Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter deals with the theories regarding women’s employment and presents various causes of entry of women in workforce along with their economic status, work situation and family conflict.

In any economy, women play an important role at various levels. Earlier economic role of women did not attract much attention of social scientist because of her dual role of worker and housewife with the later being dominant, but with the beginning of the 18th century, some eminent scholars like, Mill, Marx and Engles stressed the importance of women’s activity for their dignity and development but the economic role of women gained importance during the later half of the 20th century. This shift in emphasis was mainly due to various studies clearly indicating the importance of women’s economic role empirically.

There are different viewpoints regarding the participation of women in economic activities. Dominant ideology considered men as bread winners and women as house makers. Mill1 considers that subordination of one sex by other is wrong in itself and it is the chief hindrance to development. Marx and Engles2 also evoked discussions on the subordinate position of women and its intensity and forms. They emphasised the economic role of women. Further most of the scholars maintain that nature and type of women’s activity changes with a change in mode of production. In primitive societies women played principal role in production along with the household chores3. In view of Engles origin of family and private property lowered the value of women workers. As a result of it the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and it

will remain the same as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework.⁴

Scholars of Marxian school believe in the fact that economic participation of women is largely affected by and is a result of the capitalistic family structure. Bebel was of the view that the origin of the family, private property, class structure and the maternal role of women are the responsible factors for their exclusion from socially productive work. He visualised that women can re-enter the labour force in a socialistic mode of production.⁵

Boserup maintained that the female participation declined in selective areas, like cash crop cultivation, largely due to the colonial influence.⁶

Miranda studied Brazilian economy and found that capitalism in dependent countries raises the levels of employment which influenced women more than men. Further she maintains that if industrial capitalism relegate women to the periphery of the economy, the capitalism of the dependent nation makes their position more difficult.⁷

Some feminist scholars are of the view that subordination of women resulted from biological differences and their participation in economic activity is the only solution. They hold that period of dependence after child birth and nursing period made women economically dependent on men for large part of her adult life. Reformists

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⁷ Miranda: Labour Force Participation in Developing Society; the Case Study of Brazil, in, Wellesely, ed. Women and National Development; Complexities of Change. Chicago, University of Chicago, 1977 p. 91
accept women’s economic activity as important for nation’s development and assert that women’s subordination resulted from cultural specific social regulations.\textsuperscript{8}

**Theoretical Models**

Above discussion shows that there is a general acceptance regarding the women’s activity for the development but we do not find any single theoretical model which can capture the diversity of women’s work situation. There are many theoretical models but the existing theories may be categorised into following three parts-

A. **Neo-classical theories**

B. **Segmentation models; and**

C. **Feminist or Radical theories.**

**A. Neo-classical theories** – According to the typical neo-classical approach, based on the balancing of demand and supply in a competitive capitalist economy, workers are paid according to the value of their marginal product. The male-female differences in wages and earnings are thus either due to the lower productivity of women workers or due to imperfections in the labour market. According to neo-classical approach, the factors like family responsibilities, physical strength, education and training, hours of work, absentism and turnover affect the labour productivity and labour supply of women and they account for the male-female differentials in earnings in the labour market. The human capital theory, developed in 1960s, was used by the neo-classicals to strengthen the theoretical foundations of the labour market analysis. Neo-classical theory suggests that women earn less than men because they have lower levels of human capital (mainly education, training and on-the-job experience) and, therefore, lower labour productivity. \textsuperscript{9} This happens because parents and women themselves are not keen to invest in women’s education, training, etc. Further, due to

\textsuperscript{8} Harish: Economic Development and Role of Indian Women. New Delhi, Commonwealth Publishers, 1991 pp. 6-7

marriage, bearing and rearing of children etc., their employment is interrupted. In such a situation employers are also not willing to invest in the training of women. Consequently, women workers acquire lesser experience and training and their skills are lower which account for their lower earnings.

The new home economics approach, emphasizing the time allocation of the household between home production and wage work, also strengthened the basic neoclassical theoretical formulation. According to this approach, the household maximizes its utility, not subject to a simple budget constraint but subject to its production function, a total time constraint. Accordingly, the participation of women in the labour market would be greatly influenced by the family composition – the families allocate their resources (time and money) among family members in a rational manner which causes females to receive less human capital investments when young and stay home to take care of the children when older. Each household member undertakes those activities in which they are more efficient. It men and women are equally efficient in household chores, but men receive higher wages, then men go out to work. Further, a general rise in income might permit women to go out to work since it enables the purchase of labour saving household technology. A rise in the market wage of women vis-à-vis men should have the same impact.

‘The neo-classical approach has been very important in pointing out some of the productivity related differences between men and women which account, at least partially, for the fact that men earn more than women. Indeed, policies to improve the labour market position of women are often based on the need to improve women’s educational levels and training – that is, their human capital. In developing countries, women are generally less well educated than men and this factor may accordingly be more important in these countries than in industrialized countries’.10

However, this theory has been criticized on ground of its unrealistic assumptions. First, it is assumed in the neo-classical approach that women’s labour force participation is of necessity intermittent because of their natural child rearing role.

However, unlike pregnancy and breast feeding, there is no biological reason why the child rearing role must be performed uniquely by the mother. Further, in developing countries, this picture is blurred by the fact that women often are able to share child rearing with other female relatives or domestic servants. Secondly, the assumption of the neo-classical theories that men and women have equal access to job opportunities and compete on an equal basis in the labour market, ignores the sex segmentation of the labour market which cannot be explained simply by sex differences in human capital.11

As a matter of fact, the gender division of labour is a multifaceted and multidimensional concept, but the neo-classical theory captures only one dimension – the opportunity cost of labour in the market. In peasant societies, individual women can rarely be thought to possess freedom of action in the neo-classical economic sense. Social custom and obligation predominate over individual choice and decisions and do not correspond to marginal utility criteria.12

(B) Labour market segmentation theory- Labour market segmentation has been a popular theoretical approach for the study of labour market for the last two decades or so, both in developed and developing countries. Labour market segmentation is essentially a refinement of the neo-classical theories as they view the labour markets as segmented by institutional barriers. A popular and early version of the segmentation model is the dual labour market theory13, which divides labour market into ‘primary’ and ‘secondary’ sectors – the former is relatively better in terms of pay, security and opportunities for advancement, and the latter has relatively inferior jobs with low pay, low security and little possibility of advancement. An unequal distribution of technical progress between modern and traditional sectors has led to highly differentiated productivity growth, leaving the traditional sector labour force in a permanent situation of underemployment, low productivity and poverty. This process sows up in the

11 Ibid P. 9.
segmentation of the labour market with, on one side, the modern sector responsible for a high proportion of total production but a relatively low proportion of total employment, and, on the other, activities of a traditional type, employing the majority of the labour force, but with only a limited contribution total production. This leads to a situation in which workers with equal abilities obtain different incomes, depending upon the production stratum of the enterprises in which they work. There are various models developed with regard to the labour market segmentation and in developing countries these models have been described mostly in the context of economic dualism, and most common expression is in the distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ sectors. Both horizontal and vertical segmentation models have been developed in this context. Horizontal segmentation refers the separation of complete production system, in which all labour has some common characteristics and which may involve a separation by type of enterprise or product, association the labour process within each segment with particular production process. Vertical segmentation, on the other hand, involves the use of labourers from different segments in a single production process.

There are various factors contributing to stratification of labour market – social, economic, institutional – varying from situation to situation. Along with other dimensions, sex also acts as a basis for discrimination against women in the labour market, in the following ways: (i) women have no equal access to the employment; (ii) women get lower wage than man for the same nature of job (iii) they are crowded in a few insecure and lower paid jobs leaving rest of the jobs for male. The predominance of females in the informal sector or ‘secondary’ labour market has been explained in terms of job discrimination. Advanced technology under mature capitalism makes skills firm-specific, so that a worker’s productivity becomes a function of the on-the-job training and experience. The firms need to engage a stable labour force to capture the returns. Since attachment of men’s labour force to a particular job is greater, they fill these jobs. Lower ranked jobs needing lesson-the-job training and experience are filled by minorities and women.¹⁴

While the dual labour market approach helps to explain the occupational distribution of men and women, it does not explain the sex segregation which occurs within the primary and secondary sectors. There are both male and female occupations which involve lengthy schooling, such as engineers and nurses. There are female occupations which require firms-specific training such as executive secretaries and, at the same time, there are male occupations requiring relatively few skills and where stability is not an important factor such as janitor or truck driver.\(^\text{15}\)

Although labour market segmentation theories are powerful techniques of male-female wage differential and discrimination of women in the labour market, they are not able to adequately explain why sex is such a persistent and important dimension for labour market segmentation. The basic cause, as has been pointed out by authors like Arrow (1976),\(^\text{16}\) is probably outside the economic realm. There is certainly the need to take into account the cultural and social factors inherent in the society in this context, as has been done by feminist or radical theories.

(C) Feminist or Radical Theories-There are various versions of this approach, known as feminist or gender or radical theories – it has many divergences and incorporates both marxist and non-marxist approach. The main point of the feminist theories is that the subordinate position of women in the labour market and in the home/family are interrelated, and part of an overall social system in which women are subordinate to men. ‘In order to explain the ‘fit’ between women and inferior jobs, you have to leave the internal dynamics of the labour market and look at the conditions in which women sell their labour power.\(^\text{17}\)

Marxist feminist economists attribute capitalism and patriarchy responsible for lower earning of women. Both are interrelated and cause and effect for each other. In

\(^{15}\)Anker, Richard and Catherine, Hein: opp. Cit. P.11.


patriarchy, the women hold inferior position in family than her man. Man is considered as main bread winner and women responsible for housekeeping. The women may enter labour market if: (i) there is no man to earn in the family, (ii) men may not be able to earn a income which will fulfill family requirements; (iii) the man may not be ready to share his whole income with other family member rationally, leaving women and children at a very low level.

Low income level compel women to join labour market. Since she generally has no required skill to join high yielding, secure and lucrative job, she joins inferior jobs. Low payment and insecure job, keeps her at subordination of her husband. So, they usually behave as labour reserve to be pulled into or pushed out of the labour force at will. Labour reserve consists of various groups of potential workers who are presently not participating in the production process in industry. Three groups are distinguished: the floating reserve, the stagnant reserve and the latent reserve. The floating reserve consists of that section of the labour force in the capitalist industrial sector which is constantly renewed – basically temporarily unemployed workers who are looking for work.\(^{18}\) The latent reserve are in agricultural sector but thrown out of it because of the capitalization of agriculture. The stagnant reserve is the casually and irregularly employed force.\(^{19}\) Reserve army of labour, as Marx has referred, works in two ways. It helps in capital accumulation because women are paid less than their marginal physical productivity, stretching profit margin for a employer and helping in creating of capital and secondly, women are forced to be subjugated by men in family.

Feminist writers have also raised the issue of sexual harassment. Some authors\(^{20}\) argue that in developing countries, sexual harassment may be greater problem than in the developed countries. First, the group of women desperately in need of income (which constitute prime victims for harassment) may be greater in developing countries.


\(^{19}\) Baud, I. S. A.: Forms of Production and Women’s Labour; Gender Aspect of Industrialisation in India and Mexico. New Delhi, Sage publications, 1992 p. 24

\(^{20}\) Ibid. P. 13.
Secondly, in traditional societies, a women leaving the protection of her home in order to take employment is more likely to be perceived as a ‘loose’ women and consequently willing for sexual activity. Thirdly, in contexts where men are not accustomed to interaction with women as workers in an organizational setting, they are likely to fall back on gender based expectations of behavior. It has also been stressed by the feminist that ‘women’s occupations tend to be extensions of domestic roles (such as teaching, housing, cleaning, serving etc.) and just as women’s domestic work is devalued within most societies, so are these occupations and the skills.

The feminist or radical theories point out towards the deeper social and cultural roots of the problem of women’s discrimination in labour market. Though this approach has been criticized as ‘polemical’ and lacking of ‘precision’ of neo-classical and segmentation theories, it is nevertheless a powerful tool of analyzing the realities in the labour market.

We may conclude that feminist or radical theories put emphasis on social and cultural roots of the problem of women’s discrimination in the labour market.

Foregoing discussion reveals that women are in labour market since long. Though, they are not so economically active as their male counter just because they have to be busy in household work also.

The theories reviewed above suggest that sex inequalities in the labour market are related to sex differences in human capital. The structure of labour market and cultural norms decides the status and roles of women in the society.

**Industrialized country model**

Apart from the above theories there are certain important aspects of socio-economic and cultural systems which appear to be vital determinant of the position of women in urban unemployment.

Organisation of work in the modern sectors of developing countries is almost same as in developed countries. This involves formalised working relationships,
relatively large enterprises, protective legislation, specialisation of tasks, a fixed location work and separation of the work place and home.

Boserup is of the opinion that such a model is clearly to the disadvantage of women in almost all societies who have responsibility for child rearing and household chores activities which are difficult to combine with working for long hours outside home. 21 This leads the problems of working married women.

Location of work outside home may be an essential part of modern production and service. Married women could not be able to cope up with the far location stationed work place. It brings hurdle between the family and work. Sometimes they have to quit job due to non-adjustment of location factor.

Protection of women is an important factor which put women on unequal standard of workforce to that of men. This includes measures prohibiting the employment of norms in industry during night, in certain type of jobs i.e. underground work and lifting of heavy weight and other works considered as unfavourable to women and are injurious to their health. Protective measure is being questioned increasingly and has become a form of discrimination against women.22

Due to under representation of women employee in trade union, interests of women employees are not protected equally. Trade unions do not pay attention towards the grievances of women employees rather it perpetuate employment inequalities between men and women in developing countries.23

Management attitudes and practices

These factors have also contributed to the women’s limited access to modern sector employment. Behaviour of employer is discriminating and problematic. In human


22 International Centre for Research on Women; Keeping out Women; A Structural Analysis of Women’s Employment. Washington, USAID, 1980 p. 87

capital theory we find that employers would be said to practice discrimination in recruitment, job assignment, promotions, pay levels etc. Decisions are made on criteria unrelated to productivity factors such as sex and race. Apart from that absenteeism, pregnancy, low level of turnover also goes against the women employees which make their positions low. There are certain jobs whose nature is not found suitable for women.

In such jobs women are not found suitable due to following reasons—women are deemed to lack muscular strength to be less good at supervising and to be inappropriate for jobs where the current staff is male.\(^\text{24}\)

There are also certain factors which put women on low level as compared to male counter parts. Firstly the educational level of women is below than male in developing and under developing countries. Secondly there are cultural restrictions on women. We find that in certain society women are prohibited to mix with male employee. Sexual harassment discourages women in applying in certain jobs. Similarly, cultural restrictions on women’s activities not only restrict the supply of women available for work but also limit the demand for women workers.\(^\text{25}\)

Many of disadvantages which women suffer in the labour market can be traced back to their responsibility for domestic work, children care in particular. This influences the level of abscentism. In case of unmarried women the amount and kind of education received by girls is and also determined by their anticipated future roles as mothers and housewives.\(^\text{26}\)

But we find that in modern age there is sea change in every front including employment. Women have moved towards greater freedom and have been able to achieve greater equality with man both within and outside the home in all sphere of life.


The order of society and even employment trend of new emerging organisations have been replaced by new one in which women increasingly undertakes to fill many roles even in male dominated areas. Women are in top posts and leading organisation more efficiently. The concept of discrimination has taken back seat. Now a day women are provided job of every nature and they do not lag behind in that. Even it is quoted that they take their job seriously than those of their male counterparts. In many countries and in many jobs women have outnumbered men in employment.

Factors leading women to work force

There are various factors which have influenced women to come into workforce. It is true that recent socio-economic and political development has reinforced the existing tendencies and has speared up a trend of long standing. But the circumstances, as far as the employment of women is concerned, can be called ‘artificial’ only in the sense that they have, within a relatively short time, created opportunities which otherwise might have taken much longer to develop. Whenever such opportunities existed, women have neither been slow nor reluctant to make use of them.

As far as opportunities are concerned they may be classified into two groups: external and internal. First one offers a sort of standing invitation to women from outside while next one acts in more indirect way from within.

In first category we may include the opportunities of the existence of a sufficiently wide range of suitable jobs within easy and reasonable reach, good and smooth transportation facilities, provision for the care of children, good training facilities and the possibilities of making arrangements for some of the more time consuming household duties to be taken by the commercial services. The second type of opportunity is created by the increased leisure women enjoy today as a result of spare time in families in urban areas and by invention of new and improved household gadgets.\(^7\)

Apart from the opportunities, there are certain economic and socio-psychological factors which have influenced women a lot to come into workforce. Economists have expressed their views on this issue. Number of factors have led women to come into work force:

Economic need is generally forwarded as the most vital cause of the employment. This economic need per se may be expressed in various facets for married and unmarried women.

Satisfying indispensable needs: The increment to the total income of the family earned by the wife can make it possible to satisfy certain indispensable needs i.e. cloth, housing, medicine etc. This is particular true for the low income families where husband does not contribute significantly to family maintenance. There are several families where girls have to support the family economically. There is no option but to go for employment for the education of siblings and to make family out of starvation. Being elder in the family they cannot escape this responsibility. Here it may be said that economic needs of different class and level may vary.28

Maintenance of standard: Income of the women in family can also contribute to the maintenance of a given external standard. It has been suggested that it our society, with most of the basic necessities provided for, consumption tends to fulfil a status function where couple wants to display a particular high standard in their housing, cloths and leisure habits, the wife also wants to contribute in this economic needs which creates tendency to go for employment.

Realisation of specific consumption goals: The wife’s income can help to realise a specific consumption goal the married couple may want to have a larger flat, their own home, a car, television set, travel abroad etc. Such target saving tends to play a bigger role in the employment need of women. In modern time a large number of

married and unmarried women are going in employment in view of the target saving necessity.\textsuperscript{29}

\textbf{Security of future:} The work of the wife can constitute a form of security for the future, a form of insurance against the risk that husband’s income might drop or discontinue due to divorce, retirement, long term illness, disablement or in case of any causality. In modern age increasing risk of divorce contributes towards the employment need of women.

\textbf{Benefits in future:} In certain cases, the wife may have earned certain benefits through her work participation in earlier work expects certain benefits in future. Thus, even though her income may not be seen in short term but may be fruitful for the family in long term.

\textbf{Influence and respect:} With her own income, wife can perhaps attain a greater measure of influence and respect in the family and society. The working wife is not totally dependent on her husband for support. She administers a proportion of family’s cash income and she achieves the respect accorded to an income earner. In case of unmarried women this case of respect applies even though they do not support family to a greater extent as wife, but derives the respect accorded to an earner.

\textbf{Economic independency:} Employment has made both married and unmarried working women economically independent. Now they do not have to depend upon their husbands or parents for their economic need rather they contribute in the financial need of the family. Employment has made long march in achieving this position easily.\textsuperscript{30}

\textbf{Rising living standard:} The rising standard of living and growing consumption needs have propelled women to go for employment. During last few decades, there has


been a rise in the standard of living as average real income has increased in urban domain. This increase has occurred in most areas of consumption of goods and service by the individual. Persons are hankering not only for quantity but also for quality of goods and services. It has also been found that the need for the standard of individual has increased faster than that of income. This gap of rising standard of living and consumption needs and the rise of income have also compelled women to go for job.31

**Education of children:** The rocketing expense of the education of children has become a problem of the individual. This not only relates to higher education but also to lower level of education. Now a day most of the urban residing persons want to send their children to the best private schools rather than to go government schools. Every person has become of utmost concern for this best education in higher level also. They want to make their children doctor, engineer, M.B.A., MCA, etc. which is the recent trend of education. These types of education involve fat amount. It grows more if children are selected for foreign universities. Guardians are of the view that investment of the present will yield a good income for them. Therefore they go by their enough good education. Burden of such financial needs become a problem for single earner in the family. In view of source circumstances of future women tend to go for employment. This is supported by their husband and family members. Wife and even unmarried sisters do not want to leave stone unturned of home for such circumstances. They want to support family by their income for the future educational prospect of family members.32

**Career ambition:** Now women are more ambitious about their career than ever before. Now they prefer career than marriage because it could offer opportunity in reaching out on higher position. They believe in late marriage for working more and more.33 It has been found generally that marriage has been a hurdle in carrier

31Ibid. P. 8
33Spar, Debora; American Women have it Wrong. Newsweek, October, 2012 p.
enhancement because they have to sacrifice their career opportunity or even employment for the sake of family.

**Upliftment of standard of family:** It has been found that married and unmarried women are more conscious about the upliftment of standard of their family. But due to the inadequate family income they cannot do so. Being able to shifting in job they do not want to miss the opportunity and go for job. They utilize earning for the enhancement of their family standard as they feel this is the additional income. In many cases earner herself spend the income for this purpose. In few cases it has been found that earner spends her income for their standard only.  

**Utilisation of education:** Now women are at par with men in case of education. Parents also pay due attention to their children either they are male or female for education. Educational development of even girls has become a glorious part for parents. Even poor parents send their children to school and are concerned for their future. Virtually, social awareness has paved the way for female education.

In foreign countries female has outnumbered male in higher education. In case of good results also girls are far ahead than that of boys in many disciplines. It is evident that by getting education they want to utilize education, skill and training. Hence women are entering more and more in employment.

**Utilisation of leisure:** The concept of joint family is disintegrating. Nuclear family has emerged especially in urban areas. In such families after sending children to school and husband to employment, women seek place to utilize leisure hours. The best suitable way of utilization of leisure hour is the employment. In families where young educated girls are there, they do not want to seat at home to get bore or waiting for marriage. In the meantime they utilize their hour by going for employment.

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34 Khan, Gopa: Migrants Return to India. World of Work. No. 73, Dec., 2011 p.
35 Kapur, Promila: Changing Status of Women in India. Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1979 p. 3
36 Arora, poonam: Professional Women; Role and Conflicts. Opp. Cit. P. 111
Matrimonial prospects: Employment improves the matrimonial prospects. Now a day employed boys and their parents prefer employed girls. They not only prefer this type of bride for social status but also for economic enhancement of family.\textsuperscript{37}

Encouragement of parents: Encouragement of parents and older family members has made a social environment for women to go in job. Parents occupy a unique and critical place in the life of young children. Their support become the beacon light in building the career and job opportunities. They find proper education and explore the employment opportunity. Educated parents are encouraging more for good and regulate action. Persons living in metropolis and big cities have tendencies to encourage their young daughter to go for job. Apart from parents majority of other relatives also favour girls to take up job.\textsuperscript{38}

Equal rights and status: Women now want equal rights and equal status for them. They are of the opinion that these may be received by going them into employment. The employment brings to them the happiness and satisfaction, emotional and intellectual satisfaction, occasion of self expression and to have social relationships.\textsuperscript{39}

We generally find that in most of the cases a number of motivations work at a time. Some may be more important while others may be less. The motivation might change with the passage of time. Women might take up a job for the economic reasons, but she may continue even after the same factor is no longer relevant.

\textsuperscript{37} McNally, Fino: Women for Hire; A Study of Female office worker. London, Macmillan Press Ltd. 1971 pp.10-11

\textsuperscript{38} Young, R. A. et al.: The Joint Action of Parents and Adolescents in Conversation about Career. The Career Development Quarterly, 46(1) 2007 pp. 72-73

\textsuperscript{39} Sinha, Pushpa: Role Conflict Among Working Women. Patna, Janaki Prakashan, 1987 p.18
Employment and Economic Status

Employment of women has gone a long way in enhancing the economic status of women in the family and social life. It provides economic status due to their earning capacity. Employment has made women economically independent. They are no longer dependent for the economic support of their parents or husband rather they come as to support on time. 40

Women were in secondary position since long. They were treated as second citizen in the society. But employment has made road map for changing status in the modern society. They work not only for self psychological satisfaction but also for economic gain which is breaking the traditional status of women in society. Though employment has put them in stress and family conflict yet they are not lagging behind in taking up the job. 41

In case of unmarried women employment has made them superior. Now guardians of unmarried women are encouraging their daughters to go for job. This not only brings social respect but also economic gain for the family. Now a day employed girls are being preferred by grooms as well by parents for enhancement of economic condition of the family apart from the social respect. This is why employed girls are being more considered for marriage. This is only due to their employment. 42

Employed women have more autonomy of expenditure. As known their income is additional for the family. Hence they use it for family members of their own. More money is spent on health and education of their children. In case of unmarried women,

41 Kapur, Promila : Changing Status of Working Women in India. Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1974 p. 3
more amount is spend on health of their parents and sibling, which were early a bit neglected areas especially in middle and low income group.\textsuperscript{43}

Employment has enhanced their economic status in case of drop in husband’s income, retirement, long term illness or in case of any casuality in the family. In such conditions their income has its own importance, which brings family out of starvation.\textsuperscript{44}

Thus employment provides economic status to women (in family and society).

**Empowerment of women**

Economic status has empowered them as bold decision maker in the family.\textsuperscript{45}

Economic status empowers working women for decision making. Family members provide them due weight while taking decision in family matters and even in financial matters.

Decision making is a process by which a source of action is consciously choosen from available alternatives. It is an established fact that roles go with status and decision making goes with roles. It has been found that impact of women’s education has increased their competence to participate in decision making and even to have final say in certain cases. Employment has further reinforced their competence in contribution to economic resources. It is clearly evident from emerging changes in the pattern of relative dominance and segregated pattern of decision making by shared patterns.\textsuperscript{46}


\footnotesize\textsuperscript{44}Bathstrom, Edmund and Laljistrom , Rita : The Family and Married Women at Work. In, Dahlstrom, Edmund. ed.: The Challenging Roles of Men and Women. London, Gerald Dulkworth co., Ltd. 1967 p. 27

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{45}Ibid. P. 39

There is a large spectrum of decision making power of women. Family budgeting, purchase of consumer durables, children’s education, health and family size are some of the issues in which they exert their decision making power. Apart from that they are new taking part in the decision of investment, saving, borrowing, purchase of home, construction of house etc.  

Some of the studies have proved that employed women exercise greater degree of power in decision making in financial matter apart from general family decision. In western countries it is higher among women with prestigious occupations, committed women to work and salaried more than husband.

Empowerment of women in decision making due to employment and education is not only in upper class society but also in middle and lower class society. Working married/ unmarried women exerts more influence in decision making than non-working women in general and financial matters.

It has been found that urban family is changing fast. Industrialisation, education and urbanization have influenced a lot to modern family structure. Young men and women are migrating to urban areas to seek their livelihood. This new type of family consists of wife, husband and their unmarried children only. Married and unmarried women are entering into labour force due to their higher education. Various socio-economic and psychological factors have led women into employment market in urban areas. The joint family is decaying and substituted by nuclear family. Nuclear family has given more freedom and autonomy to young couple. Educational opportunity and entry into employment has become more than ever before. It has made women

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economically independent. It has given them self-respect in family. They are exercising their say in economic and family decisions. In joint family elders were in final position but transition of family from joint to nuclear has weaken their position. People of old generation now do not want to take conflict with younger generation on decision making of the family and economic matters. Due to education, industrialisation, employment and nuclearisation of family, women have emerged as a new benevolent dictator and exercise much greater authority than before. Despite increased duty, the urban women seem to have emerged as a stronger partner in decisions making of education of children and size of family, are the focal domain of women’s decisions. Apart from that they take decisions with their husband in all the crucial family and economic matters.\textsuperscript{51}

**Family Conflict**

The women of modern world has opted for new horizons and paths to satisfy her quest for independence, utilisation of education and training, self expression and creativity. She strives to be economically and psychologically independent and attain her own social status, leading to harmonious family existence. This takes her towards acquisition of everything that male used to achieve for themselves. This new lifestyle and pattern acquired to accommodate the dreams and hopes of women is at variance with the conventional social norms.\textsuperscript{52}

With the entrance of women into labour market, there have been definite changes with regards to established norms, position and status. They have progressed and reached new paradigms. This new role is addition to the age old assigned role of bearing and rearing of children and management of domestic and household responsibilities. This is why they have been confronted with the family conflict due to consequences of role conflict.\textsuperscript{53}

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\textsuperscript{52} Arora, poonam: Professional Women; Family Conflicts and Stress. Opp. Cit. P. 1
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid. P.2
\end{flushleft}
Role of conflict is the term which denotes the situations which arise due to simultaneous occupancy of two positions by an actor. These situations may arise from variety of circumstances and the contexts in which the role is performed. Thus role conflict is concerned with the problems for the individual which arise as a result of role incompatibilities.54

Lewin has formulated three situations of role conflict. Firstly, in which two incompatible tendencies are evoked simultaneously and since the individual cannot go both the ways at a time, the situation may produce deviant response. This is called approach conflict. In such conflict, a single situation or object has both positive as well as negative characteristics, and individual due to this situation, is suspended motionless.55

Secondly is the evidence conflict in which individual remains between two objects or situations, both of which elicit evidence tendencies. Such situation leads to withdrawal.

Third situation is called double approach evidence. According to Hovland and sears (1938)56 several distinct tendencies of approach and avoidance may be elicited by the different aspects of situations with two objects or situations involved, if the affecting and repelling features of both situations or objects are equal that will result conflict.

The family conflict pertains to the third situational setting of problems where women want to remain an employee and to carry out the domestic responsibilities as well.

56Hovland, C. I. and Sears, R.R.: Experiments of Mortar Conflict; Type of Conflict and Modes of Resolution. Journal of Experimental Psychology, 1938 p. 477
It has been found that role conflicts may be disruptive and tension indulging with each of the affects both for the role occupants and the organisation of which individual is the member. It may impact role performance and competence of individual.\textsuperscript{57}

Family conflict is also sometimes contributed by economic factors. Such conflict was found in those families, where full income of the earner, are taken away by the guardians. Such conflict also arises where working women misutilize their income. In such condition they are confronted with their guardians.

Time factor also functions as a source of family conflict. As a traditional role woman is responsible for the house hold work. This also applies for the married women. A married woman has to manage in terms of time both household and job responsibilities. Both roles have to be done within specified time frame. But both the responsibilities drag women towards their side to be finished. But that could not be easily possible. Sometimes for going office working women have to face sleep deprivation. They have to get up early to finish household chores and to go to office on time.

But in case of unmarried women there is some relaxation. They usually do not perform all the household chores and hence have less family conflict. In few cases unmarried women have to do all the household chores as there is no other female member in the family. But such cases are few and far between.\textsuperscript{58}

The working mother’s role is widely regarded as a classic conflict situation in developing countries. Since employment of women is in growing stage in India though it has come to a stagnated stage in western countries, this is why no fixed pattern or distribution of role of women in terms of changed context has yet to be achieved.

\textsuperscript{57}Khan, R. L. et. al.: Organisational Stress; Studies in Role Conflict and Ambiguity. New York, John Willey, 1969 p. 17

\textsuperscript{58}Chakravaraty, K.: Some Variables in Role Conflict Analysis; The Case of Middle Class Working Mothers. Indica, 1(22) 1977 pp. 40-47
Neither working wives nor their husbands and other relatives nor society in general are clear or definite about their roles. At present women’s role and position have not been defined and these situation leads to family conflict causing tension in working women, their husbands and children including relatives. Women of today are assuming different roles beside the role at home. In the role relationship term married women is a wife, mother, daughter in law, neighbour, employee, peers and so on. But for unmarried working women such varience of roles are not there. It is obvious that working women will have more family conflict than unmarried working women as there are a lot of differences of expectations from both occupants.

Family conflict is a universal phenomenon. It is prevalent not only in India but also in developed and developing countries. It is also prevalent in all types of societies but varies in degree as per time, place and society. In western countries a large number of women in employment experience significant conflicts between their roles as workers, wives, mothers, daughters and family care takers, all of them which they were expected to play role simultaneously.

These concurrent demands caused many working women to suffer from dual conditions. Role overload results in strains and family conflict. Mothers with well paying jobs, addressed the conflict of role overload and role strain due to motherhood.

Employed women in western countries also have to face family conflict due to dual role mainly in three major areas.

a. Time bound conflict- time spent on activities within one role cannot be devoted to activities in another role. Consequently peoples with multi roles have to face time conflict.

b. Strain based conflict- this conflict exists when strain in one role effect one’s performance in another role.\textsuperscript{63} and

c. Behaviour based conflict- people with multi roles are unable to adjust their behaviours to role expectations.\textsuperscript{64}

In American countries sometimes conflict arises between husband and wife because of wife’s increased autonomy and more earning of wife than husband. More earning has been a source of conflict as it makes them superior in the family and domination in economic decision of the family.\textsuperscript{65}

Female faculty numbers facing work and family conflict is not new to USA. Several studies refer that academic work as something suitable for those who do not have young children. Faced with work and family conflicts, women are adopting several strategies to cop up with the situations.\textsuperscript{66}

In United Kingdom women’s participation in work force has instead concentrated on constraints arising from domestic sphere. This type of the family conflict arises due to attitude of husbands towards children and their relatives. This


\textsuperscript{63} Jackson, L. D.: Reflections on Obstacles and Opportunities; Suggestions for Improving the Retention of Professional Women. Women’s Studies in Communication, 3 (2) 2008 pp. 2006-7


\textsuperscript{65} Nye, F. I. and Hoffman, L. W.: Employed Mothers in America. Chicago, Rand McNally & Co., 1963 p. 64

\textsuperscript{66} Aluko, Y. A.: Work, Family Conflict and Coping Strategies Adopted by Women in Academia. Gender and Behaviour, 7 (1) 2009 pp. 20-23
conflict is mostly responsible due to child rearing. Children feel rejected due to paucity of emotional support of the mother.\textsuperscript{67}

Work and family conflict exists in developing countries too. Some of the scholars conducted studies on bank employees of Nigeria and found that due to having conflict even unmarried women postpone working. Many married working women feel to work when they have more free time.\textsuperscript{68}

In modern age there is sea change in every front including employment. Women have moved towards greater freedom and have been able to achieve greater equality with men both within and outside the home in all sphere of life. The order of the society and even employment trend of new emerging organisations have been replaced by new one in which women increasingly undertakes to fill many roles even in male dominated areas. Women are on top posts and leading organisations efficiently. The concept of discrimination has taken back seat. Now a day women are being provided job of every nature and they do not lag behind in that. Even it is quoted they take seriously their job than those of their male counterpart. In many countries and in many jobs women have outnumbered men.

The real intent, not co-incidence, is the reason women are taking greater responsibility. In many private sectors red carpet is lying for women professionals. Fast tracking their career growth and building a pipeline of candidates who have taken senior managerial roles. Private sectors and government sectors are giving high priority to women candidates by viewing women’s better proficiency in many fields.\textsuperscript{69} Not only in foreign countries but also on our country women have reached 40% in IT sector and MNC’s. They are attracting and grooming women managers in leadership roles. Gender diversity is scoring high for head honcos. In many companies it is proven that there is

\textsuperscript{67}Ibid. Pp. 24-29

\textsuperscript{68}Stainfield, J. B.: Research on Wife/Mother Role; Strain in Dual Career Families. American Journal of Economics and Sociology, 44(3) Jly., 1985 pp355-57

focus on women which has positive impact on business. There is large bucket of gender diversity in companies are attracting women, retaining and engaging women and growing the high potentials.\(^{70}\)

**Plan of the study**

This study has been divided into six chapters. First chapter deals with the introduction of the study. Second chapter presents literature review and methodology. Third chapter puts focus on work participation of women in India and Bihar. Fourth chapter provides the scenario of work participation of women in Patna. Fifth chapter is result and discussion. Sixth chapter deals with the summary, conclusion and suggestions of study.