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STATUS, ROLE ADJUSTMENT AND ROLE CONFLICT OF WORKING WOMAN IN FAMILY: A STUDY OF SCHOOL TEACHERS

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Abstract

With the attainment of education and economic freedom educated women become conscious of their individual identity - the independent status. But there is a great discrepancy between the idealised concept of women and the real life situation in India which women find them-selves. The issuesaffecting women's status in India is vast, complex and dynamic. Change in the status of women is a long term aspect of our social progress. The role conflicts of working women result to a great extent from the cleavage between the new social and economic goals (education and employment) and the rigid social structure, above the family structure, which stands in the way of a realisation of these goals. As per norm the family role of woman have priority before all other role. Various factors like a busier working day, wider areas of social interaction and experience and an independent income have some significant consequences on the status, behaviour pattern and the life styles of employed women. This paper is an endeavour to make sociological study of status, role adjustment and role conflict of working women of selected secondary school teachers.

Key Words: Status, Role Adjustment, Role Conflict, Working Woman



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Introduction

The role conflicts of working women result to a great extent from the cleavage between the new social and economic goals (education and employment) and the rigid social structure, above the family structure, which stands in the way of a realisation of these goals. The deviant behaviour of women in the one as well as in the other case is determined by the chasm between structure and institution on the one hand and new social goal on the other. In a situation of conflicting, legitimate and institutionalised role expectation, social sanction and with that social control are eroded which ought to lead to social change(Parsons ,1967). Then one hand role conflict can be seen as to be very important as a sort of motivation leading to social change, through some sort of undermining of the motivational basis of an established

order which includes the provision of motivationally acceptable alternatives. The contradictions in the social system itself manifest such role conflicts, which lead to social change.In concrete individual cases the conflicting role expectations which Indian middle class women face are put forward by the persons who are of decisive importance in their family role set. The most important role senders for women are those who have authority in the family: father, mother, husband, parents-in-law, possibly also brother-and sister-in law. In nuclear households, mainly fathers and husbands are the decisive role senders for the women. They represent the family system externally and watch that the women do not deviate from the culturally accepted norms of behaviour. When a woman shows non-confirming behaviour, the negative sanctions of larger society are first directed towards these role senders. On the other side are the women with their educational and professional wishes. They want to fulfil their individual ambitions and desires. However, there is not always a clear opposition between the expectations of the father and the daughter. The expectations of the father are by no means unambiguous, rather they result from an ambivalent motivation. The father also recognises the daughter's right to have an education, the husband would also like to have an educated and progressive wife. The difference between the women and their role senders is not so much in the difference of their expectations as in the priorities, which they confer on the various roles of women. For fathers and husbands the family role of woman have priority before all other role, which she may take up. Role conflicts will not become manifest as long as the woman agrees to subordinate all other roles to the dominant family roles, e.g. as long as she subordinates her education to the role expectation "marriage", as long as she does not put her career above her duties as housewife, wife and mother. As soon as the woman does not recognise the unconditional primacy of the family roles, but presses her extra-familial activities independently of these roles, open conflicts between the woman and her role senders are bound to emerge. The father's scale of priorities is usually oriented towards the needs of family that of the daughter towards her own needs as an individual. Although the content of the expectants of the daughter is different from these of the father, still she does not cherish any which does not also appear in the father's scale. She has only a different order of priorities.

The discrepancy between the "student" and "working woman" roles and the "family roles" of the woman is not caused, as can be seen from the above scale of priorities, by fundamental differences in the role expectations. To a great extent both sets of expectations run parallel to each other. Education is not only considered important for the personality development of a girl but it is at the same time functional for her marriage prospects.

However, there is a latent conflict in the educational expectation. Women's education occupies a high position in the value system of Indian middle class. The same is true with regard to professional activities of the women. But for many educated Indian girls working is an independent social status.

We can locate the beginning of the role conflict situation of studying and working Indian women at around the 22nd year of her life. If a woman is still unmarried after this age, then with growing age and rising educational and professional status she is deviating more and more from culturally prescribed norm of marriage. If she is married, then her extra family roles come into conflict with the family roles. Since more and more women are continuing study and work after marriage, as we see, they inevitably land in this conflict situation. The most intense role conflicts of unmarried women occur between their 25th and 30th years of life. The individual striving after even higher educational qualifications and after higher social status can prove to be disruptive to the established family order and lead to tensions between the woman and her main role senders. For the married woman the variable age does not play a decisive role any more, but educational status and professional status do. If her education and her job position are better than that of her husband, the possibility of role conflicts grows. In her case are added the contradictory expectations, which she faces as housewife and mother on the one hand and as student and working woman on the other. One can imagine that the role conflicts of married women are most intensive in the first years of marriage when the children are small and not yet going to school.

Adjustment' is the 'satisfaction' and 'smooth switch over from one status to another' (Akthar and Pestonjee, 1963).Good adjustment is achieved primarily through a balance between the 'expected' and 'enacted' roles. When the role-playing individual attaches more value to one particular role than expected/demanded of that role, the 'role counter' does not appreciate it and this leads to role conflict. Adjustment is the balance performance of all roles in confirmatory with the role demands. When a person is able to make a smooth switch over from one role to another and his role behaviour is in consonance with the role expectations, and his role does not obstruct the performance of another's role, the person succeeds in integrating the various roles into an ordered sequence of roles leading to adjustment. One may say that when role-strain resulting from over-demanding role obligations is curtailed by applying role-strain reducing and reconciling mechanisms, satisfaction is enhanced and adjustment secured.

Review of Literature

The relevant literature on the topic of research has been reviewed while formulating the research objectives and it would identify the research gap filled up in the form of present study. The history of sociological studies in India has been quite characteristically marked, till recently, by their preoccupation with the major social components of the Indian social structure, namely, village, caste and joint family, certain other equally important areas of sociological inquiry, viz. Role, Status, Social movement, intellectuals, professions and the like had remained less explored. The exploration of the in the Role and status of Indian Woman, is sociologically meaningful. It is necessary to understand and explore in the context of the modern Indian society. As regards to this quite a few insightful studies are available now. Those who have chosen "Indian Intellectuals" in general, as a theme of their writings include both professional sociologists and free-lance writers. Edward Shils (1961); I.P. Desai(1965); T.B. Bottomore (1974); Nirad Choudhari(1967); Akhileswar Jha(1977) and H.C. Srivastava (1978) are some to name. Their writings are mostly impressionistic or of a review type. However certain studies by Parsons, Talcott, (1967); Akthar, S.S. and Pestonjee D.M., (1963); Schneiders, A.A., (1960), Jethani, Urmilla, (1994); Blood, R.O. Jr. & HamblinR.L(1960); Srivastava, Vinita, (1978); Jain, Sashi, (1988) are related to the status, role and adjustment .The field of sociological study of female teachers; still continues to be a relatively less researched area.

Objectives of the Study:

The main aim of the present study is to probe in to status of working women with reference to school teachers and their role performance. The study has been under taken with the following objectives:

- To know the socio-economic characteristics of the school teachers.
- To study the role adjustment & role conflicts of the working women with reference to school teachers.

In the following we examine the hypothesis that Women teachers have to face role-conflict in family life and this role conflicts of working women lead or have led to social change not only in the sphere of manifest behaviour but moreover in the sphere of consciousness and basic social structures.

Research Methodology

The present study was based on both primary and secondary data. Secondary data were collected from different publications and websites. The present study aimed at studying the

role and status of Secondary School female teachers of Pauri District of Uttarakhand state. The universe selected for this purpose covered the female teachers of the secondary schools spread over three major towns of Pauri District of Uttaranchal-Pauri, Kotdwar and Srinagar.Further with a view to make the work manageable selected schools of these three towns were considered. There are mainly three categories of schools such as: State Government Schools, Central Schools and Private Schools like missionary and aided schools. Using the stratified random technique, a sample of 250 female teachers, 68 from Srinagar,60 from Pauri and 122 from Kotdwar were selected as respondents of the study. To make the sample representative one and also with the view to make further inquiry more fruitful and meaningful certain procedural precautions were needed to be taken at the level of selection of sample. Care was taken that the teachers so selected represented almost all the categories of the schools of the three towns run by government authorities, and private management. The two complementary methods of investigations — the questionnaire and the interview — were adopted to collect the necessary data for this research. After carefully collecting the data, the investigator processed them for the purpose of analysis and interpretation. The data having been divided into homogenous group with the help of coding, these facts have been tabulated to present a condensed and concise picture of the whole situation. Keeping in view the requirements of the results to be drawn, univariate and multivariate tables have been prepared. From the furnished tables, various conclusions have been reached with the help of statistical methods of analysis and interpretation.

Results and Discussion

Individual's socio-economic background have a great deal to do with making up of her basic personality structurewhich has impact on her professional and family role-playing and adjustment. Distribution of sample respondents in terms of their Age ,Marital Status,Husband's Education & Occupation and respondent's salary in relation to their husband's salary are shown in Tables 1 to 6.

Age is one of the important variables in the understanding of woman's status in society. With change in age the woman's status and role also changes. Moreover, age signifies experience. The following table shows the distribution of teachers in the sample according to their age group.

Table No. 1 Age Distribution of Respondents

	Govt.	Schools	Priva	te Schools	Total	
Age	No	of %	No	of %	No	of %
Group	Respon	nde	Respo	onde	Respor	nde
	nts		nts		nts	
20-25	02	2.10	21	13.50	23	09.20
Years						
26-30	15	15.8	15	09.70	30	12.00
Years		0				
31-35	11	11.6	24	15.50	35	14.00
Years		0				
36-40	27	28.5	29	18.70	56	22.40
Years		0				
41-45	25	26.3	28	18.10	53	21.20
Years		0				
46-50	09	09.4	18	11.60	27	10.80
Years		0				
Above50	06	6.30	20	12.90	26	10.40
Years						
Total	95	100.	155	100.00	250	100.00
		00				

Source: Primary study

As it is reflected from the table, bulk of the respondents in the present study belong to middle aged (31-40) with 36.40 percent, followed by older generation from age 41-50 with 32 percent and a relatively with 32 percent relatively small percentage of them are from younger age group of 21-30 with 21.20 percent. From the angle of age, in the present sample, each generation is represented and the middle-aged group is dominant group. In the analysis of the age group between respondents of the private school and government school; it is found that the younger generation of the age group 20-25 is much more in private school in comparison to government school. As per marital status, 207 (82.8 %) respondents, out of these 250, are married. Of the 207 married respondents, eight are widows and three are divorcees. Most of the respondents thus are having family responsibilities.

Table No. 2 Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Govt. Schools		Private Schools		Total	
Status	No of Respondents	%	No of Respondents	%	No of Respondents	%
Married	81	85.30	115	74.20	196	78.40
Unmarried	10	10.50	33	21.30	43	17.20
Widow	03	03.20	05	03.20	08	03.20
Divorcee	01	01.00	02	01.30	03	01.20
Total	95	100.00	155	100.00	250	100.00

Source: Primary data

Husband's education and occupation

An educated husband presumably has a wider and clearer understanding as to what his wife's interests and concerns are. An intelligent, co-operative and moderately admiring husband would be an asset for the intellectual. The data collected show that most of the respondents have adequately educated spouses. 61.2 percent of the teachers have life partners educated upto P.G. level and further 10.2 percent of have doctorate degree. The spouses of 14.3 percent of respondents have obtained professional qualification. Only 14.3 percent spouses are educated upto graduation level. It is found that most of the respondent's husbands are engaged in urban occupation. Maximum 31.6 percent of respondent's husband are engaged in government service, which is followed by 18.9 percent in private services. 18.4 percent of husbands are engaged in business. 24.5 person of respondent's husbands are from teaching profession, out of which 10.2 are university and college teachers, due to the location of the university in the study area. Only in the 6.6 percent population, the husbands are engaged in the different profession like doctors, engineers, banking, etc. To sum up, it can be said that the nature of the occupation followed by the respondent's husbands is typical of the middle class people in India.

Table No.3 Education Attainment of Spouses

Level of	Govt. Scho	ools	Private Sc	hools	Total	
Education	No of	%	No of	%	No of	%
	Responde		Responde		Respond	
	nts		nts		ents	
Upto Graduate	10	12.4	18	15.6	28	14.3
		0		0		0
Post Gradaute	55	67.9	65	56.5	120	61.2
		0		0		0
Professional	10	12.4	18	15.6	28	14.3
Degree		0		0		0
Ph. D.	06	07.3	14	12.3	20	10.2
		0		0		0
Total	81	100.	115	100.	196	100.
		00		00		00

Table No. 4 Husband's Occupation

Occupation	Govt. Schools No of % age		Private Schools No of % age		Total No of % age	
	Responden		Responden		Responden	
	ts		ts		ts	
Businessmen	14	17.30	22	19.10	36	18.40
Government	37	45.60	25	21.70	62	31.60
Services						
Private Service	10	12.40	27	23.50	37	18.90
School teachers	12	14.80	16	13.90	28	14.30

University/colle	05	06.20	15	13.00	20	10.20
ge teachers						
Other	03	03.70	10	08.80	13	06.60
professions	0.5	03.70	10	00.00	10	00.00
*						
Total	81	100.0	115	100.0	196	100.0
		0		0		0

Table No. 5 Respondents Salary and Husband's Salary of Government Schools

Responden	15000	250	3500	4500	550	Abo	Tota	% age
t's Salary	-	01-	1-	1-	01-	ve	1	
	25000	350	4500	5500	650	6500		
		00	0	0	00	0		
6000-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10000								
10001-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14000								
14001-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18000								
18001-	06	01	-	01	-	-	08	09.9
22000								
22001-	18	14	02	01	01	-	36	44.4
26000								
26001-	07	19	02	-	-	01	29	35.4
30000								
Above	-	06	01	-	-	01	08	09.9
30000								
Total	31	40	05	02	01	02	81	
% age	38.2	49.4	06.2	02.5	01.2	02.5		100.0

Table No. 6 Respondents Salary and Husband's Salary of Private Schools

Respond ent's	15000	2500 1-	35001- 45000	4500 1-	5500 1-	Abo ve	Tot al	% age
Salary	25000	3500	12000	5500	6500	650		480
~ ······ j		0		0	0	00		
6000-	08	15	-	02	01	01	27	23.5
10000								
10001-	11	23	01	04	01	01	41	35.7
14000								
14001-	-	04	06	04	01	01	16	13.9
18000								
18001-	08	03	01	-	-	01	13	11.3
22000								
22001-	01	07	-	-	-	-	08	07.0
26000								
26001-	01	02	02	-	-	-	05	04.3
30000								
Above30	-	02	03	-	-	-	05	04.3
000								
Total	29	56	13	10	03	04	115	
% age	25.2	48.7	11.3	08.7	02.6	03.5		100.
								0

Source: Primary data

The table clearly reveals that most of the respondents' husbands possess middle class and lower middle class economic background.

Consistency between Occupational Prestige of Husbands and Wives

By virtue of a common domicile and a common way of life, all the members of a family form one single status unit. Unmarried children and the wife derive their socio-economic status from the earning head of the family. For our analytical purpose here, it is the crux of the problem that a married woman's socio-economic status is determined by her husband's occupational class position. Almost the whole range of her social activities is directly influenced by the class position of the man whose wife she is? The pattern of her social participation would reflect the tendency to meet people and make friends from a similar prestige group.

Occupational consistency is achieved if married women would be working in jobs which have similar or slightly lower prestige than that of their husbands' occupational prestige. If the proposition of occupational consistency between spouses holds good then it can be also expected that at each socio-economic level, more adjustment exists between them. In modern urban societies where most of the social positions are achieved, it has been found that the occupation of an individual is highly co-related with his 'social placement' by members of the same community. The occupational distribution of the spouses of the respondents in the sample clearly indicates high concentration along one point. Comparison of respondent's occupation with their husband's occupation shows that most of them are working at highly consistent level (Table No. 4). There has been a positive correlation between the educations of spouses of the respondents (Table No. 3). Here highly consistent has been operationally defined as when the husband and wife's occupations fall either exactly on the same level or just one level higher or lower. Teachers in Government schools belong to class III. Their income and grade are equivalent to the government servants at clerks, cashiers, junior officers and Technical Staff, etc. and supervisory, executive in the lower and middle management in private sectors. As seen from the Table No. 4 there is a high degree of occupational consistency between husband and wife. The education and income of the respondents and their spouses are identified in most of the cases as shown in Table No.5 and 6. As shown in Table No. 4, 20 respondents have university/college teacher husbands. Even in this case, since both husband and wife are engaged in teaching, their occupational positions are quite consistent with each other. Since teaching occupation is highly approved area for women to work, it may not disturb the prestige consistency of the family also.

Role Adjustment and Status of Women in Family

Recent changes in the family organisation, education and independence of woman have affected and brought some changes in the status and role of woman as a wife in her

family of in-laws. In an overall majority of the cases nuclear family, that is, households consisting of only husband, wife and their off spring are the most common type of family of the respondents. Working women are less likely to be living in the joint families. Because of their employment, these women would become more independent in their outlook. They like to have a greater say in the family matters and this make them less tolerant of their in-laws.

Table No. 7 Husband's Favour at Conflict in Relation to Family Members

Husband's	No.	of %age
Attitude	Respondents	
Judicious	107	54.6
Non interference	41	20.9
Favour of wife	48	24.5
Total	196	100.00

55 percent of respondents say that their husbands used to take a judicial view and have a balancing role in different situations of conflict between members of his family. 21 percent respondent's husbands do not interfere in those situations and husbands of 24 percent respondents use to favour their wives. This is a measure of change in the traditional attitude, as they are equally judicious to both.

Sharing of the Household Responsibilities of Husband and wife

As a consequence of their employment women are likely to become more independent and demanding. This may alter the usual division of labour between husband and wife according to which it is the wife's responsibilities to take care of the household chores whereas the husband provides subsistence for the family. In modern family the onerous of the responsibility for conducting the household affairs is not upon the shoulders of husband or wife alone, but it is increasingly shared by both and the other members of the family as well. The role of husband, wife and other members are not segmental but are becoming diffused. So far as the management of the family budget is concerned it is found when the wife is working there is greater amount of sharing of responsibility between husband and wife. The data from the table show that as many as 50.5 percent of respondents jointly managed their budget with their husbands.

Table No. 8 Persons who manage the Budget in the Family

Person who mange the budget in	No. o	f Percentage
family	Respondents	
Wife	51	26
Husband	46	23.5
Both husband and wife	99	50.5
Total	196	100.00

Source:Primary data

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As many as 26 percent of respondents are managing their family budget alone and more or less in equal proportion of husbands do this task alone in the families. Similarly when the wife is employed, in a much higher proportion of cases both husband and wife cooperate in the matter of family shopping.

Table No. 9 Persons who do the monthly Shopping in the Family

Person who do the monthly shopping	No.	of	Percentage
in the family	Respondents		
Wife	46		23.5
Husband	38		19.4
Both Husband and Wife	104		53.1
Others	8		4.0
Total	196		100.0

Source: Primary data

More than 53 percent of the respondents do shopping together with their husbands, whereas 23.5 percent respondents and 19.4 percent of husbands do it alone. One of the plausible explanations for this kind of relationship may be that there is greater co-operation and mutual help in two income families. Normally working women has comparatively less time to devote to the family. In such a situation the husband uses to extend a helping hand to his wife, which is confirmed by the data in the table.

Table No. 10 Differentiation and Diversification of Roles in Household Chores

Household	Responde	Husba	Husban	Serva	Othe	Tot
Chores	nts	nd	d &	nt	rs	al
			Wife			
Cooking	134		32	08	22	196
(percentage)	(68.4)		(16.3)	(4.1)	(11.2)	(100
)
Cleaning	54		16	116	10	196
(percentage)	(27.5)		(8.2)	(59.2)	(5.1)	(100
)
Childcare	100		44	34	18	196
(percentage)	(51.0)		(22.5)	(17.3)	(9.2)	(100
)
Recreation for	72	34	42	32	16	196
children	(36.8)	(17.3)	(21.4)	(16.3)	(8.2)	(100
(percentage))
Reception of	20	22	142		12	196
guest	(10.2)	(11.2)	(72.5)		(6.1)	(100
(percentage))
Participation in	26	34	128		08	196
Social	(13.3)	(17.3)	(65.3)		(4.1)	(100
Function)
(percentage)						

Source:Primary data

As seen from the table cooking generally has been done by the housewife. Grown up children, especially girls, in-laws and husbands also help the respondents in this work. As

regards to the cleaning of the utensils are concerned in 59.2 percent of cases the servants have to clean utensils. Childcare is one of the important roles performed by the women. But in modern families and especially in nuclear families, where the housewives have diverse roles to perform, the responsibility of increasingly being shared by her husband, servants and other members of the family. In 22.5 percent this responsibility is shared by their husbands and in some cases of joint families mother-in-laws also shared their responsibility. Similarly, in case to fulfil the recreational need of the children, here also the husbands share the responsibility of arranging recreation for their children as the wives are busy in household duties. In modern and educated family, both husband and wife are expected to receive the guest together. In this case, nearly 72.5 percent of respondents tell that both of them use to receive the guest and in absence of any one of them, either husbands or wives have to attend the guest personally. As regards to the participation in social functions, nearly 65 percent of respondents have to participate in social functions together with their husbands. But sometimes respondents and their husbands have to attend some of the functions individually as these functions use to be related to their working career. Probably this kind of sharing of domestic work by the husbands is one of the important reasons of the balance of the power in the family with working wives. In case, however, husbands are doing the domestic works against their wish then it may influence husband-wife interpersonal relationship and it may reflect in their attitude. And overall majority of the respondents feels that as a consequence of their employment there is no conflict of authority between husband and wife.

Table No. 11 If there is Conflict of Authority between Husband and Wife for the Working of Wife

Type of response	No. respondents	of Percentage
Strongly Agree	02	01.0
Agree	28	14.3
Disagree	104	53.0
Strongly Disagree	62	31.7
Total	196	100.00

Source:Primary data

In response to question whether they feel that if wives work there is conflict of authority between the spouses, nearly 85 percent respondents express disagreement with it. The reason why such a large proportion of the respondents do not feel any problem of adjustments in their interpersonal relationship with their husbands lie in the fact that they have not experienced such difficulties. Husbands of the respondents use to share their

responsibility more in the sense of helping their wives rather than taking it as domination by them.

Conclusion

Various factors like a busier working day, wider areas of social interaction and experience and an independent income have some significant consequences on the behaviour pattern and the life styles of employed women. By marriage, she achieves a new status into her husband's family and this status demands different types of roles to be performed by her. Her relationship with her husband as well as with other members of the family is expected to be in tune with the age-old ideal relationship of woman as wife. Ideally, she has to fulfil every expectation of members of the family and by her activities and the behaviour, she has to earn the praise and approval of not only her husband but also of other members of the family. Husband-wife relation is not isolated phenomenon but in case of newly married woman, such relationship is circumscribed by the family type, size and traditions also. Modern working womenare now performing many functions in the family, which were hitherto exclusively in the domain of male members only. Similarly the husbands are also sharing many of the house hold works which were traditionally done by their wives only. Recent changes have brought about not only diversification of roles to be performed by wife, but they have also brought about a new pattern of role-differentiation in terms of household functions to be performed by the wives and husbands.

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