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## ROLE CONFLICT AMONG WORKING WOMEN: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS.

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### Abstract:

Women constitute the other half of population of any society. They take part in all social, economic and political activities of any society. However their participation in social intercourse has never been equally appreciated and recognized with that of menfolk. Since ancient time itself, women are treated with inequality. Men have different set of norms and ideas regarding their participation in society. Women are considered subordinate to men. In addition to it, women had to play the dual role of home maker and work role at the same time in modern times. Hence there arises innumerable situations of role conflict. Women used to suffer both physical and mental problems due to this dual role and multiple functions they are constrained to perform. An attempt has been in this study to assess the role conflict in women performing dual role, its consequences and possible solutions to the problem.

### Introduction

It goes without saying that women are an integral part of any society. Like men, women participate in all sectors of human activities. Let it be agriculture, trade and commerce, health, education, economy and politics, women actively involve themselves with menfolk. However, the ratio of women's participation and exercise of authority vary from time to time, place to place and sector to sector of human activities. In traditional societies, both men and women used to participate in various activities with different extent of authority and responsibilities. There has been a clear cut sexual division of labour in society wherein women used to perform domestic activities like cooking, washing, cleaning the house, child care and so on, whereas men used to go out and involve in gainful activities. This kind of sexual division of labour has been justified by the belief that women are humble, emotional, and physically weak to carry on difficult, authoritarian, and decision making jobs and activities. They are said to be more vulnerable to difficulties and danger in hazardous activities. The traditional economy and occupational structure of society appears to be unfavourable for women to take up leadership jobs.

But with the onset of industrialization, automation and modernization, things began to change. The introduction of machine technology, automation, and computerization of production of goods and services the concept of sexual division of labour and subordinate status of women in the economy has changed. In the light of these changes the present study aims to focus on the different dimensions of women's employment in various sectors of economy and the role conflict arising out of their role as home making in their domestic life

**Statement of the Problem:**

Women in modern India are not confined to the four walls of the home. They come out of their homes, get educated and work in various sectors of economy. They are found in gainful employment in lucrative jobs in the field of education, health, administration, economy and politics. According to 2011 census, total number of female workers in India is 149.8 million and their work force participation is 25.51 per cent. But the female workers who work in various sectors have to perform multiple roles. The household duties that are generally attributed to women folk in India are still an important part of their regular life. Hence working women are burdened with dual or multiple role conflict. It poses several challenges to them and they try to find solution to their role conflict by way of certain strategies and use of modern facilities. The present study tries to uncover the problems, strategies and mechanisms relating to role conflict of working women and their remedies.

**Importance of the study:**

The study of role conflict in working women is significant because it is the burning issue in the present society. It creates lot of other issues with regard to the position and status of women in society. Breakdown of marital relations, increasing rate of divorce, maladjustment between couples, lack of control over children, stress and depression among working women and family members, over burden of work in families are to mention but a few problems arising out of role conflict in working women. Studies on role conflict in working women may bring about positive changes in family life and eradicate negative impact of employment of women on their personal and family life.

**Conceptual framework:**

The conceptual framework of the present study is centered around the concept of role, role set, role conflict, family role, and work role of women in society.

**Role:** Role is a set of conceptual behavior, rights, and duties, beliefs and norms associated with a status or position in a social situation.

**Role set:** It is a set of duties associated with different other social statuses.

**Role conflict:** Role conflict is defined as a struggle between different roles performed by a single individual. As an individual is placed in different statuses and asked to perform the associated duties there arises incompatibility between duties. It leads to a situation of role conflict.

**Family role:** family role refers to the domestic chores the members of family, especially assigned to women by the traditional norms of the society, such as cooking, washing clothes, and cleaning.

**Work role.** Work role refers to the duties and responsibilities of an employee in his work place.

**Objectives:**

The present study aims to address the following objectives:

1. To ascertain role conflict among working women
2. To identify the effects of role conflict and suggestive measures to lessen role conflict.

### Methodology:

The data were collected from 200 married women working in various government and private jobs in Mangalore. Convenient sampling method has been used to collect the respondents. The study has been conducted in Mangalore city in Dakshina Kannada District in Karnataka state. The respondents were selected from banks, govt offices, schools and colleges and from some private organisations.

### Results and Discussions:

In the present study role conflict among working women has been recorded. The women working in different jobs reported their difficulties arising out of their dual role. They have to work at home as daughter, mother, sister, cook, cleaner, etc. Their role at home includes taking care of the children, the aged, the sick, and so on. Without compromising their duties at they have to rush to their office and involve in job related duties. In some occupations they have to carry their job related activities to their home and do it as home work. All these lead to role conflict in their work role and family life. It leads to physical and mental stress and overwork. The following table illustrates the rate of role conflict women are facing.

Table 1. Rate of Role conflict.

Sl no	Extent of role conflict	frequency	percentage
1	Very high role conflict	145	72.5
2	Moderate role conflict	45	22.5
3	Very low role conflict	10	5
Total		200	100

The above table illustrates that 72.5 percent of working women have a very high rate of role conflict their life. They attribute this due to lack of facilities and mechanisms at their homes to cope with the situation of role conflict. The study reveals that the role conflict heavily affects their performance both in their work role and family role as well. Apart from physical and mental stress, the working women experience difficulties in work place like lack of concentration, slow speed of work, errors and mistakes in job work, and reduced job performance. Sometimes they have to forgo promotions, transfers, etc. At home they experience mental conflict, loss of self confidence, inability to spend time with spouse and children, lack of homely feeling due to hassles of employment. To some extent the dual role renders some women to resign from their jobs at the peek of their service.

Suggestive measures: the study suggests the following measures for the role conflict in working women

1. Support from the elders and parents could be of some solace to the working women. Assistance by a maid servant at home could be of some relief.
2. Use of certain home appliances to reduce physical burden of household chores and facilitate quick performance of activities could help women go to office without hassles.
3. Implementation of certain administrative reforms and special provisions for certain reliefs for working women in their workplace could of some help for them to cope with the situation

### Conclusion:

Women face multiple role conflict when they work outside home. Some sectors of employment have less stress and role conflict than others. The jobs which seek more administrative work, authoritative duties, and decision-making positions create greater role conflict. The jobs like teaching are comparatively have less degree of role conflict. In some jobs certain special provisions for women are created. Not all sectors of economy are having the same extent of role conflict. There are also several options to reduce role conflict and cope with the situation.

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