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Career, Conflict and Attitude Change and Continuity



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A B S T R A C T

This paper is an attempt to uncover the recent changes in the Indian traditional family attitudes with respect to the dual-career families in Delhi and Orissa (Bhubaneswar and Cuttack). The piece of paper is an outcome of an empirical study that was conducted in the 2007-08. This study highlights the change and continuities in domestic work and child care practices in the two-working families.

To choose a career and then to sustain it is not unfussy for every woman. Sometimes, to decide a career-life creates several incompatible situations, especially for a female spouse in Indian families. But there are many changes have been realized in the present epoch. As part of comprehensive verity, women of all classes progressed and reached into a new paradigm. They have been able to ascertain their independence, self-autonomy and personal individual growth. It is truly experienced that women moving at the forefront with men. In dual career families, the fruits of gender justice and equality have been acknowledged. For women, identity, power and status questions are in solitary dispense and role conflict, family tension, stress, strain and psychological distance from the spouse as ever more recent problems creating many imbalances in the family settings are in the additional furnish. There is colliding between the domestic roles and the job roles for the both working couples. Man is trying to put in his labour toward some preferred domestic chores.

An amount of studies on the dual-career couples and on employed women have been conducted in India. To specific, some studies related to role conflicts have found out the true reasons of conflict between the spouses and conflicts among the whole family members. Mahajan (1966), Ramaih (1969) and Arora (2003) analyze the conflicting roles which modern educated women in India have to face if they decide to pursue a career and traditional pattern of home life. The cultural and social realities of this country still force the traditional family role of house-wife and mother and not the role outside house. The working women are seeking new role fit, an unflinching frame of allusion to do up her to a relatively unwavering set of values. The role-person-system complex is in a position of volatility, essentially due to expected value lag (Mishra, 1977).

Noor (1995) found that after taking into account factors such initial well-being, personality and demographic variables; work overload is the only variable which predicts psychological distress

in working women. Andrade, Postma & Abraham (1999) concluded that husbands in both working families experienced better social support but less social contact, less mental mastery, and poorer perceived health than husbands in one-working families. Few or no socio-demographic variables were associated with well-being. Finally, employment may benefit women but stress their husbands. Arora (2003) in her study explored that the psychological pressures and conflicts encountered by an employed woman, who by her conscious and concerted effort achieves a higher socio-economic status in the society. The conflicts adept by her are not just an out come of her status but of incompatible societal values, norms, attitudes and natural non-acceptance and non-adherence of them as an individual. The resulting conflict is also due to condemnation of and their inability to act in accordance with conventional family and social roles. Coltrane (2000) and Cooke (2007) found in their research that when men do more of the housework, women's perceptions of fairness and marital satisfaction rise and the couple experiences less marital conflict and less strain and there is a minimum level of role conflicts. Jain (1988) expose that working women face difficulties in performing her familial roles. Often she has conflicting demands but she is not prepared to leave her job on account of these and she tries to make new adjustments in her family life. Similarly in the performance of her occupational goals, her family responsibilities often come in the way. Coverman & Shelly (1986) found that there is little change in the amount of time that husband spends on household activities in dual earner families. Berardo, et. al., (1987) & Ferber (1982) found that men in dual earner families do as little work as men in single earner families. Gove (1972), Cohen, Camarck & Mermaelstein, (1983), Glass & Singer (1972) Thoits, (1983), say that the multiple roles can buffer the individual against the consequences of the role conflict. Multiple roles may also provide gratification and security, increasing self esteem and a sense of purpose in life. Pahl & Pahl (1971),

Carter (1978), Singh (1981), Oliver (1981) and Biedermann, (1991) found a positive relationship between role conflict and job related tensions.

Method of the study

The sample size is 320 or 160 pairs of couples working in organized sectors. Equal numbers of respondent couples were selected from each State (Bhubaneswar and Cuttack of Orissa & Delhi). The 'Snowball' sampling method was applied to collect information about the dual-career couples in Orissa and Delhi both, because no government departments are preparing the data about dual-earner families in either of the States. It was very difficult to know the exact size of the universe. So, the Snowball Sampling method was preferred instead of other methods of sample selection. The minimum age of a respondent was determined at 18 years and maximum was 45 years. Since the questionnaire was administered in English, a minimum of 10 years of education for each respondent was determined to be the minimum level. It was the limitation of the researcher to prepare the questionnaires in Hindi or Oriya languages. Again to convert the data into English from two different regional languages could be another major problem for the researcher. The respondent couples working in Delhi are from different language backgrounds and not every one of them was comfortable with Hindi language. Selecting a dual-career couple also required that each couple should have one child at least; because this criterion can help to identify the role conflicts. The study was conducted by using two structured questionnaires, one was administered for the husband and the second was for his wife.

Focal Points

The paper highlights the areas of role conflicts between the dual-career couples arising out of child-care, domestic work, office work and finally from multiple roles. This study also discusses the issues related to change and continuity of traditional gender role expectations of both man and woman.

Findings

The educational and employment statuses of

the dual-career couples brought changes in their traditional role patterns as well as their role expectations. Both the feminine and masculine genders have been changing their traditional gender roles with respect to child care, house-keeping and sharing of domestic chores.

· The man's roles in unpaid domestic work participation have been increasing significantly in dual-earning families. The sharing of domestic chores among the dual-career couples in metro cities is increasing faster than the middle range cities in India. The dependency on paid care-takers/workers is more frequent in metro cities than the small and medium range cities. None of the working couples from Cuttack and Bhubaneswar were found to depend on paid-care takers to look after their pre-school children during office hours.

· The perception that the male-spouse keeps the idea that kitchen work is feminine in nature was rejected by the majority of the female-respondents in both Delhi (82.6%) and Orissa (72.5%). Domestic works are feminine activities and feminine in nature too are so called traditional norms in Indian families but this perception is found changing rapidly among the dual career families in India. The female respondents in this study recognize their husbands' role in domestic work. This masculine attitudinal change is faster in metro cultures than medium range cities in India.

· Gender equality is achieved in a huge extent with a rapid momentum among the dual-career couples in India. Historically, the decision of producing or not-producing a child was a predominant decision of male spouses in most of Indian families; but this attitude has been changing rapidly and India is moving towards more gender equality. The 91.9% of respondent couples from Orissa and the 85% of couples from Delhi have stated that during the decision of producing a child they had considered the decision of the spouses equally.

· A fresh notion has been emerged which co-exists with pre-schoolers' socialization process and the making of careers of both educated-spouses.

Family is the primary agency of socialization and parents are the main care-takers and role performers for a newly born child. However, many structural and functional changes especially the gender roles have been realized in the present post-modern Indian families. Socialization and parenting of pre-school children is not dependant on the parents only but crèche/ day care centers as leading institutions also play vital roles in the socialization process of the pre-school children also.

· The responsibilities, such as preparing meals, laundry works, vegetable shopping, paying milk bill, cable bill, newspaper bill and house rent were found as feminine (Wife's) role frequently and on the other hand, the responsibilities like electricity bill, telephone bills, water bill, grocery shopping etc. were found as masculine activities in both the study states.

· It was evidently observed that the majority of the women prefer to manage in-house/inside-home activities whereas the majority of the man yet take the out-house / outside-home responsibilities. Some activities/works like cleaning of utensils, floor, bath room and dusting have been done by maid servants/paid workers. Most of the child care responsibilities (vaccination, making the child ready for sending school, homework preparation, spending time with child, playing with child etc.) are yet done by the female spouses in both the study states. A large number of couples (62.8%) had been facing spousal conflicts for the cause of unable to provide proper care for their children. 77.5% of female spouses from Orissa and 55% female spouses from Delhi had informed that they had been faced the spousal conflict for the cause of proper care of their children. The working women in Orissa were found facing more spousal conflict for the cause of child care in comparison to working women in Delhi.

· The male-respondents from Delhi were found in a large number who were in moderate level of conflicts than male and female-respondents from Orissa and female-respondents

from Delhi too. The majority of the respondents from Orissa were found in low level of role conflicts whereas in Delhi the majority of respondents were in moderate level of role conflicts. It is because of the couples working in private sector in Delhi does not get much time to spend in family, to manage domestic responsibilities regularly. The higher level role conflict is found among the private sector employees than the public sector employees in both the study States. It is significant that the conflicts between the dual career couples allied to their domestic roles and job roles; often the situation compels the wife to loose her job. The place of work (Delhi or Orissa) doesn't play any role in protecting or loosing of job for a woman. The rate of spousal violence is increasing due to the women's empowerment (employment, politics and global feminist movement etc.) in one hand and traditional expectations and values on the other. The 37.2% married women in India are experiencing spousal violence and 'Rural Women'

are facing more spousal violence (40.2%) than the 'Urban Women' (30.4%) in India. The women in Orissa are facing more spousal violence (35.5%) than Women in Delhi (16.3%). Bihar is the only State in India that the married women face the highest spousal violence (59%) and it is more occurring in both Urban (62.2%) and Rural (58.5%) areas (NFHS-3, 2006).

Conclusion

With reference to the study findings it can be concluded that the traditional gender roles such as child care, house keeping, kitchen work and all forms of domestic chores of women have been significantly changing in dual-career families. The attitude of man towards domestic works has been changing positively. The employed men partake in the domestic chores. Similarly, in some cases domestic work is also a burden for both the working-spouses and becoming an agent of spousal conflict. At last, it can be cited that there are some changes and some continuities prevailing in Indian traditional attitudes.

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