

**CHAPTER-I**  
**INTRODUCTION**

**1.1 INTRODUCTION :**

Indian womanhood has been enjoying an inferior position since past so many decades. In recent years the growth of education has led them the entry to different spheres of life. However, as far as the participation of womenfolk in productive activity is concerned we notice that, even in the past they were actively engaged in different types of economic activities. The bulk of women population from the lower socio-economic strata of the society have been engaged in the activities like made-servants, scavengers, sweepers etc. as unskilled labour from the historical period.

Women performed both the household roles and the remunerative roles fetching economic gains for the family. It is seen that women have been important in creating property and we see the 'private property' notion is contributed by women folk. During the course of history the idea of 'stable life' was developed to structuralize male-female relationships. In this process, the institution family was developed. Man played a major role of a savage warrior and hunter and relegated woman into a secondary position which continued her to home roles and she started performing domestic works.

The historical evidence conforms that during the vedic age women enjoyed considerable freedom and equal opportunities with men. They were highly respected in the family and outside in the social and

economic life. They played significant roles in economic activities and as partners in economic activities they were consulted in decision making process. They lost this state of condition during the post-vedic age. They became a secondary personality and lost their status as equally important role player. They became man's private property and were symbolized as the adjunct of low legal status and ritual contempt. The smriti period, the Muslim period and even during the British period women enjoyed a very low socio-economic position and no major changes were there in their position and roles within and outside the family.

Dr. A.S. Altekar says, "for merely 2000 years from 20 B.C. to 1800 A.D. the position of women steadily deteriorated though she was saddled by the parents, loved by the husband and revered by her children. The revival of Sati, the prohibition on remarriage, the spread Purdha and the greater prevalence of polygamy made her position very bad." Thus, we can say that, there was a vast gulf between the status of women in the early vedic period and in the later part of the history of Indian society.

It is seen that Buddhism and Jainism gave greater freedom to women. The reformatory movements and the process of westernization and modernization during the British period has helped to enhance the status of woman in Indian society.

The process of industrialization and urbanization in last few decades, especially after the world wars, have demanded the woman's participation in the production process and has forced her to join the economic activities outside her home. Woman has become a productive

and important role player in the labour market. The role in the labour market has brought her equal opportunity to contribute in the economic activity along with men. This has also made it possible for her to develop her socio-cultural position in the society. Today, we notice that, throughout the world women are moving towards greater freedom and equality with men in all walks of life.

In Indian situation we notice that, woman is still treated as inferior and subordinate to men. In the urban setting, though they are engaged in the works outside home they are treated as the dependents in many respects. In the rural areas, the farm related activities demand woman's active participation. In the subsistence type of rural economy, gaizing of animals and other dairy activities, storing of the yield and performance of supporting roles to men are performed by women.

In the urban areas, though they are treated as dependents, the demand of the changing socio-economic situation has brought her outside the home and has been given many responsibilities. They are working in different types of occupations. They are engaged in white-collar jobs like teachers and administrative assistants as clerks and typists. They are trained nurses and legal practitioners and they are engaged in many such activities. They are petty traders and promising business owners. Women entrepreneur is a new class which has been engaged in recent years.

It is clear from the above discussion that in the present day society woman has to leave her house for remunerative job as it has become necessary for her to support her family economically. As far

as her role outside the family is concerned it has been accepted by the society dominated by patriarchal type of family organization and authority structure. But it is expected from her that she should not leave her traditional domestic roles and she should perform wife and mother's roles along with new roles. In the home her roles are of a varied type. She is a mother, wife, daughter-in-law and sister-in-law at one and the same time. In the joint family she has to perform her functions towards her husband's relatives. These roles are to be performed to the maximum satisfaction of her in-laws and other relatives. It is a matter of fact at many times she may not be supported by her relatives in performing her roles. On the other hand the traditionalists and conservatives think that it is the primary function of a woman to perform home roles satisfactorily. These roles are to be performed single handedly by her.

At the working place she has to perform job roles with the same involvement and integrity with the role. In some cases, when the housewives are not able to give much time and neglect some functions at home they are criticised as they fail to perform domestic or home roles. If they neglect or not able to satisfy the bosses or employer, they are criticized and some employer think that married women cannot be sincere workers. They are regarded secondary at the working place. Working women have to impart their duties with men and there they find problems with the men workers thinking women as inferiors.

The working woman has to balance her different roles. The balancing of different types of roles performed in different environments creates tension and conflicting situation. The role performer woman is in a difficult position facing problems at home and at the same time

at the place where she performs remunerative work. This is to be taken into consideration sociologically. The study of role conflicts is a matter of sociological understanding.

## 1.2 THE PROBLEM :

There has been a considerable change in the position of women in the last few decades due to the expansion of education, legal provisions and improvement in the technology. All these have brought sweeping changes in the way of life of Indian women. However, the married women who have to leave their homes for the remunerative jobs and at the same time who have to perform the home roles have to face the conflicts between different types of roles. The married working women has to balance her varied roles which is a difficult task. It overstrains her and she is unable to perform both roles properly. She is being accused as she cannot devote fully to home roles. As she has to attend the office, hospital or market in time she cannot perform the mother's role properly. She cannot give much attention to her husband as well and there is a complaint from her parents in laws about her negligence. At the working place she has always been treated as a married woman and thus having her mind in home with her children and husband. Under this situation she is not able to perform either of these roles properly.

The present study aims at sociological understanding of working women's dual roles, one at home as a wife, mother and daughter-in-laws and related to other relatives and the other, as a working woman performing the role of a teacher petty trader in the vegetable market and as a clerk in the governmental and other offices. These dual roles create conflicting situation and we notice that there is a gulf between

the expected behaviour from her as a family member and she puts herself in conflict with other members. The job role also brings tensions in her life.

The aim of the present investigation is to study the conflicts between these roles and how a working woma faces the situation and how she has been treated by other members of the society, within and outside the family.

### 1.3 a) OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY :

The major objectives of the present study are listed below:

- i) to identify the causes for role conflict.
- ii) to find out the patterns of behaviour in which such a role conflict is revealed.
- iii) to find out how working women balances dual roles and tries to accommodate and adjust with the situation.

### 1.3 b) HYPOTHESIS :

The following tentative hypotheses have been formed for the present study.

- i) Working women have to face conflicting situation due to dual roles they have to perform.
- ii) Working womens employment brings strain and tensions in the family life.

With these tentative hypotheses in mind it has been aimed to study working women from different sectors viz. petty traders, teachers nurses and clerks from Kolhapur city.

1.3 c) SELECTION OF THE AREA OF  
STUDY AND RESPONDENTS :

The study has been carried out in the Kolhapur city. For the purpose of our study we have selected respondents from different categories.

i) Women promising the petty trading business in the vegetable markets of Kolhapur city are taken into consideration.

ii) Women performing teaching, nursing, and administrative assistants jobs have been selected as a form of our sample.

The petty traders in the Laxmipuri, Rajarampuri and Udyamnagar vegetable and fruit markets have been selected for study. They perform the job to sell the vegetables in the form of retail traders. They have to be in the market from early in the morning till late evening. They come from the lower sections of the socio-economic strata and thus are not highly educated. The roles they perform are a mixed nature. They have to seek the co-operation and help of their family members in performing their jobs. They came in conflicting situation as they sometimes are unable to balance the home role and the job role. This section of the working women needs attention from sociology students. This is the major reason for the selection of this group of working women. The number of respondents selected from the petty traders from three market places is with purposive and accidental sample. The petty trader woman willing to co-operate with the researcher has been preferred and studied in detail.



At the initial stage a pilot survey was taken of the market, hospital, credit society and school for the selection of working women at these places. It was decided to have 110 respondents from these areas. These women are gainfully employed outside home are performing their roles as married women within the four walls of the home.

The number of petty traders is more in the sample as, sociological study of this class has not been taken in this area. They form 50% of the sample selected for study.

The teachers, nuses and clerks comprise the remaining part of the sample.

In total 110 respondents have been interviewed. There are 55 petty traders, 30 nurses, 15 teachers and 10 clerks in the sample of 110 working women under study. The selection of nurses, teachers and clerks is also done by using purposive and accidental sample method.

### 1.3 d) DEFINITION OF VARIABLES :

The important variables and terms used in the present study have been defined and their meanings have been taken as below:

#### i) Role :

A social role is taken here as the expected behaviour associated with a social position. It is a relational term. In the present study have taken the meaning of a role of a working woman according to her position in the family as a wife, mother and in relation to other members of the family. The activities she performs are taken into consideration for a detailed analysis.



**ii) Conflict :**

We have accepted the meaning of conflict - as social relations in which expectations are not understood and not fulfilled.

**iii) Role Conflict :**

It is experienced at two levels. Firstly, within his own body of roles and secondly between his own roles and those of other actors.

Woman's role in the family as a mother, wife and other roles are important. If there is discrepancy between her perception of these roles and her perception of her actual role behaviour brings conflicting situation. When woman perceives some incompatibility between performing certain perception of one of her roles and carrying out those of another of her roles.

Conflict may arise at a second level when there is a difference between the definition of the role and the actual performances of the role.

**iv) Petty Traders :**

A trader which is concerned with trading of small things like green vegetables and fruits in the vegetable and fruit market.

**v) Teacher :**

One who teaches especially whose profession or occupation is teaching.

**vi) Nurse :**

One who tends or takes care of the sick and one who has undergone an appropriate training of nursing and midwifery.

vii) Clerk :

One who works as an assistant in the bureaucracy in the lowest position as far as office work is concerned.

1.3 e) Research Tools :

The sample under study is selected with the help of purposive and accidental sample method. The number of petty traders in vegetable markets in Kolhapur is quite a large number and there is no comprehensive list of such petty traders available. Thus, it was necessary to use purposive and accidental sample. We have selected those petty trader women who have readily helped us in the process of interview.

The nurses from the Civil Hospital, Kolhapur are also selected on the same basis to maintain the uniformity in the selection of respondents.

The teachers from Nehru Vidyalaya have been selected and randomly the clerks from the central office have been considered for the study.

The clerks from Shivashakti Pat Sanstha have been considered for our study.

The most appropriate tool for data collection was thought to be an interview guide and the participant observation of the events happening in the market and at other places.

The main tool for data collection has been an interview guide which aimed at eliciting information regarding the life sketch of respondents as clearly as it became possible.

The Part-I of the interview guide has been designed to get an idea about the respondent's family. The number of family members, their educational and occupational status and income they earn.

The Part-II, is concerned with the reasons for accepting this job by our respondent and details about the job they perform.

It is also desired to know about the role in the home and attitudes of the members of the family towards the role performed by the respondent. Then the information is collected about the role the woman concerned has to perform outside the family. The nature of the work she has to perform, the social and hygnical environment at the working place and working hours. Her commitment to the job and attitudes of husband and other co-workers regarding her job. The information about the leisure time activities she does is collected. It is also the motive to collect information about the attitude of neighbours regarding her job and her relations with them.

The last part of the interview guide aims at collecting the information about role conflict. Reason for such conflict, and her expectations from her husband, children and other relatives and members of the family in this respect. We have also collected the information about the reasons of maladjustment with family members, co-workers neighbours.

The information regarding the petty traders is collected with frequent visits and observation of their activities in the market. It was possible to take them in confidence only after few visits, as they are

mostly from rural background and hence are not free as for as their dealings with others is concerned, inspite of the fact that they are petty traders.

Thus, with interview and observation as major tools have been used to collect the data for the present study.

The group under study is hetrogeneous group and hence the data collection took quite sometime. However, the respondents were co-operative and helpful in imparting the required information.