may be made of enrolment in arts and science. Yet the fact remains that even in these faculties the proportion of women is pitifully low. In professional courses women have enrolled substantially in teaching, medicine and fine arts (Table 4) but meagrely in commerce, law, agriculture and engineering. Though in India facilities for technical and professional education for women are widening, girls still have to be encouraged and motivated to go in.

Table 4

Enrolment of men and women in higher education (at all levels)

Faculty	1950-51			1960-61			1970-71		
	Total enrolment	Enrolment of men	Enrolment of women	Total enrolment	Enrolment of men	Enrolment of women	Total enrolment	Enrolment of men	Enrolment of women
Arts	182005	152743	29262	486228	266541	119687	1329626	90776	421850
Science	127108	118122	9046	302700	271004	31696	948009	779469	168540
Commerce	34067	33878	189	90214	89383	831	344108	331433	12675
Education	4135	2796	1339	19005	12775	6230	56922	36123	20799
Engineering/ Technology	12094	12075	19	45389	44986	403	90034	89124	910
Medicine	15260	12767	2493	35215	27501	7714	97601	75305	22296
Agriculture	4744	4732	8	27584	26338	124	43352	43183	169
Veterinary Science	1101	1096	5	5385	5347	38	6222	6178	44
Law	13649	13359	290	27251	26436	815	70618	67992	2626
Others	2522	2047	425	10893	7976	2917	14800	8887	5913
All Faculties	347645	43126	1049864	879409	170455	3001292	234470	2345470	855822

Source: Census of India, 1971.

Table 5 shows that the tendency for women to cluster in a few subjects is on the increase, which one would have expected the reverse to have happened over the years.

A comparison with the data for university enrolment for 1950-51 shows that the percentage of females going in for general education courses has increased to 26 in 1970-71 from 11 in 1950-51. For professional courses two percentage increased from 5 in 1950-51 to 10 in 1970-71. Table 5 gives the position in 1970-71. The number of female students for general education increased 28 times in 1970-71 from what it was in 1950-51 and 23 times professional education.

Table 5

University enrolment in India

Type of education	Percentage of girls enrolled		
	1950-51	1960-61	1970-71
General education	11	16	26
Professional education	5	8	10

Source: Educational Statistics at a glance, 1972.

Considering girls' enrolment for each stage of university education as given in Table 6, it is evident that the proportion of girls is higher at the post-graduate stage than at the undergraduate. While the proportion of post-graduate increased from 10.6 per cent in 1950-51 to 21.6 per cent in 1970-71 (10.8 per cent), the parallel post-graduate proportion increased from

Table 6

University Enrolment (All Faculties)

Year	<u>-Under-graduate</u>			<u>Post-graduate</u>			<u>Research</u>			<u>All Level</u>		
	Total Enrolment (E <sub>1</sub> )	Enrolment of women (W <sub>1</sub> )	$\frac{W_1}{E_1} \times 100$	Total enrolment (E <sub>2</sub> )	Enrolment of women (W <sub>2</sub> )	$\frac{W_2}{E_2} \times 100$	Total Enrolment (E <sub>3</sub> )	Enrolment of women (W <sub>3</sub> )	$\frac{W_3}{E_3} \times 100$	Total Enrolment	Enrolment of women	$\frac{W}{E} \times 100$
1950-51	375319	40999	10.8	19992	2425	12.1	1434	202	14.1	396745	33126	10.9
1960-61	985872	159491	16.2	58909	10170	17.3	5083	794	15.6	104964	170455	16.2
1970-71	2826799	611553	21.6	161182	41516	25.8	13311	2753	20.7	300292	655822	21.9

$\frac{W}{E} \times 100 \pm$  Percentage of Enrolment of women to total enrolment.

Source: Status of Women in India.

12.1 per cent in 1950-51 to 25.8 per cent in 1970-71 (13.7 per cent) (See Table 6).

Out-turn: Like enrolment, examination result is also one of the major indices of measuring educational growth and groups at various stages. As Sharma<sup>2</sup> observes that in a growing economy people generally entertain high aspirations. They desire to go up in their job positions as well as acquire better jobs. In the Indian economy higher positions and better jobs are linked with the higher educational qualifications. Moreover, graduate qualifications still carry high social prestige in India. Therefore, many young people including working men and women are keen on acquiring higher educational qualification. Therefore, an analysis of the out-turn in higher education is significant for the purpose of our study which would enable us to know how well men and women are equipped with higher education which is regarded as a pre-requisite for entrance in the professions.

Out-turn (Table 7)

The out-turn statistics for both men and women for the year 1970-71 indicate that there is a higher percentage of pass for men in almost all the faculties, with the exception of law. Here, their percentage of pass was only 5 per cent as compared to 63.3 per cent pass for men in 1970-71. However, what is really noteworthy is the fact that even among those faculties which are predominantly male dominated such as commerce,

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2. Sharma, L.R. (1974), Educational Trends in India, Vikas Publication, p.14.



Table 7Percentage out-turn of men and women  
for the year 1970-71

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Percentage of men passed</b>	<b>Percentage of women passed</b>
Arts	60.0	88.2
Science	55.1	68.3
Commerce	57.7	62.6
Education	88.3	87.4
Engineering/Technology	79.0	80.0
Medicine	51.8	64.7
Agriculture	78.3	93.0
Veterinary Science	40.7	66.6
Law	83.3	78.3
Others	88.2	81.5
Average percentage of pass	66.2	69.7

Source: Education of India, Ministry of  
Education, Publication Division,  
1970-71.

engineering and technology etc., women have registered a fairly high percentage of pass.

For instance, their pass percentage in engineering and technology was as high as 79.8 per cent as compared to 79.5 per cent men in 1970-71. This stands to contradict certain theories regarding the oriented skills. On the whole the average pass percentage of economics is greater than that for men. Their average percentage of pass being 69.7 per cent and 62.2 per cent respectively for the year 1970-71 (Table 7).

The foregoing analysis of the data concerning enrolment of women in higher education leads us to the following broad conclusions.

1) Though the growth rate of female literacy is high, it may be noted that the males have been getting the advantage of a high start (1951: Male literacy - 24.95 per cent, female literacy - 0.69 per cent). As a result the outstanding levels of male literacy is more than double that of female literacy.

2) The percentage level of female literacy in 1971 is roughly comparable to that of male literacy in the period 1951.

3) The increase in the proportion of women in total enrolment has been very slow. In spite of the fact that women had always better growth-rate than men, their proportion to total enrolment could not increase substantially.

4) At the university level we still find women predominant in "traditional" faculties like education, arts, and medicine.

5) Increase enrolment in science and commerce is indicative of a shift from traditional faculties to non-traditional ones.

6) In science and engineering the number of women students gradually increased, but their proportion is still very low specially in the latter.

### Employment Pattern; Outlook for women workers

In this section we shall discuss the pattern of occupational participation existing among women. For this publications from various sources viz., Census data, the National Sample Survey (NSS), the Directorate-General of Employment and Training (DGET) and other publications have been used for compilation of data.

### Outlook for female workers

Females constitute nearly half of the total population but significant participation in the labour force is lacking.<sup>3</sup> Looking at the female employment situation one finds that most of the women are working in the rural sector. In a country like India, where nearly 82 per cent of the population is rural and only 18 per cent is urban, it is very natural to expect an equally large proportion of its workers to be engaged in rural area. The majority of the male workers are also in rural areas,

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3. Swamy, "The role of labour participation rates in economic development", 13, Indian Journal of Labour Economics, 58, 1970-71.

but the percentage of the total female workers engaged in rural sector is much higher than men. Out of the total number of women workers 93.27 per cent are in rural areas, whereas only 6.73 per cent are in the urban areas. Among male workers the corresponding percentages are 82.5 per cent for rural and 27.5 for urban.

Practically all the female rural workers are engaged in agricultural and allied activities. It may be pointed out that may be the nature of these occupations is such that household responsibilities can be easily combined with productive work.

Employment pattern in cities and towns is also not very different. In a number of city surveys, it has been found that most of the urban working women are also uneducated, unskilled and participatory in manual occupations. Lakdawala and others reported that in Bombay employment opportunities for women were limited to only few occupations which did not require much skill and training. 63.70 per cent of the total women workers of the sample were found in manual occupations whereas in case of men the corresponding percentage was only 51 in this category.<sup>4</sup> They have shown that professional occupations were second in importance for women (Table 8). But even in this category most of the women are concentrated in lower grades. Mainly they were working as clerks, school teachers and nurses. In the category of lower

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4. Lakdawala, D.T. and others (1963), Work, wages and well-being in an Indian Metropolis. Bombay, p.376.

Table 8

## Earners by occupation and sex

Occupation	Male	Female	Total
A. Managerial, Administrative and executive occupations	4431 (25.7)	232 (13.1)	4663 (24.5)
B. Professional occupations, professional, technical related occupations (superior)	995 (5.8)	250 (14.1)	1245 (6.3)
Lower occupations	408 (2.4)	28 (1.6)	436 (2.3)
C. Commercial occupations	587 (3.4)	222 (12.3)	809 (4.3)
D. Manual occupations	2999 (17.4)	157 (8.9)	3156 (16.6)
Total occupations	8807 (51.0)	1128 (63.7)	9935 (52.2)
	7232 (99.9)	1767 (99.8)	9935 (99.8)

Source: Lakdawala, D.T. and others., Work, wages and well-being in an Indian Metropolis, Bombay, 1963, Table VI-15, pp.380-383.

professions 12.5 per cent of women worked as against 3.4 per cent of men (Table 8).

A similar pattern was resulted by S.N. Sen in his city survey of Calcutta. Here the proportion of women to total workers was only half of nearly 10 per cent of the total workers whereas in Calcutta it was only 5 per cent. It was also found that as compared to men most of the women even here were working in unskilled manual work. Only 8 per cent were working as teachers, 3 per cent in nursing profession, and 2.8 per cent as clerks and assistants.

Poona City survey of 1937 and Poona re-survey of 1954 also conform to the same pattern as reported by other city surveys. Gadgil developed a scheme for classifying the occupations, according to their socio-economic status. According to this classification it was found that there was a decline in the percentage of women working at lower prestige occupation and an increase was recorded in the percentage of those who were at a lower prestige occupation and an increase was recorded in the percentage of those who were waiting at a comparatively higher prestige level namely professional and other salaried jobs.

In India during the last few decades there was actually a decline in the proportion of women workers in the urban sectors. In 1951 nearly 11.86 per cent of the total urban female population was working. By 1971 it came down to 6.6 per cent (see Table 9).

Table 9Work participation rate for 1951 to 1971  
by sex and rural-urban difference

Sex	1950-51			1960-61			1970-71		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
Male	54.91	55.03	54.37	57.10	50.02	52.04	52.05	53.04	46.07
Female	24.06	26.47	11.86	27.96	31.04	11.04	11.06	13.01	6.06

Source: Census of India, 1971.

In 1964, the Labour Bureau undertook the collection and analysis of all the available material on this issue and published a report entitled "Women in Employment". The report gave a brief account of the trend in woman's employment as revealed by the information gathered through various sources such as Census data, the second Agricultural Labour Enquiry, the return received under the factories and the Mines Acts, information collected in report of plantations, information gathered and supplied by the Directorate General of Employment and Training under the employment market information scheme, and data collected by the Bureau on the content of women's employment. The report revealed that by and large there has been a perceptible increase both in the number of female employees and in the industrial and occupational categories in which they were being steadily absorbed.

WOMEN IN PROFESSIONS AND SERVICE

Now coming to the other fields of professions we find that it is only since independence that services and professions have

started providing new and better avenues of employment to educated women. A number of women have been among few successful candidates who crossed prestigious and challenging services, competitions like Indian Foreign Service, IAS, etc. The number of women who enter or wish to enter in different professions is increasing. The immediate factors responsible for their entrance in non-traditional fields of occupation in post-independence period are as follows:

- (a) the constitutional guarantee of non-discrimination and equality of opportunity in matter of employment;
- (b) development of women's education and their entry into areas of education and employment hitherto monopolised by men;
- (c) an increasing tendency among the urban educated women to take up paid employment which reflected gradual ideological change in social values as well as the growing economic pressure on urban middle class families;
- (d) expansion of employment opportunities in the tertiary sector, as a direct consequence of the increasing rate of development.

As a result of these factors along with many other factors, the distribution of men and women in labour force has changed significantly. In the following section we shall analyse the broader trends of occupational participation existing among women.

According to an international labour study made in 1970, only 12 per cent of the professional and technical workers in



India were females, of which three-fourths were teachers, the data from the Directorate General of employment and training data for selected profession public and private sectors identified teaching, medical and health, clerical and related workers and telephone operators, as the four occupations where there is a large concentration of women workers.

According to the information given by the Directorate-General of Employment and Training, the overall ratio between professional women and men employed was 1.86 for public sector in 1966 and 1.64 for private sector in 1967.

The national classification of occupations adopted by the Census of India in 1971 indicates that the number of women teachers was 6 lakh whereas their number in other professions was negligible - physicians and surgeons 2 lakhs, nursing and other medical and health technicians 2,500, lawyers 17,000 and architects, engineering and surveyors 700; accountants etc. 2,700. Apart from persons serving as teachers, other qualified scientists, serving in professional capacity (physical scientists, life scientists, social scientists etc.) add upto a total of 18,000. Of this last group, social scientists form the major section (16,000). It would thus appear that research particularly in the field of social research and social work are emerging as new occupations, where women are present in significant number. In relation to men, their ratio in these selected occupations are given below.

Physicians and surgeons	7.1 per cent
Lawyers	7.2 per cent
Teachers	30.3 per cent
Nursing and other medical health technicians	72.2 per cent
Scientists	10.9 per cent

A discussion of the placement of services provided by the government is relevant here. Established in 1945, the National Employment Service has a network of 535 employment exchanges including 54 university information and guidance bureaus. It offers free placement service to job seekers and employers. Employers employing more than 25 workers are required to notify the service of which 32,000 were reserved<sup>5</sup> for women. Few women job seekers less than 13.7 per cent have some college training. Only .16 per cent of the female job seekers sought administrative, executive or managerial positions.<sup>6</sup> Eighty six job openings were reserved for women in the managerial category, but only seven were filled. In other category such as clerical services, more than 80 per cent of the total vacancies reserved for women were filled.<sup>7</sup>

Unemployment in India is high (44.1 per cent) among female college graduates. Majority in arts and humanities (See Table 10).

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5. Srivastava, N.P. (1943), Women in Industry, Vikas Publishers, Delhi, p.40.

6. Ibid., pp.188-9.

7. Ibid., p.55.

Table 10

Distribution of degree holders and technical personnel in  
all subjects and status level of education

Subject field	Level of Education	Male	Female	Unemployed trying for job		Unemployed not trying for job	
				Male	Female	Male	Female
All subject field	1. Doctorate	87.23	12.77	2.30	12.55	0.38	6.99
	2. Master's degree	74.35	25.65	7.01	18.67	0.84	18.60
	3. Other PG Degree/ Diploma	90.11	9.89	6.64	11.00	0.71	9.35
	4. Bachelor's degree	74.34	25.66	13.05	20.00	1.35	23.80
	5. Bachelor's equivalent	89.93	10.07	5.79	14.37	1.23	17.12
	6. Diploma	99.41	0.59	31.86	16.29	0.77	9.05
	7. Certificate	99.06	0.94	17.45	18.38	17.45	9.87

83.3 per cent of the women with degrees in Arts and Humanities are either unemployed or not seeking jobs (see Appendix). This trend is evident for women with a professional education. For example, the 1971 Census shows that there are 26.7 qualified women doctors for every 100 male doctors. But only 6 female doctors compared to 100 male doctors are employed (Appendix).

In the profession women are concentrated in certain jobs.<sup>8</sup> 72.2 per cent of all nurses and medical technicians were women. Most women in the health field are employed as midwives and nurses, assistants, thirty per cent of the teachers are women,<sup>9</sup> most employed in primary schools. Many are concentrated in clerical works. In a study conducted in Delhi, 11 out of 123<sup>10</sup> working women held a technical or mechanical jobs in a similar study conducted in Bombay, 3 out of 268 working women were supervisors.<sup>11</sup>

Registrar of the Employment Exchanges and the views agreed on by various employers both in public and private sectors, make

8. Hate, C. A. (1948), Change in the Status of Women, New Book Company, Bombay. p.16.

9. Renade and Ramachandran in their pilot studies conducted in Delhi and Bombay, reported that out of 276 working women in Bombay 99 were teachers and that out of 123 working women teachers and that out of 123 working women in Delhi 75 were teachers. Women and Employment Report of the Pilot Studies, p.6 (1976).

10. Ibid., p.42.

11. Ibid., p.21.

it clear that jobs of receptionists, clerks, stenographers, and typists are absorbing more and more educated women. Out of 9.18 lakhs of women work seekers registered with the employment exchanges at the end of 1973, as many as 69,355 were seeking clerical and related jobs. The concentration in particular fields are indicated below.

Typists	50,448
Stenographers	7,080
Clerks	2,800
Key-punch Operator	2,392
Telephone Operators	1,392
Middle school teachers	27,525
Primary school teachers	26,000
Secondary school teachers	24,000
Nursing attendants	5,926
Midwives	2,555

Source: Directorate-General of Employment and Training.

A sample survey of the pattern of graduate employment in the country undertaken by the Directorate-General of Employment and Training towards the beginning of 1960 also found that the second highest percentage of employed women graduates were engaged in clerical and related work in the central government. About three-fourths of the employed women were earning Rs.300

per month and only 6 per cent had a monthly income of Rs.300<sup>12</sup> and above.

The occupational distribution of women workers in public and private sector and their proportion to total workers in each category is indicated in the Tables 11 and 12 which yields some information.

In the public sector while the number of women employees in the categories of professional, technical and related workers and primary and middle school teachers, has been continuously rising since 1960, their proportion to total employees has more or less remained constant with only minor fluctuations. The number of women as administrative, executive and managerial workers increased from 0.16 lakh in 1960 to 0.12 lakh in 1966 but there was a downward trend in 1968. Their proportion to total workers which was more or less constant at 3.3 per cent declined to 2.5 per cent in 1968. In the category of clerical and related workers, the number of women with the only exception of 1962, has gone up from 0.37 lakhs in 1960 to 0.79 lakhs in 1968. For the same period their proportion to total workers in this category has gone up from 4.2 per cent to 7.2 per cent.

In the private sector, the categories where both the number and proportion of women to total workers has shown a steady increase are clerical and related workers.

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12. Report on the Pattern of Graduate Employment (1963),  
DEG&T, pp.50-78.

Table 11Occupational Education Pattern in  
India (Public Sector)

Categories		1960	1962	1964	1968
1. Professional technical related workers	T	0.05	6.11	7.19	8.59
	W	1.77	2.09	1.08	1.31
	%	(35.04)	(34.2)	(15.0)	(15.3)
2. Primary and middle school teachers	T	5.77	6.19	7.52	10.79
	W	-	-	1.44	2.13
	%			(19.1)	(19.7)
3. Administrative, executive and managerial workers	T	2.76	2.93	3.17	3.87
	W	0.10	0.09	0.11	0.10
	%	(3.6)	(3.1)	(3.4)	(2.5)
4. Clerical and related workers	T	8.83	8.82	9.43	10.41
	W	0.37	0.31	0.40	0.71
	%	(4.2)	(3.5)	(4.2)	(7.6)

Source: Occupational Education Pattern  
in Indian Public Sector, 1968.

Table 12Occupational Education Pattern  
in India (Private Sector)

Categories		1961	1963	1965	1968
1. Professional, technical and related workers	T	1.61	2.42	3.0	2.96
	W	0.55	0.31	0.75	0.01
	%	(34.2)	(12.6)	(25.0)	(34.3)
2. Primary and middle school teachers	T	0.20	0.51	0.33	0.48
	W	-	0.02	0.17	0.33
	%	-	(3.0)	(51.5)	(68.7)
3. Administrative, executive and managerial workers	T	0.44	0.56	0.60	0.56
	W	0.05	0.01	0.01	0.01
	%	(11.3)	(1.8)	(11.6)	(1.8)
4. Clerical and related workers	T	2.74	3.37	3.72	3.46
	W	0.13	0.12	0.16	0.23
	%	(4.3)	(3.5)	(4.3)	(6.6)

Source: Occupational Educational Pattern in India (Private Sector), 1967, DGE&T.



After discussing all this, it will be relevant here to discuss about the broader trends of occupational achievements of men and women degree holders and technical personnel.<sup>13</sup>

Information about the status of degree holders and technical personnel is given in Table 13.

Table 13

Profile of degree holders and technical personnel

Status	Percentage of men	Percentage of women
Total	66.65	38.66 <sup>36-12</sup>
Employee	8.54	2.12
Self-employed	4.76	9.76
Students	0.85	0.95
Trainees	0.34	0.12
Apprentices	2.64	0.50
Retired	11.00	19.51
Unemployed )	81.00	97.00
Trying for job )		
Unemployed and not trying for job	1.81	22.82
Unspecified	3.29	8.77

Source: Census of India, 1971.

13. In India, the data concerning the scientific and technical personnel were systematically collected only in 1971 Census. However, in 1961 also Census of India in collaboration with the CSIR had tried to ascertain conditions of work and services obtaining among scientific and technical personnel.

From this table it may be seen that in the 'employees' category the proportion of women is much lower than that of men. Only 36.12 per cent of the total women have been categorised as employee as against 66.65 per cent of men. It may be seen while women formed 18.66 per cent of the total sample, their proportion in this category of employee was only 11.07 per cent. Thus women's proportion in employment is lower than that of men. On the other hand, the proportion of employed women, whether self employed or unemployed, is higher than that of men. While 19.51 per cent women were found to be unemployed and trying for job, there were only 11.71 per cent such men. Thus women were worse affected by the incidence of unemployment. Moreover, the proportion of women who were unemployed and were not trying for job is strikingly high, i.e., 22.12 per cent of women degree holders were found to be unemployed and not trying for jobs as against only 1.81 per cent of such men. The analysis of the Census data about degree holders and technical personnel (1971), however, gives an indication of the educational wastage among highly qualified women. Of 18.66 per cent women with academic qualification 22.12 per cent were unemployed and not trying for jobs. The majority of the women who had not worked for more than one year were married. This seems to confirm the thesis that a fairly large number of educated women were without work because they could not find jobs.

Following are some of the observations concerning participation of women in white collar jobs;

**HIGHLIGHTS**

1. Working Indian woman constitute 17.5 per cent of the total labour force. 80 per cent women work in the agricultural sector.
2. The proportion of working women in the total female population in India has continuously gone down since participation rate of women in the labour force came down to 11.8 per cent in 1971 from 24.06 per cent in 1951.
3. There is higher rate of unemployment among women.
4. There is increase in the number of women opting for white collar jobs.
5. Increasing number of women going for non-traditional occupations in an indicator of social change.

CHAPTER - VWOMAN AND CHANGE IN HER SOCIAL STATUS DUE  
TO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT AS REFLECTED  
IN SOME RECENT SOCIOLOGICAL LITERATURE

In Indian society, which has been tradition directed for several centuries, the hold of tradition is still strong over a large part of society. Though the conceptions regarding the status and role of husband and wife are slowly changing in the contemporary Indian society, the tradition oriented conceptions still largely prevails. In the traditional Indian set up it was not considered respectable for middle or upper class woman, to seek a career or to accept service outside the home and her job was limited strictly within the four walls of the house, under the protection of men whereas outside home activity was supposed to be the man's sphere of work. Educated middle class womens taking up out-of-home gainful employment has significant implications for social change. Therefore, in the following pages we shall be examining the extent of change, which has occured as a result of woman's taking up new roles, as it is reflected in some recent literature, particularly what impact it has on the status of women. For our purpose, we shall divide the whole chapter into two broad sections which are as follows;

- (i) Women in family sphere
- (ii) Women in work sphere.

WOMAN IN FAMILY SPHERE

Family is the area in which the role of woman is traditionally

the most prominent; women had practically no role outside the home in traditional middle and upper class families and their whole life had been spent within the family. In the social structure of the tradition oriented Indian family the typical pattern of husband-wife relationship is "male-dominance and female-dependence". The husband enjoys the superior position over the wife and the major decision making roles are mostly the domain of the husband. The wife tacitly accepts a subservient position in the family and her role in the domestic sphere remains complementary.

A woman has to meet the expectations and obligations corresponding to her various statuses within the fold of the family whether it is nuclear or joint. In this way her routine is occupied. For a working woman there is an additional role outside her home and with the achievement of a new status as a working woman, she enlarges her "status-set". The new status involves a fresh array of expectations from those constituting the "role-set" of the incumbent. The work role, on the one hand, brings the wife out of the limited sphere of home, and on the other, makes continuous demands on her time and energy.

With this addition in roles and statuses, there is liable to be change in her actual performance as also in her attitude and expectations with regard to her husband's and her own role set and status set in the family. This may necessitate a readjustment in the already existing complex of role sets of each persons traditionally assigned "status-set". It is assumed that as a result

of new roles, working woman will prefer to live in the joint family. Secondly, there will be change in the traditional authority pattern. Due to the economic participation woman will have better say and better hold in the important matters in the family. Then it is assumed that increasing participation of economic activity will result in redistribution of roles. Therefore, our hypothesis in this connection is that education and employment leads to nuclear family structure among working women. Secondly, it leads to change in the traditional authority structure and helps woman in acquiring individual identity in the family. Finally, it leads to redistribution of traditional roles.

The normalive family structure in India is that of the joint family, though there is a great deal of controversy about the exact form and the amount of changes that are taking place in this system of living. According to the joint family system, sons continue to stay with their parents even after they get married. At the same time other kin also live under the same roof and in this way the actual household consists of more than one conjugal unit living with adjuncts. In such a family, the authority is centralized. Important decisions pertaining to property, business etc. are taken by the eldest male member. Whereas in the household matters final authority rests with the mother-in-law or some elderly lady in the house. In this manner the younger woman occupy the lower most position in the family power structure.

Moreover, it is an institutional requirement of the joint family to exclude women from the economic activity and to subordinate the conjugal relationship. It is, therefore, assumed that economic independence of woman would bring about certain changes in the normative way of living. These employed women may want more freedom and equality of relationship which may run counter to the interest of joint family. Several researchers have drawn to the conclusion that due to their economic contribution working wives have greater say in the important matters of family. In this connection Lalitha Devi's<sup>1</sup> observation is of relevance. In her sample of educated working women, she has shown that working woman definitely has more privileges in the family and more voice with regard to money matters and home than their non-working counterparts. In her study of Kerala, she finds a clear and definite relationship between employment of educated women and money centred decisions taken in the family in the sense that joint decision-making (medium or high) occurs more frequently among the employed than unemployed women (Table 1).

Table 1

Employment and power in making  
money-centred decisions

Employment status	Decision making power			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Employed	64 (21.33)	172 (57.34)	64 (21.33)	300 (100)
Unemployed	60 (60)	31 (31)	9 (9)	100 (100)
Total	124 (31)	203 (50.73)	73 (18.25)	400 (100)

Note: Figures within brackets represent percentage.

1. V. Lalitha Devi (1980), Status and Employment of Woman in India, B. R. Publishing Corporation, p.63.

From the above Table it is clear that the significant difference occurs in all the three levels of decision-making. The difference is prominent among those who scored low. A large majority of unemployed i.e., 60 per cent have only low decision-making power while only 21 per cent of the employed have low power of decision making. 75 per cent of the employed are having medium power while only 31 per cent of the unemployed comes under this group. Again, while 21 per cent of the employed respondents scored high, only 9 per cent of the unemployed have that score. Thus from the above table it is clear that employment is a factor which enhances the status of woman in the family through their share in the money centred decision in the family.

<sup>2</sup> Heer has also concluded in the same manner in his study of working woman. He concludes that the working woman exerts more influence in the family decision than non-working wife.

found in "the Bombay Study" of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences <sup>3</sup> that there is no association between the levels of education and labour force status between those who had obtained a college degree and those who did not. The same trend was found by Lalitha Devi <sup>4</sup> in her study where she examined the education and employment position of 300 employed respondents. She found

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2. Heer, David M. (1950) Dominance and Working <sup>W</sup>Life, Social Forces, Vol. XXXV (May 1980), pp. 341-47.

3. Delhi School of Social Work (1964), Attitudes of Women Towards Part-Time Employment, Report of a Pilot Study, University of Delhi, Delhi.

4. Lalitha Devi (1980), op.cit., p.71 (unpublished report)



that there is higher rate of money centred decision making power among employed educated women than among unemployed educated women (Table 2).

Table 2

Education and Money Centred Decision Making Powers of the Employed Women

Education	Decision Making Power			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Undergraduate	28 (21.05)	73 (54.89)	32 (24.06)	133 (100)
Graduate and above	36 (21.56)	99 (59.28)	32 (19.16)	107 (100)
Total	64 (21.33)	172 (57.34)	64 (21.33)	300 (100)

It is very clear from Table 3 that there is high rate of money centred decision making power among women since out of the total 300 respondents 21.33 per cent educated employed women have high rate of decision making power as compared to 9 per cent unemployed respondents with some degree of education.

5. Ibid., p.59.

Table 3Education and Money Centred Decision Making Power of the Unemployed Women

Education	Decision Making Power			Total
	Low	Medium	High	
Undergraduate	42 (67.74)	16 (25.81)	4 (0.45)	62 (100)
Graduate and above	18 (47.37)	15 (39.47)	5 (13.16)	38 (100)
Total	60 (60)	31 (31)	9 (9)	100 (100)

From the above discussion role of employment as a powerful factor in decision making has been brought out once again. Srivastava's<sup>6</sup> study of a sample of educated working women at Chandigarh reveals that the educated working women think that their employment raises their status in the family, it makes them happier and they do not consider that work interferes with the smooth functioning of their family life. A majority of the women studied by Kapoor<sup>7</sup> admitted during the course of interviews that they had become more assertive and more equality-conscious and independent after taking up employment.

6. Srivastava, Vinita. (1972), "Employment of Educated Married Women, Its Causes and Consequences; with reference to Chandigarh," Ph.D. Thesis in Sociology, Punjab University, Chandigarh.

7. Kapoor, P. (1970), Marriage and the Working Women in India, Delhi, Vikas Publications.

Coming to the second variable that is type of family, we find that nuclear family (that is, households consisting of only husband, wife and their offsprings) is the most common type among the working women. Many studies have established this fact. Empirical investigation conducted by Neera Desai<sup>8</sup> in 1969 in Bombay in her sample of working women in Bombay, while investigating into the type of family structure prevalent among working women, reports that more than half of the examined women lived in the "pure" type of nuclear household (51.22 per cent) i.e., in the families which consisted of husband, wife and their children. 24.66 per cent lived in joint families and 12.2 per cent lived in extended nuclear families (the couple, children and relatives of the husband). In the DSSW sample 71 per cent came from nuclear households, out of which few lived with their parents. This confirms the new trend already noticed by Neera Desai<sup>10</sup> in Bombay and Srivastava<sup>11</sup> in Chandigarh. Regarding this Desai says that the family of orientation which the Indian women had to leave forever after marriage in the traditional system, for

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8. Desai, Neera A. (1957), Woman in Modern India, Bombay, Vora and Co. Publishers Private Ltd.

9. Delhi School of Social Work (1964), "Attitudes of Women towards Part-time Employment", Report of a Pilot Study, University of Delhi, Delhi. (Unpublished Report).

10. Op. cit., p.12.

11. Op. cit., p.43.

the working woman has gained a new importance. Srivastava also noticed the same trend in her study of 300 working and non-working women. She concludes that majority of working women come from nuclear family. And in the case of working wives living away from their husbands, 60 per cent of them continue to stay with their families.

Also the women who Promila Kapur<sup>12</sup> studied came mostly from nuclear households (44 per cent). Thus our conclusion seems to be justified "working women prefer to live in nuclear families". This is a surprising phenomenon if one considers the fact that the joint family with its system of division of labour has a number of advantages for a women who wants to take up employment. It seems, however, that working women reject the joint family mainly because of the authoritarian position of the in-laws, particularly the mother-in-law. They are prepared as Kapur noticed to send money to their in-laws. Thus 46 per cent of the women, in the Kapur study had financial obligations towards their relatives. These women do recognise the practical advantages of the joint family but they do not want to pay for these advantages with the traditional subordination. Promila Kapur remarks, they don't, feel happy in subordinating their set ways of doing things in the authority of mother-in-law, father-in-law, or any other relative, yet they desire to have in-law's help in looking after the children when

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12. Promila Kapur (1970), Op.cit., p.72.

they are away at work.

The extent of help received in discharging household responsibilities - the employment of women may be seen as a factor contributing to a decrease in the differentiation of sex roles in the family. Woman's employment outside home may exert a pressure towards a rearrangement of the household management and connected tasks due to their absence from home for fixed hours. In this connection our hypothesis is that employment outside home will contribute to a decrease in the participation of women in household tasks. We expect that there will be significant difference between the employed and unemployed on this aspect. The unemployed would assume the traditional role which the employed would have deviated from the traditional model. Thus employment of women is expected to be related to low participation in household management by women. In a study conducted in Kerala, Lalitha Devi<sup>13</sup> found high association between employment and sharing of responsibility by husband. Thus in her sample of 400 respondents, in the case of 21 per cent of the employed the household responsibility has been shared by the male members of the family. This indicate modification from the higher to existing patterns towards sex equality in those families. Their actual performance points towards the growing acceptance of the equality of sexes by

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13. Devi, V. Lalitha (1980), op.cit., p.69.

men. This is an acceptance of the working women's legitimate claim that since they share the stresses and strains of a wage earner, the husband should be willing to share their duties in household management. As against the 21 per cent of the employed only 2 per cent of unemployed got such equal treatment (Table 4).

Table 4

Employment and Household Responsibility  
of the Respondents

Employment	Whole responsi- bility	Sharing with relatives or servants	Sharing with husband	Total
Employed	66 (22.0)	172 (57.33)	62 (20.67)	500 (100)
Unemployed	51 (51.0)	47 (47.0)	2 (2.0)	100 (100)
Total	117 (29.25)	219 (59.75)	64 (16.0)	400 (100)

Note: Figures within brackets represent percentage.

51 per cent of the unemployed assume full household responsibility without any help, since they are at home all the time they can do their traditional task without help from others. It may be noted that 22 per cent of the employed women also bear the whole responsibility alone. 57 per cent of the employed as well as 47 per cent of unemployed get the help of servants or relatives. Here also the employed is at an advantageous position.

Apart from this, according to the various studies and observations made by various scholars, majority of husbands did not accept the changed life, pattern of a working wife. For example, Kapoor<sup>14</sup> found in her study that though majority of the husbands wanted their wives to work, mainly for financial gain to the family, by and large, they were not yet prepared to share in the household responsibilities and in looking after the children. These duties were still expected to be exclusively that of the wife even in situations where both husband and wife had equally long working hours and the nature of the work was also similar. Though many of the working wives accept their dual role, they normally receive very little help from their husbands in carrying out their two-fold duties successfully. Dhingra<sup>15</sup> also indicates towards similar findings. He found in his study that a large number of his respondents reported that their husbands were inconsiderate and often demanded a traditional subjugation of the female and her continued performance of the household chores by herself, in addition to her job demand, "even while their husbands subscribed to the women's working and equality of rights. The

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14. Kapoor, P. (1972), The Changing Role and Status of Women: The Indian Family in the Change and Challenge of the Seventies. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers.

15. Dhingra, O.P. (1972), "Women in Employment", Report of Field Investigation into the problems of professionally trained employed women in India, Sri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, New Delhi.

working women felt that with their employment they had added up an equally important role of a worker "without any reduction, modification or adaptation in their familial role". Tripathi<sup>16</sup> also makes similar observations.

Carrying out almost single handedly all the duties and responsibilities of home overstrains a working woman and makes her tired and irritable, which in turn is liable to make her an unpleasant and unenjoyable company for her husband and children.<sup>17</sup> With respect to the emotional problems of women office workers, Vasantha Kumar's<sup>18</sup> study also reveals that the strains of work at home and office coupled with lack of household amenities and vanishing domestic help contribute to make trivial incidents major causes of irritation for working women. Dhingra<sup>19</sup> found in his study that almost half of the married working women were experiencing substantial difficulty in carrying out their household duties and the duties of their "wife role" adequately, including the care and attention given to the husband along with their jobs.

In a study by Arora, Bhattacharaya and others<sup>20</sup> three-fourths of the respondents expressed that economic role had not

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16. Tripathi, Hansa, J. (1967), "Changing Attitudes of Women in Post-independent India", Journal of Gujarat Research Study, Vol. XXIX, No.2/114, April 1967, pp.92-7.

17. Kapoor, P. (1972), op.cit., p.82.

18. Vasantha Kumar, Kamla (1964), "Her Emotional Problems", Social Welfare, Vol. II, No.5, pp.12-3.

19. Dhingra, O.P. (1972), op.cit., p.54.

20. Arora, Bhattacharya and others., "Women and Career", A Group Project Report submitted to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (Bombay).



earned them any relief from household duties - 38 per cent of them even had to do exactly the same type of work at home as prior to taking up job.

In a study undertaken by Ramanamma<sup>21</sup> of the educated employed women in Poona with the purposes of finding out the changes occurring in the authoritarian status of the various members of the family as an effect of women's employment, it was found that the status of these women in their families had not very much changed and that the husband continued to enjoy the authoritarian status in the family.

It will be relevant here to look into the degree of correlation between the occupational level of husband and wife. It will give us clear picture of the authoritarian pattern existing in present India. Field study conducted by Kulwant Anand<sup>22</sup> will be of help. Relevant data is given in Table 5 of a sample of married working women in Chandigarh taken from a field study of Kulwant Anand. Kulwant Anand has classified occupations into seven prestige categories in a descending order.

There is a remarkable association between the occupational prestige of wives and husbands. Out of 168 cases for which complete information is available, 79 women (47 per cent) are

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21. Ramanamma (1972), op.cit., p.27.

22. Kulwant Anand (1970), Impact of Changing Status of Women in Population Growth (Chandigarh: Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Punjab University).

Table 5  
Occupational Prestige of Wives and Husbands

Occupational prestige categories of wives	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	Total
I	15	4	2	2	-	-	-	23
II	5	12	-	-	-	-	1	18
III	3	25	5	15	-	-	3	51
IV	-	1	3	5	-	-	2	11
V	-	-	1	3	8	4	3	19
VI	-	-	-	-	3	4	6	14
VII	-	-	1	-	-	1	2	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>175</b>

in the same occupational categories as those of their husbands. In another 45 cases (27 per cent) the occupational prestige categories of the wives are just one step lower than those of their husbands. The general trend is for wives to have occupations either of the same prestige level or of levels one step lower than those of their husbands. It may, however, be pointed out that in the occupational prestige category III of wives quite a substantial number of women have occupations one step higher in prestige as compared to that of their husbands. This apparent discrepancy is due to the coarseness of the scale for occupational classification. The women in question are mostly primary school teachers who, along with secondary school teachers, are included in prestige category III, whereas their husbands who are mainly clerical workers are included in prestige category IV. If primary school teachers are equated in prestige with clerical workers, these women would mostly have the same occupational prestige as that of their husbands. Thus the evidence on the whole confirms the statement that when both husband and wife work, the wife follows an occupation either of the same or slightly lower prestige as compared to the occupational prestige of her husband. Thus the evidence on the whole confirms the statement that when both husband and wife work, the wife follows an occupation either of the same or slightly lower prestige as compared to the occupational prestige of her husband. The prevalence of wide disparity

between the occupational prestige of husband and wife and also cases in which the wife has higher occupational prestige, are very rare. These findings are supported by the evidence reported in another study of the same community but using a different sample.<sup>23</sup>

In another study Srivastava<sup>24</sup> has also observed the same pattern. While comparing wives' occupation with that of their husbands' occupation, she found that 60 per cent are working at highly consistent level. Highly consistent, according to her, is where the husband and wife's occupations fall either exactly on the same level or just one level higher or lower. And she found highest consistency among professionals, administrators and office workers. As high as 92.6 per cent of professional women have their husbands also working professionals. 3.7 per cent professional women have their husbands in administrative services. Only one single professional has her husband working as a college teacher. Among the women administrators, 37.5 per cent have their husbands from the same occupation whereas exactly the same percentage of women have professional husbands. As many as 46.6 per cent office workers, namely clerks and cashiers also have husbands working in clerical jobs.

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23. D'Souza, Social Structure of a Planning City, Chandigarh, p.30.

24. Srivastava, Vinita. (1978), Employment of Educated Married Women in India, New Delhi; National Publishing House, p.24.

Kruger<sup>25</sup> also comes to the same conclusions. His study reveals that some 44 per cent of the professional women have professional husbands, married teachers have educated husbands, two-fifths of the women clerks have their husbands working in similar occupations. Thus it is clear that high rate of consistency occurs in the occupational status of husband and wife. Since there is higher rate of consistency between the occupational prestige level of husband and wife and the fact women generally work either lower or same prestige level occupations as their husbands, it could be inferred that women still have accepted the traditional authority of men.

But at the same time we cannot ignore the fact that reason for higher rate of consistency in the occupational prestige level of husband and wife is due to the fact that our society unfortunately is status conscious and status bound. If the wife enjoys a higher status in her work, her circles of associates are also of higher status, and however the wife may try not to bring in her office status at home the husband's adjustment with her become difficult. He tends to consider it a reversal of roles. Such a husband tends to become more aggressive.

The situation in which the husband is employed in an inferior position in the same office or exactly under the wife

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25. Kruger Daniel H. (1968), "Women at Work" quoted by Lee Taylor in Occupational Sociology, New York: Oxford Press, p.468.

is perhaps the worst. Many wives are known to have refused promotions, in order to maintain peace in the family.

On the basis of foregoing discussion we come to the following conclusions regarding the status of women in family sphere:-

- (i) Educated and working women live typically in nuclear households. Mostly they themselves take the initiative for separation from the joint family, because they reject the authority of the mother-in-law. It is therefore mainly women who actively push forward the dissolution of the traditional joint family.
- (ii) The authority of the parents-in-law has been replaced by that of the husband. The fact that there is a high rate of consistency in the occupational prestige level of husband and wife is an indication of the continuance of the hierarchically defined husband-wife relationship.
- (iii) Higher education and employment has definitely helped women in obtaining higher status within the family. Since due to economic contribution in the family, women has better say within the family regarding important matters of the family.
- (iv) Regarding the redistribution of traditional roles we found new roles have helped in changing the division of traditional roles but at the same time resulted in a state of role conflict.

### Women in Work Sphere

This is the only sphere which has provided women with an opportunity to play beyond their traditional roles. By working in this sphere women assume the male roles and activities. Women in the work place has considerable responsibility and they work under formal conditions to compete equality with men. So, in the work sphere, greater mutual adjustment by both men and women is necessary to enable women to play their appropriate roles without consideration of sex. Contrary to their traditional attitudes towards women, men have to admit the latter's equality, being their work colleagues and sometimes superiors. So an appraisal of the gains achieved in office in terms of status by women will be relevant.

In this connection, developments made by women in various fields cannot be ignored in the light of the worse conditions prevailing during pre-independence days, which is definitely an indicator of higher status of women. For example, earlier the participation rate was limited to few professions only but now women have made dent into unusual professions, professions which were considered as the domain of men. Not only this number of women going for these professions is increasing.<sup>26</sup> For instance before 1960, the number of women in administrative services was 18, which increased to 77 during 1970-71. This is an important improvement in the status of

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26. Report of the Committee on the Status of Women, 1979, p.89.

women. Similarly today we find women in non-traditional occupations like science, engineering, law etc. All these developments cannot be ignored in the light of the worse conditions prevailing during pre-independence days. But the performance of women in offices, i.e., how well do they appear to perform their role in equality with males and how comfortable do they feel in the offices. This appraisal will be based again on studies done on this role aspect of women.

Kerala study<sup>27</sup> of women professionals in white collar jobs has highlighted some relevant points. The employed womens' relations with the (male) superiors is highly significant in assessing their status within the office. It is important to know whether they get treatment equal to that shown to men workers from their superiors in the work place.<sup>28</sup> In this connection she found a particular trend existing among women professionals. According to her study at the lower level of employment, a majority of them, i.e., 45 per cent scored low. Among those who scored at the medium level is 31 per cent and those who scored at the higher level is only 24 per cent. This steady decline in the percentages from the lower to the higher score on respect shows that they get a treatment from superiors which is not very much in favour of equality with men. However,

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27. Devi, L. (1980), Status and Employment of Women in India.  
B.R. Publishing Corporation, p.94.

28. Ibid., p.97.



a good number of them scored medium (31 per cent) and also high (24 per cent). Together they constitute 55 per cent. This shows that even among those at the lower level of employment, the trend is for getting higher level of respect from their superiors. While examining the respondents at the higher level of employment, she found that 18 per cent of them scored low, 24 per cent medium and 58 per cent of them scored high. The percentages show steady increase from low to medium and then high. That is, in this case there is a steady increase in the scores achieved compared to the lower employed group. Thus, the trend indicates that the degree or extent of respect which the respondents get from the superiors clearly corresponds to the level of employment. Similar observation has been made by <sup>29</sup> Dhingra. Also he concludes like Lalitha Devi that higher the level of professions higher is the rate of respect from superiors. In addition to this variable he has also studied extent of respect from the colleagues and subordinates. He concludes that when women occupy higher positions in the office they will get greater <sup>30</sup> respect from their subordinates as well as colleagues. Kala Rani has studies in association between profession, income or education and performance of job role. She concludes that

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29. Dhingra, O.P., Women in Employment ( Unpublished report of a Field Investigation into the Problems of Professionally Trained Employed Women in Delhi), Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations and Human Resources, New Delhi, p.14.
30. Kala Rani (1976), Role Conflict in Working Women. New Delhi: Chetna Publications.

profession, income or education do not have any bearing on the performance of the job role. Thus, we can conclude from the above discussion that higher the level of profession, higher is the rate of respect enjoyed by the women. This supports our argument that employment is an important factor contributing to status.

In a Poona study Ramanama<sup>31</sup> while investigating into the same aspect regarding women in work sphere, observed the similar trend. He has studied the level of respect in relation to age factor along with employment level. In other words, how far age factor affects extent of respect at higher level. He concludes that the higher the employment position of a women, the more she is likely to receive greater respect even when she has lower age and education. Thus once again our hypothesis is confirmed that employment contribute to higher status in the work sphere. Thus we found that higher education and employment leads to higher status at the work place also. Though at the overt level it seems that women have achieved higher status in the office, still at the covert level they face conflicting attitudes regarding their status, as it is reflected in many studies. For instance, according to the reports of hundreds of working women whom Kapur<sup>32</sup> interviewed for her study, they had to face certain difficult situations

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31. Ramanama, Angan, (1968), "Position of Women in India - with special reference to Poona", Unpublished Dissertation, University of Poona, p.82.

32. Kapur, P. (1972), op.cit., p.48.

and confusions, while working with men. In the case of a woman's working under a male boss, the psychological problem is created by his tendency of not taking her as an efficient worker first, but that of taking her as a woman primarily. If she pays lots of attention and appreciation to him and is too polite, courteous and good to him in the interest of her job, promotion or career, he is liable to take advantage of his position and official status and exploit her. And if she permits him to take advantage, it generally creates tensions and conflicts both within herself in the form of guilt complex, and outside in her home life and life with her colleagues who look down upon her for her intimacies with her boss. If on the other hand, she does not go out of the way to please and boost the ego of her boss and keep herself confined to her work, the boss is liable to be "not pleased" with the result that her chances of retaining her job and of further promotion are liable to be labelled as "not fit for further promotion".

In a different situation where she is the boss and has male subordinates, she faces a different type of confusion. If she happens to be reserved, stern and strict, with her male subordinates and demands discipline and efficiency in work, she is labelled as too masculine, too dictatorial, too harsh and too much career minded, and she is looked upon with content by them. If, on the other hand she is polite, courteous, lenient and very kind to them, she is taken as a woman

interested in men and inefficient as a boss.

Even sample of women interviewed by journalists like Sapru felt that women, be they clerks or high officials in the offices, are viewed as women and women alone. They reported that is not only frustrates them but at times annoys and irritates them as well.

Thus to conclude woman's status in the work sphere we can say that though at the overt level they seems to have achieved higher status at the covert level, still they are struggling to achieve this goal.

To conclude, overall attempt in this chapter was to examine the changes in the status of women due to her taking up new roles. In order to have clear picture we divided the whole chapter into two sections - (i) status of women in the family spehre and (ii) status of women in work sphere and we found that higher education and employment contributes a lot in acquiring new social status. We have also observed that there is status congruity between the two statuses, since there is a high correlation between the two statuses. Women who are in higher level professions, have higher status in the work sphere, also enjoy higher status in the family. Thus status consistency exists between the two roles of women. And also status in the work sphere help in strengthening status in the family sphere. And at the same time higher status leads to change in the ideologies. New roles provide them with an

opportunity to develop personality. Say for instance, women were not allowed to move outside the family. But the new roles, demands more freedom of movement and thus help women in developing their personality. But all these achievements, status congruity between the two roles are the covert level, this new addition in roles have resulted in state of role conflict among women.

CHAPTER - VICONCLUSIONS, PERSPECTIVES AND PROJECTION

In the concluding chapter we shall summarise the findings of the preceding chapters that have sought to study changes in the status of women. At the end, we shall also suggest some important guidelines based on the findings of the study for future research.

It is a fact that place of women in the family and in the society has been changing from time to time. Women who had enjoyed great deal of freedom during the Vedic period, gradually began to lose their freedom and were, eventually compelled to confine themselves only to their homes, under the strict supervision of the male members. Once again now, the present century has unchained women from their past bondage and has given them legitimate freedom. Education and employment have emerged as the major factors helping women to raise their status within the family and wider society. It is in these spheres that the most obvious progress has been made. Earlier, women could be seen engaged only in menial jobs and only now they are seen also in high-income jobs. Moreover, women were not allowed to be seen in the public as often as is the case of present, when intermixing, interdining in public have become a common sight. The march of time in the modern world has thus greatly modified the established traditions and has taken us quite away from the grand mother's saying that "Men must work and women must weep".

Today, women need not necessarily remain passive considering their lot to be submitting to the dictates of destiny. Instead, with the necessary encouragement given to women's education and employment, women could step out of home.

The objective of the present study has been to find out the contribution of education and employment towards social status of women. For our purpose, we selected educated middle class working women. The working women, however, are not a new addition to the Indian scene. Women in the lower strata of society have been working since long for wages in factories as menial servants or as unskilled labourers. It is only the middle or upper class women who were confined to homes and taking of any jobs outside their homes was considered derogatory for them. Thus emergence of working middle class Indian women is of course a new addition. Along with other factors, spread of education has played its important role. The educational opportunities which women took advantage of set a new phase in social progress. Employment facilities with a variety of skilled, creative, administrative and academic jobs available for women have also contributed to modernization. This led to economic emancipation with which women came to be considered at least notionally, as important as men in contributing to the family income, particularly where the desire to take up employment was more a necessity than a choice. Thus education and employment have emerged as the major factors helping women to raise their status

within the family and the wider society, in post-independent India. There is a great increase in the rate of participation in these two fields. Literacy rate which was 7.93 in 1950-51 increased to 18.70 in 1970-71, also there is an increasing trend among women opting for professional education, since the percentage of girls enrolled for professional courses in 1950-51 was 5 which increased to 10 in 1970-71.

Eighty-two per cent of the women are working in rural areas and only 18 per cent in urban areas. Among those in urban areas, majority are absorbed in professions, semi-professions and services. In the pre-independent India, teaching and medicine were considered as the only occupations for women but in the post-independent period, women have made dent into those professions which were considered as the exclusive preserve of men before. For example, before 1950 the number of women in the Indian Administrative Services was 18. It increased to 77 during 1970-71. This is an important improvement in the status of women. Similarly, today we find women in non-traditional occupations like science, engineering, law etc. All these developments cannot be ignored in the light of the situation during pre-independence days.

Increasing rate of participation in education and employment have had great impact on the status of women within the family and wider society. To assess change in the family, three variables were selected:

- (1) Pattern of authority



(ii) Family structure

(iii) Participation-rate of traditional role.

It has been observed that majority of the working women live in nuclear families or prefer to live in nuclear families. Regarding authority pattern we found, that due to the change in the family structure, there is a change in the authority structure. No doubt, due to woman's taking up new roles, there is change in the traditional authority structure, but this change is not complete change. Because of change in the family structure from 'joint' to 'nuclear', women have acquired some freedom to express themselves. Compared to traditional non-working housewives, they have better say in important decisions of the family. But even after all these changes, a significantly higher level of husbands' jobs and occupations implies that even within their families, an important source of their dominance by males continues to be as important as ever. In other words, there is only a shift in the traditional authority structure, from that of in-laws to husband's in the modern time. Then, regarding the performance of traditional roles, it was found, that new roles have definitely affected the rigidity of traditional sex-roles in the family, since decreasing trend in the differentiation of sex roles in the family was observed among working educated women.

Another area where we wanted to examine the improvement, if any, in the status of employed educated women, was in matters

which are outside of home. This is the 'work sphere' in which a woman has to move and play several roles and with which she has to establish rapport as well as linkages. It is through the performance of new roles and establishment of new contacts that she could secure for herself a new status. For this, of course, women need to change their very concept of society and their own role in it. Only then, could she expect a change in society's attitude towards her. In order to find out whether new roles have contributed to higher status of women in the wider society, we had put forward the following hypotheses for testing and validation:

(i) Employment contributes to new roles outside of home and these new roles enable women to acquire higher status; and

(ii) New roles create in women, new attitudes and a new sense of identity which the new status further buttresses.

We found that the new roles of women (due to education and employment) have enabled woman to widen her social interaction with a wide circle of people which in turn creates in them a new confidence in their capacity and provide them an opportunity to show the world that they are as good as men in every respect. Women working at higher-level professions prove this point. Though their number is less but their participation is significant,

in the sense, that it helps in demystifying the traditional myth of inferiority of women and has proved to males that women are as capable of shouldering responsibilities as men, if given opportunity.

Secondly, women working at higher positions and in non-traditional occupations, is a proof of the fact that changes have occurred in the attitudes of women regarding their perception of their roles in the society. These new attitudes are 'modern' in the sense that they either raise one's status or help in raising one's status by creating an urge to move in that direction.

In other words, we may say that employment in professions and services, which are non-traditional in themselves, is an indication of modernization among women. It creates two kinds of opportunity - structure for a woman, both of which help in raising her status. One is the direct opportunity provided by the job to shoulder responsibilities, play new roles with new people, face new situations, all of which were traditionally the 'preserve' of men. The effective performance of these new roles by women have exploded the myth of female inferiority and established her claim for higher status.

Though education and employment have helped in raising woman's status but at the same time these new roles have added to woman's duties and functions. One in the family - the traditional mother-wife role, and the other in pursuit gainful employment. Thus they are exposed to conflicting expectations, emerging from their work outside the home and their duties at

home. If women cannot live upto both the expectations, it would naturally lead to role strain, effecting negatively either of her two roles and thus cutting into her newly acquired social status.

Since changes in the actual role-performance have not been followed by appropriate changes in the social normative expectations, it results in a virtual state of impasse. Forces of modernization such as education and employment and articulation of new ideologies have necessitated major changes in roles and responsibilities of women, but the normative and structural ill-preparedness of society to accept the goals and means of legal, educational and social equality has created a gap between what is theoretically possible for women and what comes to be realized actually. What is possible for them in theory is seldom within their reach in fact.

Religion provides ideological and moral bases for the accorded status and institutionalized roles of women in society. Case studies on young modern educated women substantiate the analysis that though Indian communities profess diverse religions, faiths yet there is no radical difference in the position attributed to women by various religions. Social restrictions on women, people's opinion regarding woman's proper roles derived from religious conceptions of their nature and capacities are internationalized and perpetuated through the process of socialization. The conflict and turmoil impelled by traditional notions of sacrifice and duty and subordination in women, is a serious obstacle to the individual aspirations and intellectual

potential that equality cannotes.

Alongwith these social barriers, women are suffering from psychological barriers also. Because the gaps between traditional social attitudes and institutional requirements creates problems and imposes constraints on women's ability to perform such roles.<sup>1</sup>

The report continues to elucidate how the most serious obstacle lies within women themselves as so many internalize these traditional attitudes. Among the tiny emancipated westernized minority, there are many outstanding and forceful women prominent in public life but such women are exceptions.

To conclude, we may say that spread of education and employment has definitely resulted in departures from the traditional system and have resulted in new trends;

1. Educated and working women live typically in nuclear households. Mostly they themselves take the initiative for separation from the joint family, because they reject the authority of the mother-in-law. It is, therefore, mainly women who actively reject the authority of the mother-in-law, who actively push forward the dissolution of the traditional joint family.

2. The authority of the parents-in-law has been replaced by that of the husband. The fact that in their decisions woman must, above all, respect the point of view of their husbands is an indication of the continuance of the hierarchically defined

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1. Report of the Committee on the Status of Women, p.86.

husband-wife relationship.

3. To an ever-greater extent, working wives are taking recourse to the help of their own families. This is a new phenomenon in the Indian system of family relationships. However, according to the rules of the ideal-typical Indian marriage system after marriage the relationship between a woman and her family of birth is reduced to the minimum.

#### Outlook for the future

With the passage of time more and more women workers are likely to be in the labour market for "white collar jobs." The rise in the cost of living and also in the level of aspirations combine to produce a craze among middle class women for employment. Thus there will be an increasing tendency for educated women to look<sup>up</sup> for job.

In order to meet the situation, government and the planners have to make provisions for more employment opportunities. Provision should also be made to offer part-time employment opportunities in various jobs.

Employment opportunities to help women do not mean that men and women will necessarily do the same type of jobs and get into cut-throat competitions. Men and women must learn to respect each other's work to nurture a healthier atmosphere in society. The focus should be to utilise women's capabilities and potentialities to facilitate a social and cultural renaissance rather than to throw them against men to fight an indiscriminate economic battle.

Implications

One very discouraging and frustrating fact noticed while collecting data on the statistics of women in professions, was the near absence of sex-wise data regarding the positions and specializations and also their mode of distribution. In the absence of such basic data, it would be impossible to assess the position of either men or women and we are unable to discern the areas of disparity. The collection of such data is thus an imperative necessity for any meaningful research in this area.

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APPENDIX 'A'

Distribution of degree holders and technical personnel  
in all subjects and status level of education

Subject field	Level of Education	Male	Female	Unemployed trying for job		Unemployed not trying for job	
				Male	Female	Male	Female
All subject field	1. Doctorate	15,210	1,943	351	244	58	136
	2. Master's degree	312,122	80,076	21,887	14,958	2,632	14,901
	3. Other PG Degree/ Diploma	38,552	3,816	2,561	420	276	357
	4. Bachelor's degree	1,206,300	309,564	157,531	61,916	16,385	73,691
	5. Bachelor's equivalent	15,180	1,530	879	220	187	262
	6. Diploma	162,897	9,074	20,041	1,479	1,259	822
	7. Certificate	31,041	2,927	5,417	583	229	289

Source: Census of India 1971, Series I, Part VII, Degree Holders and Technical Personnel.

APPENDIX 'B'Profile of degree holders and  
technical personnel

Status	Percentage of men	Percentage of women
Total	1,781,302	408,930
Employee	1,187,334	147,725
Self - employed	152,140	8,686
Students	84,887	39,926
Trainees	15,260	3,913
Apprentices	6,195	492
Retired	47,118	2,046
Unemployed )	208,667	79,820
Trying for job )		
Unemployed and not trying for job	21,086	90,458
Unspecified	58,675	35,804

Source: Census of India, 1971. General Tables  
on Degree Holders and Technical  
Personnel (G 1 - G IV), Series 1,  
Part VII.