

**ROLE CONFLICT, ROLE AMBIGUITY
AND ROLE OVERLOAD OF WOMEN EXECUTIVES
IN ORGANISATIONS**

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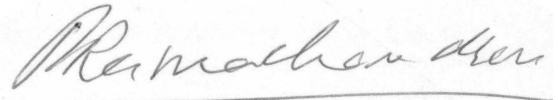
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis entitled “**Role Conflict, Role ambiguity and Role Overload of Women Executives in Organizations**” is a bona fide record of the research work carried out by **Beena C.**, under my supervision in the School of Management Studies, Cochin University of Science & Technology. The results embodied in this thesis or part of it have not been presented for any other degree.



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**ROLE CONFLICT, ROLE AMBIGUITY AND
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Conceptual background and focus of study

In India, the position of women has always been rather ambivalent. On the one side, she has been raised to the status of divinity, and on the other side, she has been exploited as somebody lower in status to men in every walk of life. Fortunately, from the middle of the nineteenth century, consciousness rose in our country to eradicate this dichotomy in her existence. Social reformers rose especially in Bengal, like Vidya Sagar and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, founder of the Brahma Samaj who advocated education for girls, marriage after adolescence and the right to widow marriage. In the North, the Arya Samaj movement led by Swami Dayanand Saraswati also wanted to purify Hinduism by preaching education of girl children as well as improvement in the status of women. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, women have started coming out of their homes for education.

Independence movement and women

The Independence Movement was a great boon to the cause of women in India as most leaders came from a western liberal education system. They encouraged the participation of women in the Independence struggle and many eminent women fought for the Independence of our country and women's issues played an important part in the perception of the national leadership. When the Indian Constitution was passed in 1950, it stressed on the equality of sexes in

Articles 15, 16 and 39 and empowered the government both for preventing discrimination against women and undertaking affirmative action to improve their status.

Indian women - A changing concept

In the last fifty years or so, India has witnessed profound changes in almost every aspect. Since the advent of independence in August 1947 the pace of changes has been greatly accelerated. One of the major consequences of the varied process of changes operating in the country had been the emancipation of women from their traditional bound ethos.

Indian women through the ages

A historical study of women in India reveals that there were distinct stages of rise and fall in her status.

The age old tradition of India, made no distinction between men and women all beings were equally "*Brahman*". The ideal of Indian women was very much the same as those of Indian men, unity and equality, greatness and fullness, purity and perfection. The very high standard of learning culture and all round progress reached by women during the *vedic* age inferred from the fact that '*Rigveda*' contains as many as 27 women seers.

The position of women in India greatly deteriorated as the *Vedic* ideal of unity and equality began to fade off with the passage of time during the period of the

Smritis. Women were denied the right to study *Vedas*, utter the mantras and to perform the *vedic* rites. Marriage and domestic life became compulsory for women and the unquestioning devotion and self offering service of husbands was their only duty. The Hindu law giver Manu had subjected her to be entirely dependent on man as daughter, wife and mother. From the *Smriti* period down to the 19th century, women was seen only as a member of the family: daughter, wife and mother and not as an individual with an identity or right of her own.

The British people at first followed a policy of non interference in the social and religious life of the people of India in order to win their co-operation in the administration of the country. So women went down imperceptibly in social status. They moved within the narrow sphere of their household; cooking, child bearing, caring and catering the in laws and husband comprised their work life and activity. They had practically no idea of the busy world out side except what they learned from their men folk. They have been subjected to many kinds of suppression. The Muslim women could not even reveal her face to men and had to have it covered by a *purdah*. The Hindu House wife hardly stepped out of the house and was like a slave to her husband who was considered as god. Marriage and motherhood were the only valuable achievements of women. Women came to be categorized as the "weaker sex" inferior in intellect as a domestic cattle, a property of the master. The decline of the Indian women's status was reflected in the customs relating to marriage, religion and property.

Beginning of changes

Even though this position of women continued in the beginning of the British period, the spread of English education which helped the blending of western and eastern cultures enabled women to realize their subordinated position and persuaded them to regain their legitimate status. The various Hindu revivalist organizations such as the Arya Samaj and the Brahma Samaj gave great impetus to the awakening of womanhood. Already in the middle of the 19th century, the practice of "Sati" was abolished by law. In 20th century, the Mahila Samitis and women's organizations took steps to abolish the *purdah* and child marriage and encouraged widow marriage.

The Indian reforms Act of 1921 enfranchised a small section of Indian population for the first time and women were also included in this. Also, Mahatma Gandhi set the pace for the progress of Indian women in all spheres of life by advising them to emancipate themselves from the drudgery of the kitchen. Adhering to Gandhi's appeal, women came out in thousands and took part in the national movement.

Many other legal measures were also passed in order to take the status of Indian women. The earliest enactment is the Hindu widow and remarriage act of 1856. Due to the strong pressure from social reformers including women, the child marriage restraint Act was passed in 1929 and amended in 1938. The act fixed 15 as the age limit for a girl and 18 years for a boy. In 1923, women for the first time voted for the legislative assembly and provincial councils. In 1926, they were also eligible

for seats in the provisional legislature. It was felt desirable that widows should have a share in their husband's property. An Act was passed according to which if a Hindu dies, his widow is entitled to a share equal to the son.

After independence, the government of India has taken a number of significant steps which are bound to go long way towards the improvement of women's conditions in India. Thus the constitution provides equal rights and opportunities for both men and women in all spheres of life. It also provides human conditions of work and maternity relief. Further, there are legal enactment relating to women's right against immoral traffic, maternity leave etc. The Hindu women's interests are also protected by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1953, prohibiting bigamy, fixing the minimum age of marriage, for judicial separation or dissolution of the marriage on the specified conditions etc. The Hindu Succession Act, 1956 may be considered as landmark in the history of Hindu women in that it recognized for the first time the equality of men and women in respect of property rights.

Indian Constitution also assures equality, freedom and non exploitation to all sections of the people irrespective of race, religion and sex.

The present day proves to be a big contrast compared to the past. It is now an established fact that women should contribute to the economic, social and national development of the country; women power should be used to enrich the common good; their talents and capabilities should not be ignored; the nation should be enriched by their knowledge.

Many factors have constituted to the improvement in the status of women. The scientific and technological progress all over the world has accelerated the process of change in the position of women in India also. The change in the structure of the economy through industrialization offers greater role for women in the productive function.

According to Harper (1961), the needs of economic systems with respect to labour and consumption are seen as promoting a change from traditional sex role to quasi-equalitarianism. The process of industrialization, urbanization and secularization have brought about socio-psychological changes in the attitudes and values of the people of this country. The attitudes of educated women have considerably changed particularly with regard to marriage and their own status. More and more women consider self respect and the development of personality as necessary goals of life.

Besides industrialization, another factor contributing to the emergence of women to prominence was the two world wars of the 20th century. The drafting of men into the army in large numbers left many jobs unattended and women had to be recruited to fill their posts. After the wars were over, the reduction in the male population due to the distraction of whole battalions of soldiers compelled many nations to keep the women in their jobs to maintain economy.

Another factor which is related to change in the social position of women is education. Education and industrialization have gone hand in hand with increased opportunities for education, provided by the society to sustain the tempo of industrialization and women began to enter school system in large number. The

percentage of literacy among women is on the increase. The spread of education has also increased the employment opportunities for women.

As the bearing and caring of children formed one of two important roles of a woman in traditional society and as these occupied most of her youthful period, mastery over this role fundamentally altered the sex roles in society in favor of women and gave her leisure in quality improvement.

The socioeconomic emancipation of Indian women has itself been a product of, and an instrument in the changes in their lives. In an investigation of the socio-economic constitution of educational Indian by Hate (1970) it was found that a deep and vital change has taken place in their economic condition and personal status. Desai, pointing out the change in the outlook towards women's status writes "Now women is no longer looked upon child bearing machine and helot in the home. she has acquired a new social status" (Desai, N., 1957, p. 53).

It is an undisputed fact that in this 20th century the status of women has certainly risen up compared to that of the past. But it is a reality that even now a woman has not become independent. She faces a lot of problems especially the career women. And the conditions of a married career women is still worse since she has to play a dual role; that of a house wife and of an employed women (Mira Seth, 1995).

Dual role

The term "role" denotes a set of expectations and obligations associated with a particular status within a group or social situation.

The behaviour expected of the occupant of a given position in a social system is called 'role'. The development of the concept of role leads to the interpretation of behaviour in situational rather than personal terms. Behaviour is thus explained in terms of the expectation held by others in the situation and of the individual's interpretation of those expectations. The role exists apart from the personality of the individual performing the role although personality in itself is an important factor in behaviour.

Role is an expected mode of behaviour. An individual occupies many different positions in a variety of organizations and performs multiple roles. Professors may be teachers, researchers, consultants, wives or husbands, community leaders. In organizations, such roles are formally prescribed and others are created by the informal activities of the organization members. There are three types of roles (i) the expected role, (ii) the perceived role and (iii) the actual role. The expected role is what other people expect from an individual. The perceived role is how the individual thinks he or she should behave to fulfil the expected role. The enacted role is the way the person actually behaves in an organization. Thus in the complex stage of modern life, most people play not to one audience but to several, and they act multiple roles simultaneously.

Now more and more women are employed in new avenues of employment and in new occupations. They enjoy more and more opportunities than ever before as individuals, workers, wives and mothers. Their adjustment to social changes is retarded and is generally associated with a high balance between satisfaction and tensions. This is due to the fact that their lives are linked with the existence of the family and the continuation of the race (Rani, Kala 1976).

The sociological analyses of the non domestic work performed by middle class married women have focused so much its contribution to domestic or national economy as well as on its impact on family structure and functions. Spitz (1988), Piotrkowski (1979), Bohem & Vivers-Long (1981) and Voydanoff (1988) have analyzed the linkages between family system and work among dual earner wives with a view to delineate inter-role conflicts, role strain and personal stress among working wives/mothers.

The extent of women's economic need may be assessed by considering the degree to which women contribute economically to the well being of the family or house hold members. It is shown that there is considerable evidence, which demonstrates that women's contribution to household income provided the means to meet the basic survival needs such as food, clothing and shelter. Women's contribution makes possible improvements in the health and nutritional status of young household members.

It is often found that family organization is a powerful source of resistance to women's work. The contention that women's first responsibility is to her home and hence the course of action women take with respect to her work depends on the

adjustments made between the organization of the economy and the prevailing family system.

Ramanumma and Bambuwale (1987) reported findings of a positive relationship between wage, employment and fertility among low income groups which clearly suggests that the need for additional earnings has a stimulating effect and dominated over the negative influence of child care on women work participation.

Women's occupational status has been closely associated with the home and family. By taking up employment, they have to play a dual role: housewife and career woman. There is a clear conflict between the society-approved status of women as housewives and mother of children on one hand, and their status as more productive workers on the other. Family duties have also imposed restrictions on their role in their employment. For most of them the major role they have to play is that of a wife and mother. The home always revolves around her and she plays the key role in the house. She faces the dilemma of somewhat contradictory role perception. On the other hand she must conform to the traditional ideal person always ready to subjugate her own interest to the happiness of others in the family. She assumes almost a different personality as a member of the personnel in office or factory. Her loyalties, interest and aims differ between one place and the other and it demands two different type of individuals (Shameer & Soloman, 1985).

Marriage and home-making require self negative where as wage necessitates self enhancement for going ahead. The former implies cooperation while the later leads to competition.

Problems arising from dual role burden

Some fundamental problems encountered in combining family and work life are categorized as follows:

1. Problems of overload and time budgeting

Usually, where a woman works she also has to keep the kitchen fires burning, and the family satisfied. In order to accomplish everything, she must not only budget her time; but she must also be flexible, since she is expected to be available round the clock. Thus she finds herself in a paradoxical situation.

2. Conflicting expectations of dual roles

Each person identifies oneself with stereotyped gender roles. Behavioural traits like passivity and practicality, found in all members of the human species have become sexualized and are assumed, asserted or expected to correlate with sexual differences. The working housewife faces an obvious dilemma. As a mother and wife, she must conform to traditional ideal of a hard working yet a self effacing woman, in readiness to subjugate her own interests to family's happiness. On the other hand, in her occupational role, she must be result oriented, independent, persistent and innovative. The domestic role requires a cooperative attitude as opposed to the competitive spirit demanded by the work world. Thus two polarised personalities need to be combined. Moreover, dilemmas may arise due to conflicts in

obligations and attachments, desires and so on related to one's networks of relatives, friends on the one hand and work associated on the other.

3. Problem of adverse self evaluation

A dilemma may arise from conflict within oneself about whether one is being a good person in leading a certain type of existence. A working woman may blame herself for neglect of mother's role, wife's role especially if the children develop problems of health, disinterest in studies, unsociable behaviour or the husband becomes irritable or tired.

4. Maintenance of satisfactory family relationship:

This is another problematic area for working woman. As Goode (1963) points out, the modern industrial world is the first cultural system to permit woman to occupy independent jobs. Thus woman may have a "better bargaining position." within the family system and increase their say in decision making. This bring about changes in the traditional family role relationships and power structure.

5. Problems of reallocating household tasks and sharing in childcare

Participation of woman in gainful employment demands upon the husband to get more deeply involved in household chores and raising of children. However, in all societies, women's task have less prestige than those of men. Women thus by taking over "male roles" are moving to higher levels of prestige whereas men are moving to lower levels of work. Thus the new division of labour is harder for the men in the

family to adjust to than it is for the woman. The redefinition of responsibilities from segregated, conjugal roles to joint conjugal roles may not be equally shared by men. Moreover, when the respective careers of both husband and wife assume overriding importance to each of them, both would be equally unwilling to make sacrifices and compromises.

Emerging thrust areas in women studies are:

- ◆ Women entrepreneurship
- ◆ Women empowerment
- ◆ Role related problems of women workers / executives
- ◆ Status of women in power, politics and social life.

Women entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is defined as the ability to co-ordinate, organise, maintain and reap the best out of even the worst situations. The main quality expected of an entrepreneur is dedication, which is most important for a women entrepreneur to succeed in her pursuit (Towns & Gentzler 1985).

Women entrepreneurs always display an innate capacity to calculate and shoulder risks with a problem solving approach. They have a very high degree of achievement motivation (Colette V Browne, 1995). Women also do not lag behind men in projecting a positive image of their talents (Minkler & Stone, 1985). The other characteristics of women entrepreneurs can be listed as the ability to think independently, imagination and creative ability, the easy adaptability to any change /transition at home or elsewhere and resistance and ability to cope with setbacks (Hegar & Hunzeker, 1988).

Women empowerment

Empowerment is derived from the traditional definition of power –"possession of control or influence over others", legal or official authority, capacity, right or physical might (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). Empowerment has been defined as a process (Gutiérrez, 1990), an intervention (Parsons & Cox 1989, Solomon, 1976) and skill (Mandell & Schram, 1985). Power is often used synonymously with force strength authority jurisdiction, control and command. Van Den Bergh and Cooper (1986) noted that in most traditional models, power is seen as a finite commodity to be controlled particularly in determining the distribution of rights, resource and opportunities. Empowerment is thus viewed as both the possessions of control authority, or influence over others and as the help provided to assist a person to gain control over his or her life (Colette V Browne, 1995).

The basic understanding principle is that empowerment is often conceptualized as an individual experience primarily promoting individual, not collective good or political power for individual gain.

Studies in role related problems of women workers / executives

'Role' plays an important part in every day life of every person. Without playing a role a person does not exist either for himself or for others. Role is essentially a part of human behaviour. In common sense terms, role is a set of expectation people has about the behaviour of a person holding a position. An individual occupies many different positions in a variety of organizations and performs multiple roles.

A person, more or less consciously, plays many roles and it is in these roles that we know each other. It is in these roles that we know ourselves. A role is a socially identified more or less a clear entity. It is being played by different individuals and it serves as a basis for identifying persons in a society.

Linton (1936) identified role as a segment of culture in that it consists of behavioural norms bearing a one to one correspondence with social status. A role includes the attitude values and behaviour ascribed by the society to any and all persons occupying a given status.

Lenvinson (1959) opines that the term 'Role' is generally being used in three ways.

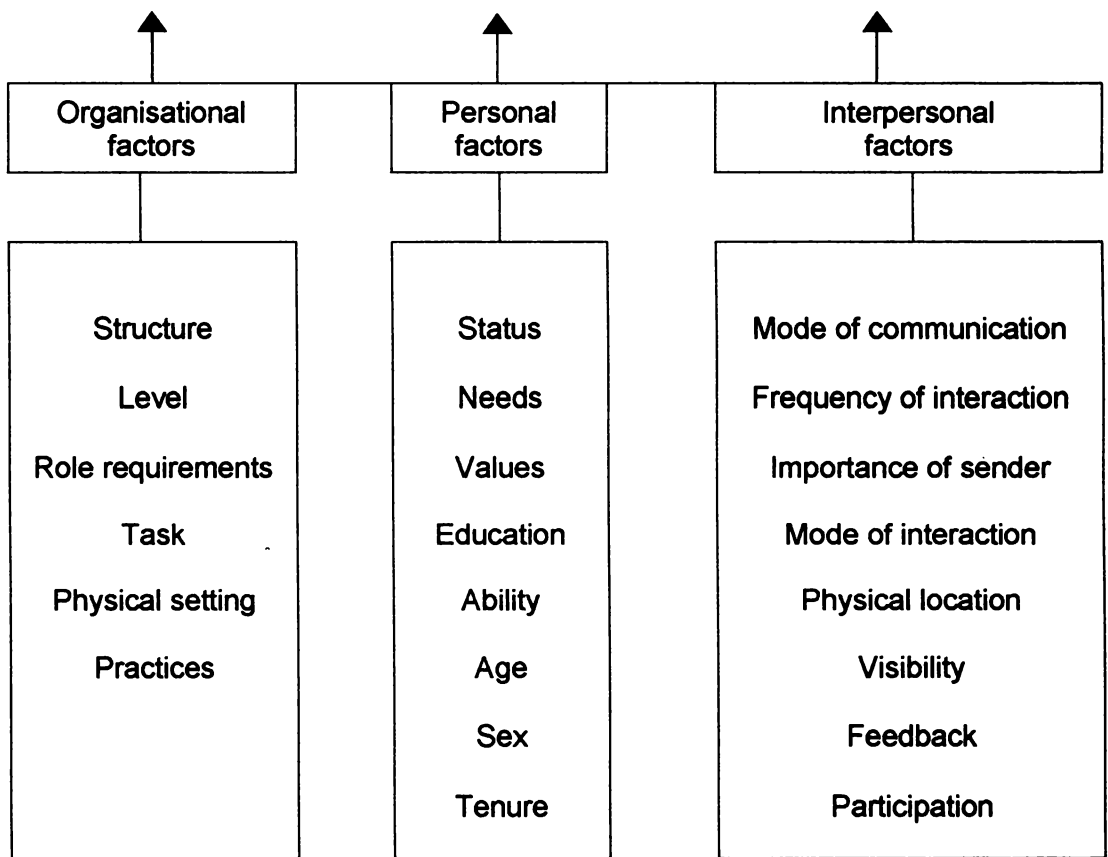
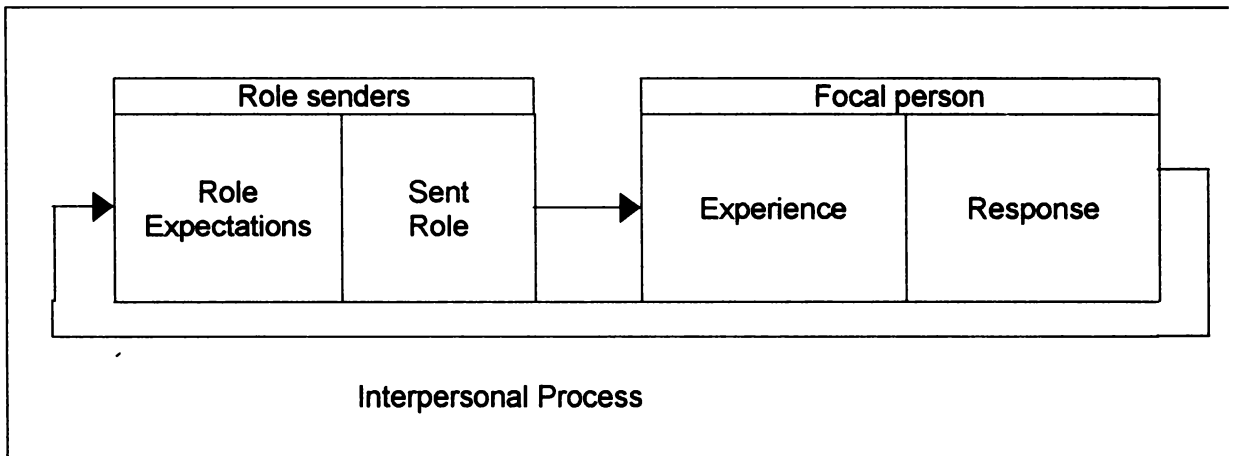
1. It is structurally given demands (norms, expectations, taboos, responsibilities and the like) associated with a given social position.

2. It is the member orientation or conception of the part he has to play in an organization.
3. It is the actions of individual members, i.e., the ways in which members occupying various positions act in accordance with or in violation of a given set of organizational norms.

Biddle and Thomas (1966) came out with an explicit definition of the term 'role'. They defined 'role' as the set of prescriptions of what the behaviour of a position of member should be in all the varied aspects of human existence: as a member of a family, as a social unit or organizations. Roles have Universality in human existence and endeavor.

The behaviour expected of the occupant of a given position in a social system is called role. The development of the concept of role leads to the interpretation of behaviour in situational rather than personal terms. Behaviour is thus explained in terms of the expectation held by others in the situation and of the individual's interpretation of those expectations. The role exists apart from the personality of the individual performing the role, although personality in itself is an important factor in behaviour

Role conflict and role ambiguity as they occur in organizations may best be described around the notion of a role episode that is a complete cycle of role sending, response by the focal persons and the effects of that response on the role senders (Khan et al., 1964.)



Source: Kahn et al. (1964).

In the figure showing the role episode model, the different boxes represent 'events' that constitute a role episode. The arrows connecting them imply a causal sequence. Role pressures are assumed to originate in the expectations held by members of the role set. Role senders have expectations regarding the way in which the focal role should be performed.

In order to examine and integrate the research on role conflict and ambiguity, Khan et al. (1964) role episode model is very useful. The model depicts the interpersonal process between the person being sent expectations (the focal person) and those sending the expectations (role senders). In addition, the model incorporates organizational, personal, and interpersonal factors which affect the role episode.

The organizational factors include structure, level in the organization, role requirements, task characteristics, physical setting, and organizational practices. The personal factors (which can be applied to both the role senders and focal person) refer to such variables age, sex, and tenure in the organization. The interpersonal factors in the relationship between role senders and focal person include frequency of their interactions, mode of communication, importance of senders to focal person, physical location, visibility, feedback and participation. The role senders can be the focal person's supervisors, clients, co-workers, or subordinates.

All the three set of factors may affect the role episode, by influencing the role senders, the focal person and/ or the relationship between the role senders and the focal person.

Role sender - focal person relationships have generally been investigated by gathering perceptual data on role conflict and ambiguity from the objective responses. Affective responses include job satisfaction, job involvement, tension, threat, anxiety, and propensity to leave the organization.

The research investigating these relationships has generally been correlational, although the role episode model implies causality within a given time period. Actually, the feedback loop from focal person to the role senders suggests a transactional relationship between role senders and the focal person; therefore, there may be reciprocal causality over several time periods. The review indicates, however, that the reciprocal nature of these relationships has not been investigated.

Viewed from the perspective of developmental tasks for various periods in one's life span, as defined by Havighurst (1953), modern adult women have to perform the additional female roles as wives, mothers, housekeepers on the one hand and their role as employees on the other. Coping with both the roles, simultaneously, has an important bearing on their occupation which leads to conflicts. The time-consuming household chores without support have an adverse effect on the fulfillment of their emancipatory aspirations.

The role conflict visualized as mutually competing expectancies and demands confronts the working women as a result of the demanding and pervasive nature of women's family and domestic role. Work and family role conflicts have been well documented (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, Gray, 1983, Valdez & Barbara, 1987). Marriage and parenthood appear to be incompatible with a career for women and are seen as conflict arousing. Working women experience greater inter role

conflict than either men or non-working women. Although, the theory of role accumulation (Sieber, 1974) asserts that such conflict and overload may be reduced by the rewards of multiple roles, there is convincing evidence that working women do face tension due to their dual role .

Dak (1986) recognise that much of the household and productive task performed by women in India remains unaccounted for because of socio-biological factors. Between productive and reproductive roles and pregnancy, lactation and bringing up infants adversely affect the duration and efficiency in work. This creates a bias against female employment, especially in organized work situation. Another bias in women's gainful employment outside home is considered to be an indication of low status of their parents or husbands leading to the determination of the prestige of their family. The conflict sometimes forces the women to give up job at the whims and fancies of her parents or husband.

In addition, there are a number of other factors that complicate the dilemma of performing dual roles. A women may not have the desire to take up employment but she is forced to do so against her wishes under economic pressure to supplement the family income. She spends extra energy to cope with the demands and pressure of her family, employment and her own self. All this is done at the cost of her health. Hibbard and Pope (1987) found that married working women faced greater health risks than men because of their dual roles of work and family responsibility.

A working women has also the traditional role of a home maker. The women in this situation has to cope with many stresses caused by the expectations of the

members of the family. They expect her to be efficient at work, smart and graceful and beautiful like a fairy at home and in social functions with all the assets of Alladin's Gin to be able to cook to create dreams of dresses, and please the gusts by giving them five star treatment. But in most cases, the working and earning women has little control over her own earnings, has little say in decision making and is usually in a subservient position (Uma Shankar Jha; Arati Mehta and Latika Menon, 1993)

In a joint family the married working women has deal with the mother and sister- in-law who are mostly jealous of her status, and always find faults with her style of life (Sethi & Bains, 1990).

Even her own children become demanding and feel neglected. According to Sethi and Bains (1990) the large number of the daughters of working mothers were not in favour of their mothers working.

In facing the guilt of neglecting her family and also not doing justice to her work, a working women falls prey to shattered aspirations . Her sincerity to both type of responsibilities is the cause of troubles. Because there is a lack of proper understanding of her problems, her performance is not appreciated either at home or outside at the work place.

To add to the list, there is restricted freedom of movement for her and there is not time her own recreation or rejuvenation. Working women spends fifty hours per week at work and about the same amount of time performing household chores with

no domestic help hired or other wise. Usually, men think that domestic work is meant for women and they have nothing to do in the matter.

Besides, married working women face what may be called geographic constraints in that they find it difficult to leave the place where the family and husband stay (Deitch & Sanderson, 1987). As a consequence, she may have to forego prestigious career placements. Rao (1985) feels that problems and dilemma of working women are related to their socio-economic background. Thus, the problems of the women of lower strata as summed up by Rao are:

- A) Low and unequal wages paid for the equal and the same job;
- B) Double burden of earning as well as caring for the children with no financial security;
- C) Large family;
- D) Unhygienic living conditions; and
- E) Lack of minimum facilities of privacy.

Working mothers have to meet the expectations and obligations corresponding to the different roles which they play within the fold of a family whether it is nuclear or composite. In addition, they also have to play their work related roles in the place of employment. A married women who works outside her home is under various pressures and is most often engaged in a struggle to balance her work and responsibilities inside and outside her home (Itshree Padhi, 1999).

Even today in most families women have to take the sole responsibility for bringing their children up and the fact of a women being in full time employment

hardly alters the situation. Given the fact that most women are socialized to believe and accept child rearing responsibilities unquestioningly there is no protest from their end. It is true that there is an increasing awareness about the need for men to share household work, but this awareness is not widespread. As a result there is tension and conflict between responses and this conflict assumes serious proportions especially in authoritarian families. (Itshree Padhi, 1999).

Reasons for role conflict are many. Among these, prominent ones are age and number of children , type of family in which a working mother lives and of course the nature and extent of participation by other members of the family .

The studies of Kinnunen & Mauno (1998) shows that there is no gender difference in the experience of either family - work or work- family conflict. The level of each type of conflict is the same for both men and women. Frone et al. (1992) Gutek et al. (1991), Duxbury et al. (1994) reported that women had interference from work to family more than men. This is due to the multiple roles of women.

High education and high number of children in the family in the family meant a higher level of work family conflict. This finding indicates the possibility that highly educated men (i.e, men with high socio-economic status) and men with several children living at home (ie, men with preschool children) appear to feel guilt about neglecting the family because of work. These feelings of guilt may arise out of social expectations; men are increasingly expected to be good husbands and fathers and devote time to the family. Thus the ability of men to maintain a positive family related self image is hindered (Frone et al., 1996).

Role conflict

Role conflict is the incompatible expectations with in and/or between role(s). There are inter role conflicts and intra-role conflicts. It exists when the expectations of a job are mutually different or opposite and the individual cannot meet one expectations without rejecting the other. Four types of conflicts often described in the context of role enactment are:

- a) **Person role conflict:** this type of conflict arises when expected behaviour is incompatible with a person's own basic values and attitudes.

- b) **Inter role conflict:** this type of conflict is the result of facing multiple roles. It occurs because individuals simultaneously perform many roles and they conflict each other.

- c) **Intra-sender role conflict:** this occurs in an individual who is expected to perform task within specified limits but it is not possible to behave in a manner consistent with role assignment.

- d) **Intersender conflict:** When pressures from one role sender oppose pressures from one or more other senders it leads to inter sender role conflict.

Role conflict is defined as incongruity of the expectations associated with a role. This may take the form of

(a) **divergent role expectations. It exist when the expectations of a job are mutually different or opposite and the individual cannot meet one expectations without rejecting the other**

or

(b) **incompatible requests received from role senders in carrying out job related responsibilities**

or

(c) **incompatible multiple roles enacted by the incumbent.**

Role conflict is defined as the subject's experience of incompatibility in role enactment due to any one of the above factors either in separation or in combination.

Khan et al. have defined role conflict as the "simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures. such that compliance with one would make the compliance with the other more difficult" (1964). They identified different types of conflict within the work role: intrasender and intersender. Person-role pressure is in some sense incompatible with the other set of pressures.

Inter-role conflict is a form of role conflict in which the set of opposing pressure arises from participation in different roles. In such cases of inter-role conflict, the role pressures associated with membership in one organization are in conflict with pressures stemming from membership in other groups. Demands from role senders on the job for overtime or take-home work may conflict with pressures from one's wife to give attention to family affairs during evening hours. The conflict arises between the role of the focal person as worker and his role as husband and father (Khan et al., 1964).

Kahn et al. (1964) described a specific instance of inter-role conflict in this passage. In a more general sense, inter-role conflict is experienced when pressures arising in one role are incompatible with pressures arising in another role. Note again that role pressure incompatibility exists when participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in another role.

The theoretical background and conceptual focus of the study came from research reports, articles and books. The empirical studies related to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload extend to almost thirty-five years. Khan et al. (1964) have defined role conflict as the simultaneous occurrence of two or more pressures such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult. Or in other words role conflict occurs when individuals perform many roles and they conflict with each other.

Khan et al. (1964) in their theory of role dynamics postulated a negative relationship between job satisfaction and conflicting or incompatible expectations

which cause role conflict, and between job satisfaction and unclear or vague expectations which cause role ambiguity.

Mark (1977) has associated the role conflict to the increased formal participation in paid employment while maintaining the traditional roles. Individuals have a finite amount of energy and when involved in multiple roles, these trends to drain them and inevitably cause stress or inter role conflict.

Role ambiguity

Role ambiguity is defined as the degree to which clear information is lacking regarding expectations associated with a role. Ambiguity occurs when an individual is unclear regarding his job. The potential degree of clarity or ambiguity in a role can be assessed by investigating the availability of relevant information within the role set. Ambiguity may be aroused regarding various aspects of the role and of the situations surrounding it. The person may be uncertain about who has a legitimate right to influence him or about the limits of his own authority over others. Confusion may center on organizational rules and regulation to his position. The focal person is likely to experience two types of role ambiguity. One, concerning the task and the related activities; the other concerning the feedback regarding his performance of the task.

Role ambiguity was studied in detail by Indian and foreign researchers as an important factor. Role conflict dimensions along with other dimensions such as role overload job satisfaction, job involvement, job stress, number of years service etc.

Studies of the effects of role ambiguity reveal that lack of clarity about behavioural expectations causes a greater concern with own performance, lower actual and perceived group productivity, less concern or involvement with the group, lower job satisfaction, unfavorable attitudes toward role senders, and increased tension, anxiety, depression and resentment. (Caplan & Jones, 1975). Role ambiguity has also been causally linked to turnover (Johnson & Graen, 1973)

When working women go to work, they actually have to face the problems of combined work at home and office. They have to work in addition to their usual responsibilities. This raises a problem of adjustment of their working hours with their home duties. This dual role burden leads the women executives in the role related problems of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.

Role overload

Role overload is a condition in which the individual is faced with a set of obligations, which require him to do more than he is able to cope with. Margolis et al. (1974) reported that job performance was affected by overload conditions as it is associated with lowered confidence, decreased work motivation, poor decision-making quality, deteriorating inter-personal relations and even accident rates.

Piotrowski (1979), Bohlen and Viverous Long (1981) and Voydanoff (1988) among others have analysed the relationship between family system and work among dual-earner wives with a view to delineate inter role conflicts, role overload, and personal stress among working wives/mothers. The demands of work and family are often viewed as incompatible and consequently, working wives engage in a zero

sum activity, that is the more they devote themselves to one sphere , the less energy and time they have for the other. More significantly, the positive or negative feelings derived from the work place by individuals have an impact on their family relations. Likewise, domestic relations tend to influence the work role of individuals. The psychological carry over effect from work to family roles or vice versa can affect psychological availability and the amount of energy available for performing the other role.

Role overload and Role stress are two common problem experienced by married women who are employed full time. Simply put women who try to fulfill family roles that are traditionally assigned to wives and mothers (house keeping & child care) and to work outside the home may be overworked and may experience difficulty in performing all of these roles adequately (Rhona Rapport & N Rapport, 1976).

Employed women who still perform most of the household chores and child caring duties have somewhat higher levels of overload (Lewis & Cooper, 1987 Pleck, 1985). However role overload is inversely correlated with maintaining a positive family climate for men as well as women (Weiserma & Vandanberg, 1991).

In the preliminary study conducted, it was observed that role conflict is maximum among women executives with their husband staying in the family, but without much role clarity and role differentiation in managing the house.

The consequences of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload are that they may affect:

- the individual himself physically and psychologically. The physical consequence includes psychosomatic disorders, lethargy and emotional exhaustion. Psychologically the individual might feel anxious, tense and ambiguous about the role alienated, depersonalized and frustrated.
- the organization, in terms of increased employee turnover, absenteeism, grievances, low job performance and morale.
- the organization related individual consequence such as job threat, job tension job satisfaction job involvement, and company satisfaction.

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affect the individual in terms of emotional exhaustion (Schwab, 1981). These factors is also observed to result in low turnover, low job performance, and low employee morale (Parasuraman,1978; Lyon 1971; Flora, 1977 Helwig, 1979 Lambie 1980; Beehr 1976; Chonko, 1979; Szilagyi, 1980; Bateman 1981; Libby 1978).

The study presented in this thesis focuses attention on the role related problem of women executives working in Cochin-Always region.

Thus the present study was an attempt to investigate role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by the women executives working in the manufacturing, consulting and service organizations in the Cochin-Always industrial belt. The study also aims at examining the relationship among selected bio-social and organizational variables on the level of role conflict, role ambiguity and role

overload experienced by the women executives so that their dynamic inter relationships and variations can be ascertained with some implications for the practice of Human Resource Management in the industrial belt.

The literature survey depicting selected models, theories and findings of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload research are provided in the next chapter.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Role related problems of women executives

In recent years many writers have examined the role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload of employees of different organizations and various facts associated with role related problems.

Marriage and parenthood appear to be incompatible with a career for women and are seen as conflict arousing. Working women experience greater inter role overload and conflict than either men or non-working women. Although, the theory of role accumulation (Sieber, 1974) asserts that such conflict and overload may be reduced by the multiple roles, there is convincing evidence that working women do face tension due to their dual role. Hibbard and Pope (1987) found that married working women faced greater health risks than men because of their dual roles of work and family responsibility.

The dual worker couples do not always have identical orientation and attitude towards work and career. Very often the demands of work and family are in conflict even in conventional situations, and for working couples the potential conflicts are multiplied. In the western world, dual worker couples try to manage these conflicts within the context of a societal expectation that the careers of men are more important than the careers of women. Traditionally, men but not women are expected

to be devoted to work. A man's status is primarily defined by his occupation, a women's is not (Berger et al., 1978)

An inequitable division of house hold labour may make homes with families a source of support for male managers but a source of demands for female managers. (Ragins and Sundstrom, 1989). There are five type of relationships between home and work, including instrumental and conflicting relationships (Bartolome, 1984) for men, home and work appear instrumental for each other (Evans & Bartolome, 1984), where as for women, a family may conflict with work.

Women managers' home roles reduce employment involvement and subsequently advancement, by reducing training among other things. (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1993). Working wives highlight issues such as role conflict and adjustment pattern (Kapur, 1974) .

Working mothers with more number of children are prone to conflict than those who have fewer children (Itshree Padhi, 1999). Kala Rani (1976) also found a similar correlation pattern in her study.

Prathap and Gupta (1986) found sex difference in job satisfaction: females are more satisfied than male. Bharathi (1989) found that women's life satisfaction and job satisfaction were higher than those of men. Rajasekhar , Bharathi & Sivasankar Reddy (1991) found significant difference between men and women in job satisfaction.

Andrisani and Shapiro (1978) reported that job satisfaction is very low among working women in their thirties and forties .

Glass (1990) and Konard and Cannings (1990) reported that gender discrimination provided a better explanation of performance outcomes.

The problems for working mothers in carrying out the dual responsibilities of home and work and shows that there is an increasing need for services that will enable them to carry out the dual responsibilities. Family life in general and children in particular are salient factors in creating problems for working mothers. Among factors generating role conflict, age and number of children are quite important because mother's personal attention is most essential to children when they are in infancy. Having less time and more congruent demands of roles, a working mother experiences more and more role conflict in modern situations (De Souza, 1963).

Role conflict continues to exist as long as the polarity between masculine and feminine role continues. The dual role responsibilities of a working wife not only overloads her but may also be so incompatible that they cannot be performed properly (Ahmad, 1984).

Working mothers have to meet the expectations and obligations corresponding to the different roles which they play within the fold of a family whether it is nuclear or composite. In addition, they also have to play their work related roles in the place of employment. A married women who works outside her home is under various pressures and is most often engaged in a struggle to balance her work and responsibilities inside and outside her home (Itshree Padhi, 1999).

Herman and Gyllstrom (1977) found that married persons experienced more work family conflict than unmarried persons did. In a similar vein, it might be expected that parents would experience more work family conflict than non parents would. Holahan & Gilbert (1979) and Pleck et al. (1980) remarked that child bearing may be the significant contributor to work family conflict.

Uco J Wiersma (1994) study indicates that dual-career couples must cope with two types of work home role conflict, namely, time based issues of role overload and psychological issues of role quality.

The major reasons for this is that the female executives have to play two or more roles in the family and in the office, which leads to the inter role conflict. Cooper and Davidson (1982) reported that the female executives have role conflict and role overload because of their dual roles in the family and the office.

According to Aryee (1992), married professional women do experience high level of work – family conflict. Several studies reported that women professionals experience higher conflict than their male counterparts (Greenhaus et al. 1989, Voydanff, 1988).

According to Sangamitra, Buddhapriya and Preetham Khandewal (1995), female executives face conflict between job demands and family obligations than the male managers. Viewed from the perspective of developmental tasks for various periods in one's life span, as defined by Havighurst (1953), modern adult women have to perform the additional female roles as wives, mothers, house keepers on the

one hand and their role as employee on the other. Coping with both the roles, simultaneously, has an important bearing on their occupation which leads to conflicts. The time consuming household chores without support have an adverse effect on the fulfillment of their emancipatory aspirations.

The role conflict visualized as mutually competing expectancies and demands confronts the working women as a result of the demanding and pervasive nature of women's family and domestic roles. Work and family role conflicts have been well documented by Rapoport & Rapoport (1971), Gray (1983) and Valdez & Barbara (1987). Marriage and parenthood appear to be incompatible with the career for women and are seen as conflict arousing. Working women experience greater inter role conflict than either men or non-working women. Although, the theory of role accumulation asserts that such conflict and overload may be reduced by the rewards of multiple roles, there is convincing evidence that working women do face tension due to their dual role. (Sieber, 1974).

The studies of Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) shows that there is no gender difference in the experience of either family - work or work- family conflict. The level of each type of conflict is the same for both men and women (Frone et al., 1992 , Gutek et al., 1991). Duxbury et al. (1994) reported that women had interference from work to family more than men. This is due to the multiple roles of women.

Russo (1976) found that married professional women might have more difficulty than men in managing the work- family interface and thereby experience more work family conflict.

Lack of spouse support i.e. to participate in household chores and childcare as well as providing the necessary emotional support to enable the partner to manage the demands arising from one's participation in multiple roles - has been identified as a source of work - family conflict (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Burke, Weir & Duwars, 1980; Houseknecht & Macke, 1981). The occupational commitment or work role involvement has also been identified as a source of work family conflict (Frone & Rice 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Beutell & Greenhaus, 1982).

Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) reported that high education and more number of children in the family meant a higher level of work family conflict. This finding indicates the possibility that highly educated men (i.e. men with high socio economic status) and men with several children living at home (i.e. men with preschool children) appear to feel guilt about neglecting the family because of work. These feelings of guilt may arise out of social expectations; men are increasingly expected to be good husbands and fathers and devote time to the family. Thus, the ability of men to maintain a positive family related self image is hindered (Frone et al., 1996).

The role conflict, visualized as mutually competing expectations and demands confronts the working women as a result of the demanding and pervasive nature of women's family and domestic role (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971; Gray, 1983; Valdez & Barbara, 1987).

Khan et al. (1964) were concerned with the impact of organization on an individual . They explored the extent of role conflict and role ambiguity in industrial

positions. Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) argued that "classical organization theory of principle of chain of command and principle of unity of command have implications for role conflict. Both classical organization and role theory deal with role ambiguity leading to dissatisfaction, anxiety, distorted reality and ineffective performance.

Work family conflict has been defined as a form of inter role conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect such that participation in the work role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family role and vice versa (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Work family conflict is positively related to the number of hours worked per week (Burke et al., 1980; Keith & Schafer 1980; Pleck et al., 1980) as well as the number of hours worked/commuted per week (Bohen & Viveros-long, 1981). Work family conflict also has been associated with the amount and frequency of overtime and presence and irregularity of shift work (Pleck et al., 1980).

Schwenk (1990) showed that high conflict is associated with high quality for the executives of non-profit organizations but with low quality for executives of profit organizations.

Hall Copur (1990) reported that role conflict experienced by faculty are not found to be related to general job satisfaction but are significantly correlated with faculty dissatisfaction in decisions that affect their work and work environment.

Leslie B Hammer, Tenora D Grigsby & Steven Woods (1998) reported that the students with their educational experience reported higher levels of work-school conflict. Those findings and suggestions would help them deal more effectively with their multiple demands.

The best documented outcomes of role conflict are job dissatisfaction and job related tension, which have been isolated among a variety of occupational groups (Beehr, Walsh & Taber, 1976; Brief & Aldag, 1976; Brief, Aldag, Van Sell & Melone, 1979; Gross et al., 1958; House & Rizzo, 1972; Miles, 1976; Oliver & Brief, 1977-78). Hamner and Tosi (1974) reported a positive correlation between role conflict and job threat among a sample of managers but no relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. Tosi and Tosi (1970) found a negative relationship between role conflict and job related threat and anxiety. Keller (1975) observed among research and development professionals that role conflict is negatively correlated to satisfaction with work but no such negative correlation was reported among ordinary workers. This observation suggests that further work is needed to isolate the effects of role conflict on particular affective reactions to the job outcomes.

Role conflict has been demonstrated to be correlated with several other organisationally dysfunctional outcomes. Among them, factors such as unsatisfactory work group relationship (French & Caplan, 1972), slower and less accurate group performance (Liddell & Slocum, 1976), lower commitment to the organization (Baird, 1969), lower performance evaluations (Hass, 1964), inadequately perceived leader behaviour (Rizzo et al., 1970), less confidence in the organization (Khan et al., 1964), and unfavorable attitudes toward role senders (Miles, 1976b) were well studied. Conflicting findings exist with respect to organizational commitment and

effectiveness (Taves, Corwin & Hass, 1963) and attitude towards role senders (Miles, 1976b).

Futrell and Parasuraman (1981) reported that stress in the form of role conflict and role ambiguity may be considered as a term of cognitive dissonance which was generally assumed to be tension producing. It is observed that stress arising from various job roles of employees produce an unfavourable condition, which reduces the degree of job involvement.

Galinsky and Stein (1990) noted work time and supervisory relationship as among the major problems faced by employed parents. Work schedule inflexibility has been shown to be related to work-family conflict because it makes it difficult for employed parents to balance the competing demands of work and family (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Aryee, 1993). Moen and Dempster-Mc clain (1987) reported that perceived work family interference was related to a desire for a reduced work schedule for both self and spouse among dual earner couples with children aged 12 and under.

Time spent on activities within one role generally cannot be devoted to activities within another role. Time based conflict is consistent with the excessive work time and schedule conflict dimensions identified by Pleck et al. (1980).

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) reported in their study that among male executives role ambiguity was negatively related with job performance, but role conflict did not exhibit any significant relationship with job performance. Bateman (1981) found that role overload resulted in poor job performance.

Singh (1990) observed that junior and middle level managers differ significantly on certain stress dimensions. Junior level managers experienced greater lack of group cohesiveness, role conflict, role ambiguity, feeling of inequity, role overload and inadequacy of role authority.

Peltit (1973) finds that role conflict and role ambiguity was both negatively related to various forms of organizational tenure.

Madhu & Harigopal (1980) reported no significant relationship between either role conflict or role ambiguity and job experience for the technical as well as non-technical supervisors. Eisenhauer (1987) reported that those with the least amount of academic experience had less role conflict and role ambiguity than with a moderate amount of such exposure.

Miles (1974) indicated that both role conflict & role ambiguity were related to job dissatisfaction. The same conclusion was suggested by Rosenheim (1976), Organ & Greene (1974), Bernardin (1981), Coldwell (1981), Keenan (1981) and Madhu (1982).

Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload are main sources of work family conflict (Greenhaus & Butell 1985). Role ambiguity and role conflict have been identified as a major source of stress and job tension. (Ivancevich & Matteson 1980, French Caplan & Harrison 1982).

Futrell and Parasuraman (1981) reported that stress in the form of role conflict and role ambiguity perhaps be considered as a term of cognitive dissonance which was generally assumed to tension producing. It is observed that stress arising from various job roles of employees produce an unfavourable condition, which reduces the degree of job involvement.

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affect the individual in terms of emotional exhaustion (Schwab, 1981). These factors is also observed to result in low turnover, low job performance, and low employee morale (Parasuraman,1978; Lyon 1971; Flora, 1977 Helwig, 1979 Lamble 1980; beehr 1976; Chonko, 1979; Szilagyi, 1980; Bateman, 1981; Libby, 1978)

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affects the organization related individual consequence resulting in job threat and job related tension (Hammer & Tosi 1975; Senatra, 1977; Carter 1978; Peltit 1973; Miles,1974).

Role conflict was found to be negatively related to satisfaction with job (Krant, 1966; Parasuraman 1978, Libby 1978 ; Price 1971; Medrano 1979; Miller 1979).

Rajeshwari (1992) reported that organizational stress is greater for married people than unmarried people. Significant negative relationship was observed between stress and work experience, stress and age, stress and income; negative relation between stress and work experience.

Srivastava (1990) reported that managers of public sector organization experienced higher level of occupational stress than their private sector counter

parts. Ahmed Bharadwaj and Narula (1985) found that public sector executives experience more role conflict than private sector executives do.

With the narrow span a great deal of time is spent with subordinates. Untrained subordinates, inadequate authority delegation, unclear plans of non repetitive operation, use of ineffective communication techniques, greater number of specialists at lower and middle levels, subordinates unwilling to assume responsibility, or immature subordinates could be the reasons for having a narrow span. The degree of specialisation by individuals was the most important variable affecting span. Simple tasks may allow for a wider span than tasks that are complex and include a great variety of activities. When a greater number of specialists were supervised, effective spans were less, mostly at lower and middle levels of organisation. Clarity and co-ordination issues are the major problems associated with that. Close control, close supervision, more involvement of superiors in subordinates' work and complicated planning are required at the narrow span (Koontz and Wehrich, 1989, pp.164-172). Thus the narrow span may be more stressful with conflicts and work load for the superior officer.

French, Caplan & Harrison (1982) reported that role ambiguity and role overload as source of stress and job tension. It is expected that individuals who occupy work roles that are ambiguous, conflicting and who perceive their workload to be more than they can handle would experience negative emotions, fatigue and tension.

Studies on the effects of role ambiguity reveal that lack of clarity about behavioural expectations causes a greater concern with own (vs. work group) performance, lower actual and perceived group productivity, less concern or involvement with the group, lower job satisfaction, unfavorable attitudes toward role senders, and increased tension, anxiety, depression, and causally linked to turnover (Caplan & Jones 1975, Johnson & Graen, 1973).

Other studies, indicated a difference in the impact of role ambiguity across occupations. Although the preponderance of the evidence shows role ambiguity to be associated with job dissatisfaction, (e.g Beehr et al. 1976; Caplan et al. 1975; Greene 1972; Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Johnson & Stinson 1975; Paul 1974;: Rizzo et al. 1970) studies among nurse's aides (Brief & Aldag, 1976) managers (Tosi, 1971) teachers (Tosi & Tosi, 1970) and supervisors and operating employees (Ivancevich & Dobbelly, 1974) found no relationship. Role ambiguity is negatively correlated with job satisfaction, but is unrelated to satisfaction with pay, co workers, supervision, and promotion (Keller, 1957). This finding suggests that a general measure of job satisfaction might not sufficiently discriminate the potential outcomes of role stress. Similarly, most studies report a positive relationship between role ambiguity and tension or anxiety. But two studies report no relationship (Tosi, 1971: Tosi & Tosi, 1970).

Role incumbent with high levels of role ambiguity also respond to their situation with anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, a sense of futility or lower self esteem, lower levels of job involvement and organizational commitment, of supervisors and of themselves (Brief & Aldag , 1976; Greene, 1972).

The relationship between role ambiguity and the propensity to leave the organization has varied across investigations from positive (Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974) to non significant (Hamner & Tosi, 1974). Two correlational studies have found positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover (Brief & Aldag, 1976; Lyons, 1971).

The relationship between role ambiguity and performance is also unclear. Negative correlations have isolated role ambiguity and measure of performance for nurses' aides (Brief & Aldag, 1976) and managers (Greene 1972) but no relationship was found for paramedical workers (Szilagyi & Sims, 1975) and managers (Tosi, 1971) Beehr et al. (1976) find that role ambiguity is negatively related to effort toward quality but unrelated to effort toward quantity, Role ambiguity is negatively related to supervisory evaluation of performance but unrelated to self perceptions of work quality (Rief & Aldag, 1976) the observation of negative relationship between role ambiguity and compliance (Greene, 1972) suggests that role incumbents are ambiguous about the behaviour required of them by supervisors, and that they may be working at the wrong things and are probably unaware that they are doing so.

Orpen (1982) reported inverse relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction. Nath (1980) reported negative relationship between length of service and role ambiguity. Abdel-Halim (1980) observed negative relationship between role ambiguity and positive work outcomes. Open (1982) also reported inverse relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction.

Malhan, Agarwala and Krishna (1983) observed that education and experience had negative relationship with role ambiguity. Pandia (1991) reported that there is no relation between role ambiguity and age.

Malhan, Agarwal & Krishna (1983) reported that managers with relatively less number of years of service might experience role ambiguity detrimental to their performance. There found to be a negative correlation existing between role ambiguity and length of service.

Hamner and Tosi (1974) examined the relationship between role stress and ambiguity with job involvement and found an inverse relationship between the two. Madhu and Harigopal (1976) found role ambiguity to be negatively related with job involvement; however no significant relationship between role conflict and job involvement was found.

Abdel Halim (1980) observed negative relationship between role ambiguity and positive work outcomes. Orpen (1982) also reported inverse relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction.

Parasuraman (1978) demonstrated that stress and ambiguity were positively and significantly related to turnover.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) reported in their study that among male executives role ambiguity was negatively related with job performance, but role conflict did not exhibit any significant relationship with job performance.

Singh (1990) observed that junior and middle level managers differ significantly on certain stress dimensions. Junior level managers experienced greater lack of group cohesiveness, role conflict, role ambiguity, feeling of inequity, role overload and inadequacy of role authority.

Schuler (1977) reports that only the lower level of an organization, the more experienced employees had lower levels of performance given high role ambiguity, and higher performance levels given low role ambiguity, than did employees with less experience. Schuler's hypothesis that better educated, more experienced employees adapt to role ambiguity was therefore not supported.

An employee, who just joined in an organization might find his role ambiguous, as it is his initial role. This might also be due to the organizational climate, which is new to him. One who grows old in the organization might not find ambiguity regarding his role as the role becomes "routinized" and he becomes acquainted with the duties and responsibilities. Thus he will be able to tackle the problems with more confidence.

Chonko (1979) found that role ambiguity was negatively related for less experienced sales people because they often find themselves in new situations requiring new information. Experienced sales people tend to have less ambiguity.

Peltit (1973) finds that role conflict and role ambiguity was both negatively related to various forms of organizational tenure.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) reported no significant relationship between either role conflict or role ambiguity and job experience for the technical as well as non-technical supervisors. Elsenhauer (1987) reported that those with the least amount of academic experience had less role conflict and role ambiguity than with a moderate amount of such exposure.

The relationship between role ambiguity and the propensity to leave the organization has varied across investigations from positive (eg: Ivancevich & Donnelly, 1974; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974) to non significant (eg Hamner & Tosi, 1974) Two correlational studies have found positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover (Brief & Aldag, 1976: Lyons, 1971)

Miles(1974), indicates that both role conflict & role ambiguity were found to be related to job dissatisfaction. The same conclusion was suggested by Rosenheim (1976), Organ & Greene (1974), Bernardin (1981), Coldwell (1981) Keenan (1981), Madhu (1982).

Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload are main sources of work family conflict (Greenhaus & Butell, 1985). Role ambiguity and role conflict have been identified as a major source of stress and job tension. (Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980; French Caplan & Harrison 1982.)

Abdel Halim (1980) observed negative relationship between role ambiguity and positive work outcomes. Orpen (1982) also reported inverse relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction. Futrell & Parasuraman (1981) reported

that stress in the form of role conflict and role ambiguity perhaps be considered as a term of cognitive dissonance which was generally assumed to tension producing. It is observed that stress arising from various job roles of employees produce an unfavourable condition, which reduces the degree of job involvement.

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affect the individual in terms of emotional exhaustion (Schwab, 1981). These factors is also observed to result in low turnover, low job performance, and low employee morale (Parasuraman, 1978; Lyon 1971; Flora, 1977; Helwig, 1979 Lambie 1980; Beehr 1976; Chonko, 1979; Szilagyi, 1980; Bateman 1981; Libby, 1978)

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affects the organization related individual consequence resulting in job threat and job related tension (Hammer & Tosi 1975; Senatra, 1977; Carter 1978; Peltit 1973; Miles, 1974).

French, Caplan & Harrison (1982) reported that role ambiguity and role overload as source of stress and job tension. It is expected that individuals who occupy work roles that are ambiguous, conflicting, and perceive their workload to be more than they can handle would experience negative emotions, fatigue and tension.

According to Mishra (1988), role overload does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between job involvement and job satisfaction. Examining the relationship between role stress and work related outcomes, Keenan & McBain (1979) found positive relationship between tension and role overload.

Dramatic shift in employment patterns created strains at work and in the home that demand attention. Women experienced role overload and wrestled with day care and career advancement issues. (Strickland, Jay.W 1992)

Role overload is a condition in which the individual is faced with a set of obligations, which require him to do more than he is able to cope. Margolis et al. (1974) reported that job performance may be affected by overload conditions as it is associated with lowered confidence, decreased work motivation and decision-making quality, deteriorating inter-personal relations and even accident rates.

The compulsion to work hard and give of one's best is often due to an individual's loyalty to the organization but on account of several other reasons : improper delegation of work, job insecurity, fierce competition for promotions and corporate culture typical of Indian companies which demands that senior management staff have to necessarily be in the office everyday until the head of the organization leaves it. Some managers even believes that long hours of work is a pre-requisite for high achievement, where as some others believe that managers perform best only when they are highly stressed and overload with work (Philp, 1994).

Managers who are younger and those having lesser tenure of service experience more role overload. (Gupta & Prathap, 1987) reported that "a linear increase was observed in the extent of role overload as function of service length (cf. Pestonjee, 1992; p.102). Sen (1981) reported that age is negatively related to role overload (cf. Pestonjee, 1992, p.95)

Role overload is negatively correlated with age, length of service and span of control (Philip C Koshy, 1994).

It may be virtually impossible for the executives to complete all the task assigned to them within a stipulated time. They face conflicts of priorities; they must decide which demands are to comply with and which all to hold off.

Younger executives experience role overload because of their insufficient exposure to the organizational tasks. But as they get familiarised with people and job context they gain confidence in overload situation by adopting various personal and professional strategies. More responsibility is generally assigned to the subordinates from the top displeasure from the superiors. People who are adaptable and those who do well are rewarded with more work in Indian conditions (Pandia, 1991) Generally younger executives will fall into this category. Subsequently these younger executives experience role overload.

Role overload decreases when the span of control increases . It is quite evident that more subordinates at disposal will bring down the overload. Work will be shared by more people and hence the superior executives experience less role overload.

Andrey D Smith and William J Reid (1986) reported that married women employed full time often experience role overload and role strain.

Multiple roles may compete for a person's time. Time spent on activities within one role generally cannot be devoted to activities within another role. Time

based conflict is consistent with the excessive work time and schedule conflict dimensions identified by Pleck et al. (1980) and role overload identified by Kahn et al. (1964).

According to Keenan and Mc Role (1981) overload occurs when parents must attend to the rigors of employment as well as to domestic and childcare chores. Because employed women still perform most of the household chores and childrearing duties they have somewhat higher levels of overload (Lewis & Cooper 1987; Pleck, 1985). However, role overload is inversely correlated with maintaining a positive family climate for men as well as women (Wiersma & Vanden Berg, 1991) Although egalitarian role sharing between husband and wife helps decrease overload. Pleck (1985) has suggested that women complain of role overload not because of exhaustion or doing too much, rather her husband is doing too little.

Flora (1977) in her study suggested that role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload correlate positively to anxiety.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) reported in their study that among male executives role ambiguity was negatively related with job performance, but role conflict did not exhibit any significant relationship with job performance. Bateman (1981) found that role overload resulted in poor job performance.

Singh (1990) observed that junior and middle level managers differ significantly on certain stress dimensions. Junior level managers experienced greater lack of group cohesiveness, role conflict, role ambiguity, feeling of inequity, role overload and inadequacy of role authority.

Role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload are main sources of work family conflict (Greenhaus & Butell, 1985).

According to Mishra (1988), role overload does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between job involvement and job satisfaction. Examining the relationship between role stress and work related outcomes, Keenan and McBain (1979) found positive relationship between tension and role overload

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affect the individual in terms of emotional exhaustion (Schwab, 1981). These factors is also observed to result in low turnover, low job performance, and low employee morale (Parasuraman,1978; Lyon 1971; Flora, 1977; Helwig, 1979; Lambie 1980; Beehr 1976; Chonko, 1979; Szilagyi, 1980; Bateman 1981; Libby, 1978).

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affects the organization related individual consequence resulting in job threat and job related tension (Hammer & Tosi 1975; Senatra, 1977; Carter 1978; Peltit 1973; Miles,1974).

Beena and Poduval (1997) found that there is no relationship between job satisfaction and job involvement. According to Mishra (1997) overall job satisfaction was significantly related to job involvement.

Rajeshwari (1992) reported that organizational stress is greater for married people than unmarried people. She observed significant negative relationship between stress and work experience, stress and age, stress and income; negative

relation between stress and work experience; negative correlation between family members and stress.

Dwivedi (1991) reported that relatively low level of education, experience and age down the hierarchy make public sector personnel vulnerable to role stress. Bajpai (1992) stated that the following are some of the factors responsible for job stress (1) relationship with boss, subordinates and colleagues (2) role ambiguity and confusion caused due to shifting of roles, (3) heavy workload and setting unrealistic targets and deadlines, (4) keeping up with technological change, (5) problems with career growth, (6) conflicting demands by superior and (7) conflict between required tasks and desired personal accomplishments.

With the narrow span a great deal of time is spent with subordinates. Untrained subordinates, inadequate authority delegation, unclear plans of nonrepetitive operation use of ineffective communication techniques, greater number of specialists at lower and middle levels, subordinates unwilling to assume responsibility and reasonable risks, or immature subordinates could be the reasons for having a narrow span. The degree of specialisation by individuals was the most important variable affecting span. Simple tasks may allow for a wider span than tasks that are complex and include a great variety of activities. When a greater number of specialists were supervised effective spans were less, mostly at lower and middle levels of organisation. Clarity and co-ordination issues are the major problems associated with that. Close control, close supervision, more involvement of superiors in subordinates work and complicated planning are required at the narrow span. (Koontz & Wehrich, 1989, pp.164-172) . Thus the narrow span may be more stressful with conflicts and work load for the superior officer.

Furnham and Schaffer (1984) reported that occupational pressure might have adverse effects upon a worker's attitude and well being.

French, Caplan and Harrison (1982) reported that role ambiguity and role overload as source of stress and job tension. It is expected that individuals who occupy work roles that are ambiguous, conflicting, and perceive their workload to be more than they can handle would experience negative emotions, fatigue and tension.

With the narrow span a great deal of time is spent with subordinates. Untrained subordinates, inadequate authority delegation, unclear plans of nonrepetitive operation use of ineffective communication techniques, greater number of specialists at lower and middle levels, subordinates unwilling to assume responsibility and reasonable risks, or immature subordinates could be the reasons for having a narrow span. The degree of specialisation by individuals was the most important variable affecting span. Simple tasks may allow for a wider span than tasks that are complex and include a great variety of activities. When a greater number of specialists were supervised effective spans were less, mostly at lower and middle levels of organisation. Clarity and co-ordination issues are the major problems associated with that. Close control, close supervision, more involvement of superiors in subordinates work and complicated planning are required at the narrow span. (Koontz & Weihrich, 1989, pp.164-172) . Thus the narrow span may be more stressful with conflicts and work load for the superior officer.

Nazz Rovshen and Ferguson (1990) observed that Indian managers sandwiched between a traditional upbringing at home and modern industrial culture at work force, take a long time to adjust. The result is that Indian executives are increasingly becoming stress-prone (Mukhi, 1990). Pandia (1991) observed that Indian managers are known to be averse to delegation especially of authority which could be one stresser and work load accumulated by manager for lack of delegation could be another.

P.C. Mishra (1987) reported that job involvement scores are not related to occupational stress but related to job satisfaction. This result is in tune with the findings of Wissenberg and Gruenfeld(1968), Schwyhart & Smith (1972); Rao (1976); Sharma & Sharma (1978); Porat (1979); Cheloha & Farr (1980), Saal (1981) also support the present findings.

The correlation coefficient between job satisfaction and occupational stress scores is negative and significant(Mishra P.C 1987). Lakshminarayan and Prabhakaran (1994) reported that the textile workers with more job satisfaction have less job stress.

Richardson (1988) showed that responsibility and job satisfaction are positively related. Factors such as age and tenure of job are related to job satisfaction (Bedeian et al.,1992). Schuler (1980) argued that stress in an organization is an important problem and job stress contributes to health related problems among workers (Parker & Decotis 1983). The organizational characteristics influence both physical and psychological well being (Kelloway & Barling, 1991). Tang and Hammontree (1992) found that the relationship between stress and

employee's health is an important concern for human resource managers. In recent days technological progress, the development of large-scale production and division of labour with specialization have impoverished the workers relationship to his work. The worker may not have any real feeling of contributing to the final product or result. Thus the work may become unsatisfying and may result in increasing signs of discontent (Sen, 1993)

Cooper and Bramwell (1992) revealed that the blue collar workers have less job satisfaction and more job stress. French, Caplan and Harrison (1982) reported that role ambiguity and role overload as source of stress and job tension. It is expected that individuals who occupy work roles that are ambiguous, conflicting, and perceive their workload to be more than they can handle would experience negative emotions, fatigue and tension.

The findings of the present study would provide information to bridge certain gaps in the area of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload research although in a limited geographical area. It also provide certain guidelines for the human resource management practices . so as to adopt a package of role conflict management strategies preventive and curative as well. It means that organizations can choose to invest in women executives role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload reduction programs as away to provide their women executive people better Quality of work life and at the same time can develop the managerial effectiveness for better productivity.

Chapter 3

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This study primarily focuses attention on the phenomena of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by the women executives of different sectors of Cochin – Alwaye industrial belt. Investigation of the inter relationship of these role dimensions with selected bio social variables and performance/behavior related outcomes are also included within the broad scope of this study. Variations in these role dimensions observed among women executives of Public and private sector companies and also of manufacturing, consultancy and service sector organizations are also a part of the study.

The dependent variables and independent variables under the study are as follows.

The dependent variables or the main phenomena under observation are:

- Role conflict

- Role ambiguity

- and

- Role overload

Independent variables or factors which are likely influence and the outcomes of the dependent variables are:

A. Bio social variables or factors associated with role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload taken for this study are:

1. Male female or gender differences.
2. Age of women executives.
3. Job tenure (experience) of women executives.
4. Education of women executives
5. Span of control of women executives.
6. Family responsibilities of women executives.

B. Performance/ behavior related outcomes of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload:

1. Job satisfaction
2. Job involvement
3. Job stress

C. Nature of organization (Where women executives work)

- Ownership pattern of the organization
 1. Public sector
 2. Private Sector

- **Nature of work of the women executives.**
 1. **Manufacturing sector**
 2. **Consultancy**
 3. **Service**

CLARIFICATIONS OF THE CONCEPTS

Role conflict

Role conflict is the experienced incongruity of the expectations associated with a role assigned by the organization. This may take the form of

(a) divergent role expectations. It exist when the expectations of a job related behaviours are mutually different or opposite and the individual cannot meet one expectations without rejecting the other

and /or

(b) incompatible requests received from role senders in carrying out job related responsibilities.

and /or

(c) incompatible multiple roles enacted by the incumbent.

In the present study, Role conflict is defined as the experience of incompatibility in role enactment due to any one of the above factors either in separation or in combination.

Role ambiguity

In this study , Role ambiguity is defined as the lack of clarity of role expectations and the degree of uncertainty regarding the outcome of one's role performance. Role ambiguity occurs when an individual is unclear regarding his job duties and responsibilities. As a result, the individual experiences difficulty in enacting the role.

Role overload

Role overload is defined as experienced time pressure for the completion of duties and responsibilities. It occurs when the role incumbent engages in several activities or several roles at the same time, all of which may be mutually compatible in the abstract but within too short a time period.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as a positive emotional state resulting from the performance of one's job. Job satisfaction determines the individual's attitude towards his/her job. Job satisfaction is a general attitude, which could be the result of many specific attitudes in three areas, namely specific job factors, individual characteristics and group relationship outside the job.

Job involvement

Job involvement refers to the degree to which the job is considered as an important aspect of one's self. Job Involvement defined as a psychological

identification with one's work, seems to be a distinctive job attitude that should be thought of as conceptually and empirically separate from job satisfaction. Enthusiasm in carrying out the role assigned by accepting the assigned role as the central theme in one's life is an indication of the degree of job involvement.

Job stress

Job stress is defined as the phenomenal state of the job performance exhibiting a set of physical and psychological syndrome characterised by tension, anxiety and physical exhaustion.

Family responsibilities

Family responsibilities is defined as the set of activities to be carried out by a person for the maintenance and development of the members of the family viz. Husband/wife, children, parents and others living in the same household under the care or patronage of that person.

Job tenure

Total number of years spent in enabling the present role or experience in the present job is taken as job tenure.

Education

Formal schooling at secondary and higher levels are taken as indication of education. The subjects in this study are classified into two educational groups as (i) Graduates and (ii) Post-graduates.

Gender

The subjects of the study are to be compared with the male counter parts for identifying the similarities and differences in various role dimensions and outcomes. This is done by comparing the responses of all women executives taken for this study with the responses given by a comparable male subjects selected on a random basis from comparable organizations.

Age

Age is chronological status in terms of date birth of the subjects selected for the study.

TYPES OF THE ORGANIZATION

Public sector

Large/medium manufacturing industry in the Cochin-Alwaye industrial belt controlled by the government of India and having more than 30 women executives.

Private sector

Large/medium manufacturing institutions in the Cochin-Alwaye belt controlled by Private management and having more than 30 women executives.

Consultancy type work

An organization with consultancy as the main line function and having more than 30 women executives.

Service oriented organization

Large/medium banking institutions both in the Public and Private sectors and having more than 30 women executives under each.

OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To understand gender difference in role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by the executives.

2. To find out the association of biosocial factors such as age, education, number of years of service, span of control and family responsibilities with role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by women executives.
3. To study job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress in relation to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by women executives.
4. To find out differences in role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing, consultancy and service organizations.
5. To find out the difference in role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by the women executives in the Private and Public sector organizations.

HYPOTHESES

Major hypotheses put forward in the study are:

1. Gender difference

- (1) The women executives experience significantly higher role conflict in comparison with that of male executives.
- (2) The women executives experience significantly higher role ambiguity in comparison with that of male executives.

- (3) The women executives experience significantly higher role overload in comparison with that of male executives.

2. Public vs. Private sector difference

- (1) There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in private and public sector organisations.
- (2) There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in private and public sector organisations.
- (3) There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in private and public sector organisations.

3. Manufacturing vs. Consultancy difference

- (1) There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy oriented organisations.
- (2) There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy oriented organisations.
- (3) There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy oriented organisations.

4. Manufacturing vs. Service difference

- (1) There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service oriented organisations.
- (2) There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service oriented organisations.
- (3) There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service oriented organisations.

5. Consultancy and Service difference

- (1) There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in consultancy and service oriented organisations.
- (2) There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in consultancy and service oriented organisations.
- (3) There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in consultancy and service oriented organisations.

6. Age

- (1) There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and age of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and age of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and age of women executives.

7. Educational levels

- (1) There is a significant negative relationship between educational level and role conflict experience of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant negative relationship between educational level and role ambiguity of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant negative relationship between educational level and role overload of women executives.

8. Job tenure/experience

- (1) There is a significant negative relationship between number of years of service and role conflict experience of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant negative relationship between number of years of service and role ambiguity of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant negative relationship between number of years of service and role overload of women executives.

9. Family responsibilities

- (1) There is a significant positive relationship between family responsibilities and role conflict experience of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant positive relationship between family responsibilities and role ambiguity of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant positive relationship between family responsibilities and role overload of women executives.

10. Span of control/supervision

- (1) There is a significant positive relationship between role conflict and span of control of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and span of control of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant positive relationship between role overload and span of control of women executives.

11. Job satisfaction

- (1) There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job satisfaction of women executives.

12. Job involvement

- (1) There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and job involvement of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job involvement of women executives.

13. Job stress

- (1) There is a significant positive relationship between role conflict and job stress of women executives.
- (2) There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives.
- (3) There is a significant positive relationship between role overload and job stress of women executives.

A PRELIMINARY STUDY

A preliminary study was conducted among forty cases dealing with role related problems experienced by four different categories of postgraduate women. The observations made in this preliminary study were relevant in formulating meaningful hypotheses for further detailed research on the role related problems of working women.

Observations in this preliminary study focussed attention on the following:

1. Role related problems among *women executives with their husband in the family but without much role clarity and role differentiation in managing the house.*
2. Role related problems *among women executives when there is role clarity and role differentiation between husband and wife in managing the family.* This is possible (a) when the women executives are managing the family in the absence of their husband (b) when there is role clarity and role difference in the family in the presence of the husband.
3. Role related problems of *non-working graduate and post-graduate married women* under the family environments described in (1) and (2) above.

This preliminary study with its findings/observations is briefly described in Appendix B of this report.

THE SAMPLE: (of the present study)

For the present study, Cochin-Alwaye industrial belt was identified as the study area. This is because there are a large number of industrial organizations in this area, which employ women in the executive cadre. Due to non availability of a significant number of women executives, all the units in the industrial belt could not be included and hence only four units with different work environment were selected for the study: One in the manufacturing, one in the Consultancy and two in the service oriented organisations. Manufacturing and consultancy oriented organisations were in the Public sector. Of the two service oriented organisations, one was a public sector bank and the other a private sector bank. The names of these units are kept anonymous due to the sensitive nature of the study. These four units were selected on the basis of availability of women executives in such organisations. All the women executives from these four organizations were selected for the study. A comparable number of male executives were selected at random from the public sector manufacturing and consultancy organisations. Comparison was made only for finding the gender difference in role dimensions and not on other variables. Selection of the male executives were confined to comparable levels in the organisation and age and the random sample was within this segment.

The investigator approached each of the subject in the sample with a prior appointment. The purpose of the study was explained to each of them and clear instructions were given. The data collected from the respondents were tabulated with the help of computer. Correlation, 't' tests and other appropriate statistical techniques were adopted to draw conclusions and for arriving at meaningful generalizations.

Categories of institutions and the number of subjects under each category and their overall age are shown in the following table.

Table No.3.1
Distribution of women executive and sample male executive respondents by
the type of organizations

	Number	Average age in years	Public Sector			Private Sector		
			Manufacturing	Consultancy	Service	Manufacturing	Consultancy	Service
Male executives	123	38	74	49	—	—	—	—
Female executives	196	32	74	49	34	—	—	39

TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION

The necessary data are collected by questionnaire method in order to explore the differences, associations and inter linkages among variables of the study. An eight page questionnaire containing 84 questions include the following eight categories. The first part contains demographic details: age, education, experience, marital status, occupational status, type of organisations etc. The second part deals with questions related to family responsibilities. The data related to role conflict is obtained from the third section while the fourth and fifth sections contain questions related to role ambiguity and role overload respectively. Data regarding job

involvement, job satisfaction, and job stress are obtained from sections six, seven, and eight respectively. A copy of the questionnaire is given under Appendix A.

Specific scales used for the measurement of RC, RA, ROC, JS, J1, Jstress etc. are as follows:

ROLE CONFLICT SCALE

The role conflict scale developed by Johnson and Stinson (1975) was adopted with minor modification to suit the present purpose and was used for measuring role conflict and role ambiguity in the present study.

According to this scale, role conflict (RC) is defined as the extent to which the subject's job entails tasks that conflict with his values and job expectations and the incompatible requests the subject receives concerning his/her work. Totally ten items were presented in the role conflict scale.

The response categories to the items ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. A score of 5 was given to strongly agree and a score of 1 to strongly disagree. Thus a high score on these scales denotes high role conflict. The reliability of this scale ranged from 0.58 to 0.80.

ROLE AMBIGUITY

Role ambiguity scale developed by Johnson and Stinson (1975) was adopted with minor modification to suit the present purpose and was used for measuring role ambiguity in the present study. There are seven questions in the role ambiguity scale. The reliability of this ranged from 0.42 to 0.71.

ROLE OVERLOAD

The role overload index developed by Higgins and Duxdury (1991) was adopted for the study. Ten questions are related to how much time pressure an individual experiences to pursue personal interests. The reliability of this test ranged from 0.40 to 0.72.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Family responsibility scale developed by Higgins (1991) was used in this study. The questions are related to how much time they have to spent with family duties and family members or how much free time respondents spent with their families and how much they perceived that the most important things that happened to them involved their families. The test-retest reliability exceeds 0.59.

JOB SATISFACTION

The measuring instrument used in the present study was the Brayfield-Rothe scale (1959). The scale, measuring overall job satisfaction, consists of 18 items with Likert scoring system applied to each item. The reliability exceeds 0.71 to 0.84.

JOB INVOLVEMENT

The 20-item measure job involvement scale developed by Lodhal & Kejner (1965) was employed. The test retest reliability coefficient ranges from 0.72 to 0.89 (Lodhal & Kejner 1965).

JOB STRESS

Job stress scale developed by Higgins (1991) was used for data collection. Instrument contained 10 questions. The scale items were designed to tap the kind of stress related to internalised values and emotions. The reliability of this scale exceeded 0.7.

Bio social and background information

A performa was designed to collect information on the bio- social factors and background information of the respondents. Entries were to be made by the respondents. Most of the responses were to be in the form of tick marks in the appropriate space provided. These selected biosocial variables were considered for

the analysis. But a separate set of Performa for background information was used to know the nature and characteristics of the sample.

The selected biosocial variables considered for the analysis are age, length of service, education level and expected and span of control. These variables are included for analysis based on the literature survey and the preliminary study findings.

The information collected through the background information Performa provided a comprehensive profile of the sample of executives under the research study. The background information collected are marital status, educational and professional qualification, family responsibilities and other relevant information.

Administration of the tools of data collection

Permission was obtained from the management of each unit to conduct the study. Maximum co- operation could be secured from them. Each respondent was briefed individually on the procedure for filling up the questionnaires which would took about 60 minutes for completion. Some executives were found to hesitate to respond due to the sensitive nature of the study.

About 250 questionnaires were distributed among the women executives from whom 219 of them got filled up by the respondents. 23 questionnaire were either incomplete or distorted, which were later discarded. Hence a total of 196 filled in questionnaires were found to be complete and ready for data processing. The total

female executives at all levels in the four selected organizations were 219 out of which 196 women executives were accepted for the analysis.

Editing, coding and statistical analysis of data

The data generated through the responses from 123 male executives and 196 female executives were considered for data processing. All the items were appropriately coded and entered into a master chart manually, which were later on stored in the computer.

The data were processed through SPSS package. The analysis was done based on the objectives of the study. For testing the hypotheses, appropriate statistical techniques were used.

ANALYSIS

The "t" test was applied to find out whether there was any significant difference in the mean scores on role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload of respondents due to gender, nature of the organisation such as manufacturing, consultancy, service etc.

Karl Pearson's coefficient of correlation was computed to find out the degree of relationship among role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload and also among job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress. The relationship of age, education,

experience, job satisfaction, job involvement, job satisfaction etc with role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload were also calculated and tested.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Comparative study on all possible role conflict related variables like general political and economic pressures, organizational climate, and personality style motivational factors etc could not be included.

The sample selected in this study only covers the limited women executives in the Cochin - Alway industrial belt; the study was not focused on other women workers.

Chapterisation scheme

The entire report is presented in the seven chapters. Chapter one gives the general introduction, where in the context, focus and conceptual background and significance of the study are provided. Chapter two presents the review of literature wherein relevant empirical studies are listed. Chapter three provides the scope and methodology adopted. Role Conflict, Role ambiguity and Role overload experienced by women executives are described in detail in chapters four, five and six respectively. Comparisons of the findings in the private and public sector and manufacturing, consultancy and service organisations are also given in chapters 4, 5 and 6. The main findings in the study are summarised in chapter 7.

A comprehensive reference list is given immediately after chapter seven.

Appendices include the following:

Appendix A: The tools for data collection used in this study.

Appendix B: Preliminary study.

Appendix C: Outputs from SPSS analysis software.

Appendix D: Inter correlations among Role conflict, Role ambiguity, Role overload and also among Job satisfaction, Job involvement and Job Stress.

Chapter 4

ROLE CONFLICT

'Role conflict', in the context of the present study, is conceptualized as mutually competing expectancies and demands that confront the working women as a result of the pervasive nature of women's family and domestic roles. Work and family role conflicts have been well-documented by several researchers (Rapoport & Rapoport, 1971, Gray, 1983, Valdez & Barbara, 1987). Marriage and parent hood appear to be incompatible with a career for women and are seen as conflict arousing. Working women experience greater inter role conflict and overload than either men or non-working women (Kapur, 1974). Although the theory of role accumulation asserts that such conflict and overload may be reduced by the rewards of multiple roles, there are convincing evidences that working women do face tension due to their dual role (Uma Shankar Jha; Arati Mehta & Latika Menon, 1998).

Role conflict may exist by the perceived and experienced incongruity of the expectations associated with the ascribed or assigned role in an institution.

The objectives of this study is to examine the role conflict experienced by the women executives due to their multiple roles in the work organisation and family. How the experienced role conflict is associated with socio-biological factors such as age, education, number of years of experience, family responsibilities and what are the work related outcomes of such conflict are also enquired into in this chapter.

Correlations among the three dependent variables of the present study, viz. role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload have been computed to find out the relationship, if any among them. The computed 'r' value between role conflict and role overload is 0.133 and the correlation between role conflict and role ambiguity is -0.095. The computed results using SPSS package is given in Appendix E. The same test is done in the case of performance/ behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress. Correlation between job satisfaction and job involvement is 0.066 and that of job satisfaction and job stress is -0.078. The 'r' value between job involvement and job stress is -0.122. From these data on 'r', it seems that all the dependent variables i.e., role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload are somewhat independent. Similarly the performance/ behavioural outcomes such as are also independent since the 'r' value between them is not significant.

To find out the gender difference in the role conflict experienced by the executives is calculated by equating the age of the male and female executives in the same organization and the 't' test is computed.

Hypotheses being tested on the variables related to or associated with role conflict are:

RC-H1 There is a significant difference **between male and female executives** in the experienced role conflict .

RC-H2 There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the women executives of the **public and private sector organizations**.

- RC-H3 There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the women executives of the **manufacturing and consultancy organizations**.
- RC-H4 There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the women executives of the **manufacturing and service oriented organizations**.
- RC-H5 There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the women executives in the **consultancy and service oriented organization**.
- RC-H6 There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and **age** of women executives.
- RC-H7 There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and experience in terms of **job tenure i.e. number of years of service** of women executives.
- RC-H8 There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and **educational levels** of women executives.
- RC-H9 There is a significant positive relation between role conflict and **span of control/supervision** of women executives.
- RC-H10 There is a significant positive relation between role conflict and **family responsibilities** of women executives.
- RC-H11 There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and **job satisfaction** of women executives.
- RC-H12 There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and **job involvement** of women executives.
- RC-H13 There is a significant positive relation between role conflict and **job stress** of women executives.

Gender difference

Gender difference in role conflict has been reported in various studies. The responses from male and female executives are coded and analyzed to verify the gender effect on role conflict. For the comparison of male and female executives, age factor was equated.

Hypothesis (RC-H1): There is significant difference between male and female executives in the experienced role conflict.

Table 4.1a

Gender difference in the role conflict experienced by male and female executives in the same age group (35 to 40)

Categories of respondents	Number (N)	Role conflict score Mean (x')	Standard deviation (S.D.)	Difference between means (x1'-x2')	Obtained t-value	Remarks
Male	32	33.1	4.01	1.1	1.20	not significant p = 0.10
Female	52	34.2	4.23			

Table 4.1a gives the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives in the same age group (35-40). The mean value of role conflict experienced by the female executives is 34.2 and that of the male executives is

33.1. The standard deviation of the male executives is 4.01 and that of the female executives is 4.23. The observed difference in the mean values of male and female executives is 1.1 which is found not significant even at 0.05 level as the calculated t value is 1.20 that is less than the table value. The findings of this study rejects the hypothesis (RC-H1) that there is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by male and female executives.

This result indicates that there is no difference in the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives (In the age group 35–40).

This finding is in tune with the conclusion of Kinnunen U and Mauno Saija (1998) who reported that there was no difference between the sex in the experience of either family or work-family conflict; the level of each type of conflict was the same for both men and women. But the reports of Frone et al. (1992); Gutek et al. (1991) and Duxbury et al. (1994) have shown that women experienced more role conflict than men, especially in the interface of work and family roles.

Working mothers with more number of children are prone to conflict than those who have fewer children (Itshree Padhi, 1999) Kala Rani (1976) also found a similar correlation pattern in her study.

Herman and Gyllstrom (1977) found that married persons experienced more work family conflict than unmarried persons did. In a similar vein, it might be expected that parents would experience more work family conflict than non parents would. Holahan & Gilbert, 1979a; Pleck et al. (1980) in their study reports that child caring may be the significant contributor to work - family conflict.

Rapoport and Rapoport (1971), Gray (1983) and Valdez & Barbara (1987) have documented many studies on work and family role conflict indicating gender difference. Hibbard and Pope (1987) also found that married working women faced greater health risks than men because of their dual roles of work and family responsibility.

Higgins (1991) found that a significant gender difference in the work family conflict i.e. female managers experience higher level of role conflict than the male managers.

Uco J. Wiersma (1994) reports that dual-career couples must cope with two types of work home role conflict, namely, time based issues of role overload and psychological issues of role quality.

Cooper and Davidson (1982) reported that the female executives have role conflict and role overload because of their dual roles in the family and the office. According to Aryee (1992) married professional women do experience high level of work – family conflict. Lot of studies reported that women professionals experience higher conflict than their male counterparts (Greenhaus et al. 1989; Voydanff, 1988)

According to Sangamitra, Buddhapiya and Preetham Khandewal (1995), female executives face conflict between job demands and family obligations than the male managers.

Russo (1976) found that married professional women might have more difficulty than men in managing the work - family interface and thereby experience more work family conflict.

Lack of spouse support has been identified as a source of work - family conflict (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979; Burke, Weir & Duwars, 1980; Houseknecht & Macke, 1981). I.e. to participate in household chores and childcare as well as providing the necessary emotional support to enable the partner to manage the demands arising from one's participation in multiple roles. The occupational commitment or work role involvement has also been identified as a source of work family conflict (Frone & Rice 1987, Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Beutell & Greenhaus 1982).

Majority of women are expected to carry out all the household work. Husbands in general seldom participate in any of the household duties. The outcome of the situation is that a women's paid work gets affected and puts her at a disadvantage as compared to men. She does not want to be transferred because of her family obligations and as a result she compromises with her career. Many women give up very promising careers for marriage or later for the children. In the absence of support from the family, female managers face a conflict between job demand and family obligations. In such a situation, the male employee always puts his job above his family, but a women is expected to sacrifice her career (Sanghamitra Buddhapriya & Preetakhandewal, 1995).

This study supports the view that there is no gender difference in the experienced role conflict between male and female in the 35-40 age group.

Various studies reported that role conflict is maximum at lower age group. It has been established that females at lower age group have more role conflict because of the adjustments they have to make at the beginning of their married life and the presence of infants in the house etc. This fact is further enquired into by analysing the data obtained from executives at a lower age group (25-35).

Table 4.1b

Gender difference in the role conflict experienced by male and female executives in the same age group (25 years to 35 years)

Categories of respondents	Number (N)	RC score Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (S.D.)	Difference between means ($\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2$)	Obtained t-value	Remarks
Male	30	30.1	3.5	0.09	0.147	Not significant
Female	32	30.01	3.2			

Table 4.1b gives the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives in the same age group (25-35 years). The mean value of role conflict experienced by the female executives is 30.01 and that of the male executives is 30.1. The standard deviation of the male executives is 3.5 and that of the female executives is 3.2. The observed difference in the mean values of male and female executives is 0.09. The calculated 't' value is 0.147 which is not significant even at 0.05 level. This result indicates that there is no significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives in the lower age group.

The women executives working in different types of organisations (viz. public and private sectors) may experience different levels of role conflict. The following hypothesis is formulated and tested.

Hypothesis (RC-H2): There is significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the women executives in the public and private sector organizations.

Table 4.2

Difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in private and public sector organizations

Class	Number of executives	RC score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference between means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Private	39	30.79	3.7	0.19	0.79	Not Significant
Public	34	30.6	3.1			

Table 4.2 shows the data relating role conflict experienced by the executives of the private and public sector organizations. The mean value of role conflict score of women executives in private sector organization is 30.79 and that of

public sector organization is 30.6 and of the difference of the means is 0.19. The calculated 't' value is 0.79 which is much less than the table value. Thus the obtained result rejects the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the private and public sector organizations.

These findings indicate that there is no difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the private sector organization and the public sector organizations.

Srilatha, P (1991) reported that the private sector reports more of intersender role conflict while public sector managers experienced more role ambiguity.

Manufacturing and consultancy organisations

Following hypothesis is formulated and tested to examine the role conflict experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

Hypothesis (RC-H3): There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the manufacturing and consultancy oriented organizations.

Table 4.3

Role conflict experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations

Categories	Number of women executives	RC score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Manufacturing organisation	74	31.04	5.15	1.31	1.40	Not significant
Consultancy organisation	49	29.73	5			

Table 4.3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the role conflict experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations. The mean values of role conflict in the manufacturing and consultancy sectors are 31.04 and 29.73 and the standard deviations are 5.15 and 5 respectively. The calculated 't' value is 1.40 which is less than the table value at p:0.05 level and hence not significant.

This results rejects the hypothesis (RC-H3), that there is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy oriented organizations.

From the results obtained it is concluded that **there is no difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy oriented organizations.**

There is no reference available for comparing the observation that there is no difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy oriented organizations.

Manufacturing and service oriented organisations

Possible difference between manufacturing and service oriented organisations in the role conflict experienced by women executives is examined in this section.

Hypothesis (RC-H4): There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and service oriented organizations.

Table 4.4

Role conflict experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service organizations.

Categories	Number of executives	RC score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of Means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Manufacturing organisation	74	31.04	4.12	0.24	0.63	Not Significant
Service organisation	73	30.8	3.6			

Table 4.4 shows the mean and standard deviation of role conflict experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and service oriented organizations. The mean value for manufacturing sector is 31.04 and that of the service sector is 30.8. The values of standard deviation are 4.12 and 3.6 respectively. The calculated 't' value is 0.63 which is less than the table value at $p:0.05$, and hence not significant.

Results from the table 4.4 rejects the hypothesis (RC-H4) that there is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and service organizations.

From the results it can be concluded that **there is no difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and service oriented organizations.**

Sufficient literature is not available for supporting or rejecting the present finding. Women executives in the manufacturing sector organizations experience more role conflict than the women executives in the service organizations. However, this difference is only a trend and not statistically significant .

Consultancy and service organisations

The role conflict experienced may be different due to the nature of the work the executives are performing. Data obtained from women executives in consultancy and service organisations are analysed to test the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis (RC-H5) There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in the consultancy and service oriented organizations.

Table 4.5
Role conflict experienced by women executives in consultancy and service oriented organizations

Categories	Number of women executives	RC score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of Means	Obtained 't' value	remarks
Service organizations	73	31.6	3.08	0.5	0.86	Not significant
Consultancy organizations	49	32.1	3.23			

Table 4.5 shows the role conflict experienced by women executives in the service and consultancy organizations. The mean value of role conflict experienced by service oriented organization is 31.6 and that of consultancy organization is 32.1. The difference between the mean values is 0.5 and the standard deviations are 3.08 for service organizations and 3.23 for consultancy organizations. The calculated 't' value is 0.86, which is much lesser than the table value at 0.05 level and hence it is not significant.

This hypothesis (RC-H5) that there is significant difference in the role conflict experienced by women executives in service and consultancy organizations is rejected by the obtained data.

Adequate references are not available for the comparison of the role conflict experienced by women executives in different types of organizations base don the nature of their line functions.

Age and degree of role conflict

What is the effect of age on role conflict is explained in this section. Age signifies the physical and mental maturity of an individual. The following hypothesis is tested to understand the relationship between age and role conflict experienced by women executives.

Hypothesis (RC-H6) There is a significant negative correlation between the role conflict and age of women executives.

Table 4.6

Correlation between age and role conflict, within the same category of women executives

Number of women executives	'r' value between role conflict & age	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.287	4.378	Significant at 0.01 level

The table 4.6 shows the relationship between role conflict and age of women executives. The 'r' value is -0.287 which indicates that there is negative relationship.

i.e when age increases, role conflict scores decreases. For measuring the significance of the relationship, statistical test of significance was resorted to. The calculated value of 't' is 4.378 which is higher than the table value at 0.01 level, so that the observed 'r' is significant at 0.01 level.

This result supports the hypothesis (RC-H6) that there is a negative relationship between role conflict and age of the women executives.

The table 4.6 indicates the significant negative relationship of age with role conflict. I.e. with increase in age people tends to experience less of role conflict. Or in other words, higher role conflict is at the lower age groups.

Increasing age was associated with ability to tolerate stress (Petit, 1973; Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984). But contradictory findings were obtained by Madhu and Harigopal (1980). Ahmed, Bharadwaj and Narula (1985) found no correlation between role stress and factors like age and experience of public and private sector executives. Familiarity with work with the passage of time will make the job more easier to the incumbent (Pestonjee,1992).

In terms of occupation, age has got some more significant role to play. Information about age is an essential part of the inquiry not only for understanding the entrance of an individual to the job market, but also for the exploration into his/her occupational career, work experience, family life and occupational mobility (Kumud Rajan, 1993).

Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Eisenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981). But this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in a similar background.

From this study, it can be inferred that age is related to role conflict, but one cannot fully stress the fact that with increase in age, there will be lesser conflict. Contradictory findings have been obtained in other studies. Madhu and Harigopal (1980), in their study on supervisors, found a positive relationship between age and role conflict. That is, as age increases the amount of experienced role conflict also tends to increase. As age increases, one tends to establish a set of stabilised role expectations and may become less inclined to change his role behaviour. This is quite similar to Chonko's assumption of positive relationship between experience and role conflict. From these studies it may be presumed that probably the relationship between age and role conflict is curvilinear than linear.

Most of the studies support the present findings (Peltit,1973: Simpson, 1979: Schwab,1981). However there are some studies which prove the opposite (Redfeck,1973; and Flora 1977, Madhu & Harigopal, 1980). Studies which take into account wider age span ranging from 20 to 50 years may sometimes even reveal that the pattern need not be linear (either positive or negative). It can be a nonlinear or a curvilinear i.e experienced role conflict could be more on both sides viz. very young age or very senior age but relatively lower in the middle aged group or vice versa. i.e. lower role conflict at either extreme and maximum in the middle. A satisfactory answer to this problem can be established only with a wider age span. The age range of subjects in the present study is 25 to 55 and within the age band, the observation - a significant finding - is that the younger age group is likely to

experience more role conflict than the older age group. This is well in tune with the fact that family responsibilities are perceived as a burden at the initial stage in married life with problem of establishing a new family and bearing up children. With advance of time people get adjusted to both the family responsibilities and work responsibilities as every thing get structured by experience.

The conclusion obtained from the present study is that **there is significant negative relationship between role conflict and age of the women executives.**

Service experience (Number of years) and role conflict

Number of years of experience (service experience/job tenure) may be a major factor affecting the role conflict of women executives in organisations. The following hypothesis is tested from data given in the table 4.7

Hypothesis (RC-H7) There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and experience in terms of job tenure. i.e. number of years of service of women executives.

Table 4.7

Correlation between role conflict and experience of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between Role conflict and number of years of experience	Obtained t value	Remarks
196	-0.067	0.913	Not significant

Table 4.7 shows correlation between role conflict score and the number of years of experience. The 'r' value is -0.067 .

The calculated 't' value of the observed 'r' is less than the table value of 1.96 at 0.05 level which means that there is no significant relation between role conflict and experience. But the negative trend indicates that there is possible relationship between role conflict and experience, i.e., when the year of service or experience increases the experienced role conflict may decrease. But no significant relationship was found in this study on the degree of correlation.

The result does not support the hypothesis (RC-H7) that there is a significant negative correlation between role conflict and experience.

Chonko (1979) indicated that for less experienced sales people, role conflict was found to be positively related while it was negatively related for more experienced sales people.

Peltit (1973) found that role conflict and role ambiguity were both negatively related to various forms of organizational tenure. Richardson (1974) in his study among sales girls in a large department store, indicated that overall department store experience and length of service were unrelated to role strain. Harigopal (1980)

found no significant relationship between role conflict or role ambiguity and job tenure for the technical as well as non-technical supervisors.

When similar studies were conducted in an educational institution background, role strain was found to be greater among less experienced persons (Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981) However contradictory findings have been obtained in other studies (Redfck, 1973; Flora, 1977; Lopez 1978; Gitelson, 1981)

Deepa Mathur (1992) found that after twenty years of service there was a rise in home adjustment, However, as length of service exceeded twenty years, there was again a low degree of home adjustment. The reason for this seems to be that in the initial years of work, the working women being younger, was more enthusiastic about her job, and determined to pull along anyhow. However, family members have yet to learn to accommodate to the situation where the wife / daughter-in-law is working. Young children may accentuate her problems. After a considerable length of service, the family "learns" to live with a working women and she herself works out "bargains". She equips herself with more defensive mechanisms. However, once the respondent has served for a long period of time she may feel frustrated by the burden of shouldering dual responsibilities, and feel less adjusted with home role (Deepa Mathur, 1992).

Job adjustment was also positively, moderately associated with length of service (Lovell, 1980).



From the present study, it can be concluded that **there is no relationship between service experience and role conflict experienced by women executives.**

Education and level of role conflict

Education is one of the major tools which provides individuals the necessary qualifications to fulfill socioeconomic roles. In the case of women, higher education has much importance as it helps them to find their rightful place in the society. The following hypothesis is tested to find out the possible relationship between educational level and role conflict of women executives.

Hypothesis (RC-H8) There is a negative correlation between role conflict and educational level of women executives.

Table 4.8

Correlation between role conflict and educational level of women executives.

Number of women executives	r.between role conflict and educational levels	Obtained ' t 'value	Remarks
196	0.054	0.736	Not significant

The table 4.8 gives the correlation between role conflict and educational level of women executives. 'r' value is 0.054, the obtained 't' value is 0.736 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that the obtained relationship is not significant to warrant any generalisation.

The result prompts the researcher to reject the hypothesis, that there is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and educational level of women executives. Though there is a positive direction in the relation between role conflict and educational level of women executives, this observation could be just by chance as the obtained correlation is not significant even at 0.05 level.

Women's ambition is tied to her role in marriage and the goals directly related to marriage, whereas man's ambition is linked to his occupation and marital status. The fundamental differentiation of women's ambition, related to direct and indirect pursuit of goals imposed by the married women's role, appears to be the key to the data at hand. The educational and occupational ambitions are substantially related to marital ambitions for men, but women's own educational and career aspirations bear little relationship to their marital existence" (Turner 1964b. p 271).

Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) reports that high education and high number of children in the family meant a higher level of work-family conflict. This finding indicates the possibility that highly educated men (i.e. men with high socio-economic status) and men with several children living at home (i.e. men with preschool children) appear to feel guilt about neglecting the family because of work. These feelings of guilt is about neglecting the family because of work. These feelings of guilt may arise out of social expectations; men are increasingly expected to be good

husbands and fathers and devote time to the family. Thus, the ability of men to maintain a positive family related self image is hindered (Frone et al., 1996).

One of the more recent observations is the trend of a curvilinear relationship between educational level of women and their work participation (Ayree et al., 1988).

From the present study, it is concluded that **there is no significant relationship between the educational level and role conflict experienced by women executives.**

Span of control/supervision and role conflict

Span of control/supervision may be defined as number of individuals working under the supervision of one person. Very few studies have examined the relationship between role conflict and span of control/ supervision. It may be suggested that more the number of subordinates, there exists a greater amount of role conflict.

Hypothesis (RC-H9)

There is a significant positive correlation between role conflict and span of control of women executives.

Table 4.9

Correlation between role conflict and span of control of women executives

Number of women executives	'r' between role conflict and span of control	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.117	1.59	Not significant

Table 4.9 indicates the relation between role conflict and span of control. The 'r' value is 0.117 and on checking the significance, it was found that the calculated t value is lesser than the table value at 0.05 level implying that this value is not significant. But the positive correlation shows that role conflict and span of control relationship is linear. i.e., when span control (or number of individuals working under the supervision of one person) increases, the role conflict may also increase.

Literature survey reveals that the role conflict is positively related to the number of subordinates (Gitelson, 1981)

In spite of the limited studies in this area, it can be suggested that more the number of subordinates, there exists a greater amount of role conflict, because of contradictory expectations from different number of subordinates and difficulty in managing them. If the subordinates are few, the role is likely to be less with better co ordination and direction. Relationship between the superior subordinates, when the organization is high in automation may become less strainfull and lesser in

conflict irrespective of a larger span of control. The job being standardized at the operative level, probably it requires less of direct supervision for co-ordination of activities (Sreelatha, 1991).

Complexity of the job also determines the span of control, when the nature of this job is complex, it needs constant supervision, and frequent interaction with the subordinates. This might result in role conflict for the supervisors more so when the span of control is larger (Sreelatha, 1991). However, Sreelatha found no significant correlation between span of control and role conflict (Sreelatha, 1991).

In the present study, it is observed that **there is a positive but not significant relationship between span of control/supervision and role conflict experienced by women executives.**

Family responsibilities and role conflict

A working women also has to look after the family and keep the family members satisfied. In order to accomplish everything, she must not only budget her time, but she must also be flexible, since she is expected to perform multiple roles. The following hypothesis is tested to verify this fact.

Hypothesis (RC-H10) There is a positive correlation between role conflict and family responsibilities.

Table 4.10

Correlation between role conflict and family responsibilities of women executives

Number of women executives	R between role conflict & family responsibilities	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.273	3.83	Significant at 0.01 level

The table 4.10 indicates the relation between role conflict and family responsibilities. The 'r' value is 0.273 and the obtained 't' value is 3.83 which is higher than the table value at 0.01 level, and hence significant. This results shows that high family responsibilities are closely associated with high role conflict experienced by women executives.

Statistical analysis supports the hypothesis that there is a significant positive correlation between family responsibilities and role conflict experienced by women executives.

Herman and Gyllstrom (1977) found that married persons experienced more work-family conflict than unmarried persons. In a similar vein, it might be expected that married women executives with children (Parents) would experience more work- family conflict than non parent. Although support for this expectation has been mixed (Holahan & Gilbert, 1979a; Pleak et al., 1980), having the major responsibility

for child rearing may be the significant contributor to work-family conflict (Bohen & Viveros, Long, 1981).

Aryee, Samuel, Vivienne Luk and Raymond Stone (1998) found that employed parents who benefit from an organization's family-responsive policies tend to be attached to the organization, presumably because it minimizes their experience of work-family conflict, and (b) that the attachment that family responsive policies in general holds regardless of the gender of the employed parents.

Several researchers have found a positive relationship between work involvement and work conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Kopelman, 1981; Higgins et al., 1992) and family involvement and family conflict. A number of reasons have been suggested for these associations. First, high work involvement and high family involvement have been shown to be positively related to the number of hours spent in work and family activities, respectively. These hours in turn linked to increased work and family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) resulting from role overload (Staines et al., 1978). Pleck (1979) suggests that psychological involvement in a role acts primarily as a sensitizer to interference effects, making the individual more aware of problems within that role. This awareness in turn, increases perceived role conflict.

Working mothers have to meet the expectations and obligations corresponding to the different roles which they play within the fold of a family, whether it is nuclear or composite. In addition, they also have to play their work related roles in the place of employment. A married women who works outside her

home is under various pressures and is most often engaged in a struggle to balance her work and responsibilities inside and outside her home (Itshree Padhi, 1999).

The growing participation of women in paid employment and the consequent emergence of the dual earner family model, has altered the traditional model for coordinating work and family. In the traditional model husband assumed the breadwinner role while wives assumed the role of homemaker and child care taker.

The result of the present study shows that **there is a positive relation between role conflict and family responsibilities.**

Job satisfaction vs. role conflict

The best documented outcomes of role conflict are job dissatisfaction and job related tension, which have been isolated among a variety of occupational groups (Beehr, Walsh, & Taber, 1976; Brief & Aldag, 1976; Brief, Aldag, Van Sell & Melone, 1979; Growoss et al., 1958; House & Rizzo, 1972; Miles, 1976a; Oliver & Brief, 1977-1978).

Hamner and Tosi (1974) reported no relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction in a study among a sample of managers. Keller (1975) observed among research and development professionals that role conflict is negatively correlated to satisfaction with work. But no such negative correlation was observed among the ordinary workers. Studies on the role conflict outcomes suggests that

further work is needed to isolate the effects of role conflict on particular affective reactions especially of women executives.

This section deals with role conflict experienced by women executives and its possible effects on job satisfaction. The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role conflict on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis(RC-H11) There is a negative correlation between role conflict and job satisfaction experienced by women executives.

Table 4.11

correlation between role conflict and job satisfaction of women executives.

Number of women executives	R between role conflict & job satisfaction	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.392	5.8	Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4.11 shows the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction of women executives, the r value is -0.392 and the calculated 't' value is 5.8 which is found significant at 0.01 level. The result indicates that when role conflict increases, job satisfaction decreases or in other words there is inverse relation between job satisfaction and role conflict, i.e., higher the role conflict, lower will be the job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction is a general attitude which is the result of many specific attitudes in three areas namely, viz., specific job factors, individuals characteristics and group relationships outside the job.

Job factors refer to wages, supervision, steadiness of employment, conditions of work, advancement opportunities, recognition of ability, fair evaluation of work, social relations on the job, prompt settlement of grievances, fair treatment by employer etc. Individual characteristics refer to age, health temperament, desires and level aspiration. Group relationships outside the job are his family relationship, social status, recreational outlets, and activity in organizations. Job satisfaction plays an important role in terms of its relationship with role conflict (Srilatha, 1991).

Miles (1974) indicates that both role conflict and ambiguity were found to be related to job dissatisfaction. The same conclusion was suggested by Rosenheim (1976). Organ and Greene (1974), Bernardin (1981), Coldwell (1981) and Keenan (1981) also arrived at the same conclusion but found that these relationship were moderated by personality characteristics. Madhu (1982) in his study on the middle level managers of production and service organizations finds that role conflict is significantly and negatively related to job satisfaction.

Tosi and Tosi (1970) found a negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction for teachers, but no association between role conflict and job related threat and anxiety.

Keller (1975) in his study on research and development professionals revealed that role conflict was negatively correlated with satisfaction with pay,

supervision, and promotion but is unrelated to satisfaction with work and with number of workers. This study suggests that further work is needed to isolate the effects of role conflict on particular affective reactions to job outcomes.

Similar studies were conducted in school organizations. Some of the studies indicate that there exists a significant negative relationship between job satisfaction and role conflict (Libby, 1978; Simpson, 1979; Price, 1971; Flora, 1977; Wilson, 1980; Miller 1979; Rigging, 1979; Yarworth, 1979; Monnelt, 1980; Ahrens, 1977). Christopher Orpen & John Bernath (1987) report that correlation between role conflict and job satisfaction is not significant.

The present study supports the hypothesis concerning the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. Women executives with lower role conflict are found to exhibit a higher degree of satisfaction. The correlation studies yielded a significantly negative relationship between job satisfaction and role conflict.

The result of the present study shows that **there is a negative relation between role conflict and job satisfaction experienced by women executives.**

Job involvement and role conflict

Job involvement is the degree of identification with work as an integral part of the role. How the job involvement is related to role conflict is explored in this section.

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role conflict on job involvement.

Hypothesis (RC-H12) There is a negative correlation between role conflict and job involvement experienced by women executives.

Table 4.12

Correlation between role conflict and job involvement of women executives

Number of women executives	r between role conflict & job involvement	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-.306	4.4	Significant at 0.01level

Table 4.12 indicates the relationship between role conflict and job involvement. The 'r' value is -0.306 and the 't' value is 4.4 which is found significant at 0.01 level. The negative relationship means higher the role conflict lower will be the job involvement. Several studies support this result. This study supports the hypothesis (RC-H12) that there is a negative correlation between role conflict and job involvement. Flora (1977) found that individuals who do experience greater amounts of role conflict and role ambiguity have less job involvement.

Job involvement tends to be lower, when there exists vagueness and conflicting expectations in a job. This is supported by the study of Beehr (1976) which was carried out on 331 employees of a large manufacturing company.

However, no significant relationship could be obtained between role conflict and job involvement in a study carried out by Madhu and Harigopal (1980).

The present study shows that **there is a negative relation between role conflict and job involvement experienced by women executives.**

Job stress vs. role conflict

Various studies established a positive relation between role conflict and job stress. The following hypothesis formulated from these studies, is tested by the data given in table 6.13.

Hypothesis(RC-H13) There is a positive correlation between role conflict and job stress experienced by women executives.

Table 4.13

Correlation between role conflict and job stress of women executives

Number of women executives	r between role conflict & job stress	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.242	3.46	Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4.13 shows the relationship between role conflict and job stress. The 'r' value is 0.242 and the calculated 't' value is 3.46 which is highly significant at 0.01

level. This means that with increase in role conflict people tends to experience more job stress. The explanation given in the case of both role conflict and job stress are closely associated.

The obtained result supports the hypothesis (RC-H13) i.e., there is a significant positive correlation between role conflict and job stress.

Senatra (1977) reported that role conflict and ambiguity were found to be related to tension. Carter (1978) found that role conflict was related to higher level of job related tension among division controllers.

Peltit (1973) reported job related tension to be positively related to ambiguity and conflict. Role conflict and ambiguity were found to be positively related to job tension (Flora 1977; Monnelt, 1980; Lusk, 1970)

Dunham (1980) reported that stress situations consisted mainly of role conflict and role confusion. Coldwell (1981) reported significant relationship existing between role conflict and situational anxiety.

The present study reveals that women executives with high role conflict are found to exhibit a higher degree of job stress.

Summary of main findings:

This chapter deals gender and organisational difference in role conflict and the different factors associated with role conflict of women executives. The variables tested for association with role conflict are age, experience, education, span of control, family responsibilities etc.. and also performance/ behaviour outcomes of role conflict such as job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress. The findings are listed below.

Hypothesis		Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis	Remarks
No.			
RC-H1	There is a significant difference in the role conflict experienced by male and female executives.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RC-H2	There is significant difference in role conflict experienced by women executives of private and public sector organization.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RC-H3	There is significant difference in role conflict experienced by women executives of manufacturing and consultancy sector organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RC-H4	There is significant difference in role conflict experienced by women executives of manufacturing and service sector organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant

Hypothesis		Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis	Remarks
No.			
RC-H5	There is significant difference role conflict experienced by women executives of consultancy and service sector organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RC-H6	There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and age of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RC-H7	There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and experience of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant
RC-H8	There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and educational level of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant
RC-H9	There is a significant positive relation between role conflict and span of control of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RC-H10	There is a significant positive relation between role conflict and family responsibilities of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant
RC-H11	There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and job satisfaction of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RC-H12	There is a significant negative relation between role conflict and job involvement of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RC-H13	There is a significant positive relation between role conflict and job stress of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level

Age and family responsibilities are negatively significant with respect to role conflict. All the performance / behavioural outcomes viz. job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress are significantly related to role conflict.

Chapter 5

ROLE AMBIGUITY

Role ambiguity is defined as the degree to which clear information is lacking regarding expectations associated with a role. Ambiguity occurs when an individual is unclear regarding his job duties and responsibilities.

The potential degree of clarity or ambiguity in a role can be assessed by investigating the availability of relevant information within the role set. Ambiguity may be aroused regarding various aspects of the role and of the situations surrounding it. The person may be uncertain about who has a legitimate right to influence him or about the limits of his own authority over others. Confusion may center on organizational rules and regulation to his position. The focal person is likely to experience two types of role ambiguity. One, concerning the task and the related activities; the other concerning the feedback regarding his performance of the task.

The relationships of the eight independent variables viz. age, education, experience, span of control, family responsibilities, job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress, with the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives are examined in this chapter in addition in addition to differences that exist with gender, types of organization and nature of work.

Correlations among the three dependent variables, viz. role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload have been computed to verify the existing relationship among these variables. The computed 'r' value between role conflict and role

ambiguity is -0.095 and the correlation between role conflict and role overload is 0.133. The computed results using SPSS package is given in Appendix E.

Hypotheses being tested in this study are :

- RA-H1 There is a significant difference **between male and female executives** in the experienced role ambiguity .
- RA-H2 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of the **public and private sector organizations**.
- RA-H3 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of the **manufacturing and consultancy organizations**.
- RA-H4 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of the **manufacturing and service oriented organizations**.
- RA-H5 There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the **consultancy and service oriented organization**.
- RA-H6 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and **age** of women executives.
- RA-H7 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and experience in terms of **job tenure i.e. number of years of service** of women executives.
- RA-H8 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and **educational levels** of women executives.

- RA-H9 There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and **span of control/supervision** of women executives.
- RA-H10 There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and **family responsibilities** of women executives.
- RA-H11 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and **job satisfaction** of women executives.
- RA-H12 There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and **job involvement** of women executives.
- RA-H13 There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and **job stress** of women executives.

The objective of this study is to examine the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives due to their multiple roles in the work organization and family. How the experienced role ambiguity is associated with socio-biographical factors such as age, education, number of years of experience, family responsibilities and what are the work related outcomes of such ambiguity are also enquired into in this chapter.

Gender difference in role ambiguity

Gender difference in role ambiguity has been reported in various studies. The responses from male and female executives are coded analyzed to verify the gender effect on role ambiguity. Responses obtained from male and female executives in the same age group are used for this analysis to eliminate the effect due to age.

Hypothesis(RA-H1): There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives.

Table 5.1a

Gender difference in role ambiguity of experienced by male and female executives in the same age group (35 to 40 years)

Category	Number of women executives	RA score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference between the means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Male	32	22.1	1.5	0.4	1.29	Not significant
Female	52	21.7	1.3			

Table 5.1a shows the gender difference in the role ambiguity of male and female executives. The mean value of role ambiguity of male is 22.1 and that of the female executives is 21.7. The difference of the two means is 0.4. The standard deviation of the male executives is 1.5 and that of the female is 1.3 and the calculated 't' value is 1.29 which is less than the table value at 0.05 level. The obtained t-value is not significant at 0.05 level.

This table indicates that **there is no significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives (age group 35-40).**

There are studies reporting that age is negatively related with role ambiguity, and age is positively related with role ambiguity. Age is one of the major factor

effecting role ambiguity. The negative relationship shows that women executives in the lower age group experience higher role ambiguity due to their multiple roles in the work and family which depleted their energies and often leads question their own physical, psychological abilities. This condition often leads to role ambiguity.

Various studies reported that role ambiguity is maximum at lower age group. It has been established that females at lower age group have more role ambiguity because of the adjustments they have to make at the beginning of their married life and the presence of infants in the house etc. This fact is further enquired into by analysing the data obtained from executives at a lower age group (25-35).

Table 5.1b

Gender difference in the role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives in the same age group (25-35)

Categories of respondents	Number (N)	Mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation (S.D.)	Difference between mean ($x_1 - x_2$)	Obtained t-value	Remarks
Male	30	19.7	2.6	0.6	1.05	Not significant
Female	32	20.3	2.3			

Table 5.1b gives the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives in the same age group (25-35). The mean value of role conflict experienced by the female executives is 20.3 and that of the male executives is 19.7. The standard deviation of the male executives is 2.6 and that of the female executives is 2.3. The observed difference in the mean values of male and female

executives is 0.6. The calculated 't' value is 1.05 which is not found significant. This result indicates that there is no difference in the role conflict experienced by the male and female executives in the lower age group.

The data and analysis presented in the table shows that **there is no difference in role ambiguity experienced by female and male executives in the lower age group (25-35 years).**

Pandia (1991) reported that there is no relation between role ambiguity and age. Sreelatha (1991) finds a positive relationship between role ambiguity and age.

Peltit (1973) finds a negative relationship between role ambiguity and age. Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Elsenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981). But this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in similar background.

There is no gender difference in any type of role ambiguity experienced by the executives. It may be due to the fact that in the modern life women are having equal opportunities in the society with men.

The data and analysis presented in the table shows that **there is no gender effect in the role ambiguity experienced by executives.** It is purely due to the age.

Public and private sector organizations

The women executives working in different types of organizations (viz. public and private sector organizations) may experience different levels of role ambiguity. The following hypothesis is formulated and tested for finding the significance.

Hypothesis (RA-H2): There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives of private and public sector organizations.

Table 5.2
Role ambiguity experienced by women executives in private and public sector organization

Category	Number of women executives	RA score Mean	Standard deviation	difference of Means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Private	39	22.04	1.8	0.24	0.68	Not significant
Public	34	21.8	1.23			

Table 5.2 gives the mean, standard deviation and 't' value of the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the private and public sector organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the private sector organization is 22.04 and that of the public sector organization is 21.8. The difference between the means is 0.24 and the standard

deviations are 1.8 and 1.23 respectively. The calculated 't' value is 0.68 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level. So it is not significant even at 0.05 level.

Thus it is inferred that there is no difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the private and public sector organizations.

Manufacturing and consultancy organizations

The following hypothesis was tested to examine the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

Hypothesis (RA-H3) There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

Table 5.3

Role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations

Categories	Number	Mean score of role ambiguity	Standard deviation	Difference of Means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Manufacturing	74	20.6	1.42	0.5	1.92	Not significant
Consultancy	49	20.1	1.04			

The table 5.3 indicates the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing sector organization is 20.6 and that of the consultancy sector organization is 20.1. The standard deviation in manufacturing sector organization is 1.42 and that of consultancy sector is 1.04. The calculated 't' value is 1.92 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence not significant.

This results rejects the hypothesis that, there is difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in manufacturing and consultancy sector organization.

The present study shows that there is no difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in manufacturing and consultancy sector organization.

There is no adequate literature available discussing the difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the executives in different organizations.

Manufacturing and service sectors

In the following table, results of the analysis to examine the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service organizations is given.

Hypothesis (RA-H4) There is difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives of the manufacturing and service sector organization.

Table 5.4
Role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service sector organizations.

Class	Number of executives	RA score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of Means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Manufacturing	74	20.6	1.42	0.11	0.63	Not significant
Service	79	20.7	1.0			

Table 5.4 indicates the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and service organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing sector organization is 20.6 and that of the service sector organization is 20.71. The difference between means is 0.10 and the standard deviation of role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing sector organization is 1.42 and that of service sector is 1.00. The calculated 't' value is 0.63 which is lower than the table value, hence it is not significant even at 0.05 level.

This result rejects the hypothesis that, there is difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of manufacturing and service sector

organizations. Adequate literature in this field is not available for a comparative study.

So, it is concluded from the present study that **there is no difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives of manufacturing and service sector organizations**

Consultancy and service organizations

The role ambiguity experienced may be different due to the nature of the work the executives are performing. Data obtained from women executives in consultancy and service organizations are analysed to test the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis (RA-H5) There is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives of consultancy and service organizations.

Table 5.5
Role ambiguity experienced by women executives in consultancy and service sector organizations

Category	Number of women executives	RA score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Consultancy	49	20.1	1.04	0.61	3.3	Significant at 0.01 level
Service	79	20.71	1.05			

Table 5.5 indicates the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in the consultancy and service organizations. The mean value of the role ambiguity experienced by the executives in the consultancy sector organization is 20.1 and that of the service sector organization is 20.71, the difference of mean is 0.61 and the standard deviation of role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing sector organization is 1.04 and that of service sector is 1.05. The calculated 't' value is 3.3 which is higher than the table value, hence it is significant at 0.01 level.

This result supports the hypothesis that, there is significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by the women executives in consultancy and service organizations. This may be due to the difference in the nature of work and organizational difference .

The conclusion arrived at from the present study is that **there is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by women executives in the consultancy and service sector organization.**

Age and role ambiguity

The following hypothesis is tested to understand the relationship between age and role ambiguity experienced by women executives.

Hypothesis (RA-H6) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and age of women executives.

Table 5.6

Correlation between role ambiguity and age of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity and age	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.149	2.05	Significant at 0.05 level

Table 5.6 shows that the relationship between role ambiguity and age. The 'r' value is -0.149 and the calculated value of 't' is 2.05, which is significant at 0.05 level. This result supports the hypothesis that as age increases the amount of experienced role ambiguity tends to decrease.

Peltit (1973) reported a negative relationship between role conflict and role ambiguity and age. Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Eisenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981) but this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in a similar background.

Pandia (1991) reported that there is no relation between role ambiguity and age.

Peltit (1973) finds a negative relationship between role ambiguity and age. Similar findings were obtained in an educational setting (Eisenhauer, 1977; Simpson, 1979; Schwab, 1981). But this was not supported by Redfck (1973) and Flora (1977) who conducted studies in similar background.

Sreelatha (1991) finds a positive relationship with role ambiguity and age.

From the present study, it is found that **there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and age of women executives.**

Experience and role ambiguity

Number of years of experience may be a major factor affecting the role ambiguity of women executives in organizations. The following hypothesis is tested from data given in the table 5.8.

Hypothesis (RA-H7) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and experience of women executives.

Table 5.7

Correlation between role ambiguity and experience of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity & experience	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.172	2.35	Significant at 0.01 level

Table 5.7 shows the relationship between role ambiguity and experience. The 'r' value is -0.172 and the calculated 't' value is 2.35 which is higher than the table value indicating it is significant at 0.01 level. This means that role ambiguity has

a significant negative relationship with experience. i.e., higher the years of experience lesser will be the role ambiguity.

Schuler (1977) reported that the more experienced employees had lower levels of performance with high role ambiguity, and higher performance levels with low role ambiguity, compared with the employees with less experience. Schuler's hypothesis that better educated and more experienced employees adapt to role ambiguity is very relevant for relating role ambiguity with experience and job performance levels.

An employee, who just joined in an organization might find his role ambiguous, as it is his initial role. This might also be due to the organizational climate, which is new to him. One who grows old in the organization might not find ambiguity regarding his role as the role becomes "routinized" and he becomes acquainted with the duties and responsibilities. Thus he will be able to tackle the problems with more confidence.

Chonko (1979) found that role ambiguity was negatively related for less experienced sales people because they often find themselves in new situations requiring new information. Experienced sales people tend to have less ambiguity.

Peltit (1973) found that role conflict and role ambiguity were both negatively related to various forms of organizational tenure.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) reported no significant relationship between role ambiguity and job experience for the technical as well as non-technical supervisors.

Elsenhauer (1987) reported that those with the least amount of academic experience had less role ambiguity than with a moderate amount of such exposure.

The relationship between role ambiguity and the propensity to leave the organization has varied across investigations from positive (Ivancevich & Donelly, 1974; Sorensen & Sorensen, 1974) to non significant (eg., Hamner & Tosi, 1974). Two such correlational studies have found positive relationship between role ambiguity and turnover (Brief & Aldag, 1976; Lyons, 1971).

The conclusion from the present study is that **there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and experience of women executives.**

Education level and role ambiguity

Education is one of the major tools which provides individuals the necessary qualifications to fulfill socioeconomic roles. In the case of women, higher education has much importance as it helps them to find their rightful place in the society. The following hypothesis is tested.

Hypothesis (RA-H8) There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and educational level of women executives.

Table 5.8

Correlation between role ambiguity and education of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity & education	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.212	2.95	Significant at 0.01 level

Table 5.8 gives the correlation between role ambiguity and education. The 'r' value is -0.212 and the calculated 't' value is equal to 2.95 which is significant at 0.01 level. The inference is that higher the educational level lesser the degree of role ambiguity.

Years of education and years of work experience relevant to the present job, and organizational level were not found to moderate the relationships between satisfaction and performance and role conflict and ambiguity (Schuler, 1977).

When educational qualifications are not suited for one's job, one tends to experience lack of role clarity both in terms of goals as well as responsibilities. Such a situation leads to role ambiguity (Sreelatha, 1991).

Level of the employee also plays an important role. At lower level, one is more likely to find conflicting expectations, as it might be one's initial role. When the employee gets higher positions in the organization, he becomes "routinized" and has better understanding regarding the responsibilities and duties associated with his job.

It is concluded from the present study that **there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and educational level of women executives.**

Span of control/supervision and Role ambiguity

Few studies have examined the relationship between role ambiguity and span of control/supervision. I.e. how the number of individuals working under the supervision of one person affects the role ambiguity experienced by him. The following hypothesis is tested to examine the possible relationship between role ambiguity and span of control.

Hypothesis (RA-H9) There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and span of control/supervision of women executives.

Table 5.9

Correlation between role ambiguity and span of control of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity & span of control	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.-045	0.57	Not significant

Table 5.9 shows that the 'r' value and 't' values of the correlation between role ambiguity and span of control. The 'r' value is -0.045 and the 't' value is 0.57

which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level. The finding does not warrant any definite conclusion in the relationship between role ambiguity and span of control though the trend is negative.

There is no relationship between span of control and role ambiguity (Sreelatha 1991).

The researcher could not find adequate literature on the possible relationship between role ambiguity and span of control.

From the present study it is concluded that there is no significant relationship between role ambiguity experienced by women executives and span of control/supervision.

Family responsibility and role ambiguity

A working women also has to look after the family and the family members satisfied. In order to accomplish everything, she must not only budget her time; but she must also be flexible, since she is enacting multiple roles. The following hypothesis is tested to verify this fact.

Hypothesis (RA-H10): There is a positive relationship between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives.

Table 5.10

Correlation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.137	1.92	Not significant

Table 5.10 shows the relationship between role ambiguity and family responsibilities. The 'r' value is 0.137 and the calculated 't' value is 1.92 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence not significant. This result rejects the hypothesis that there is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities, though the trend is positive.

It is concluded from the present study that **there is no significant relationship between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives**

Job satisfaction and role ambiguity

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role ambiguity on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis(RA-H11): There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives.

Table 5.11

Correlation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity & job satisfaction	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.038	0.55	Not significant

Table 5.11 shows the 'r' value and the 't' value of the correlation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction are given. The 'r' value is -0.038 and the 't' value to 0.55 which is lower than the table value and hence not significant. This result rejects the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction.

When "supervision" and instructions given to a person involve contradictory expectations and non clarity of the nature of work, it may result in role ambiguity and dissatisfaction with job. Lack of proper recognition for employee's skills and abilities may also affect the growth of the individual in the organization resulting in job dissatisfaction. (Sreelatha, 1991).

Studies on the effects of role ambiguity reveal that lack of clarity about behavioural expectations causes a greater concern with own (vs. work group)

performance, lower actual and perceived group productivity, less concern or involvement with the group, unfavorable attitudes toward role senders, an increased tension, anxiety, depression, and causally linked to turnover (Johnon & Graen 1973)

Other studies, however, indicate difference in the impact of role ambiguity across occupations. Although the preponderance of the evidence shows role ambiguity to be associated with job dissatisfaction (Beehr et al. 1976; Caplan et al. 1975; Greene 1972; Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Johnson & Stinson 1975; Paul 1974; Rizzo et al., 1970) studies among nurse's aides (Brief & Aldag 1976), managers (Tosi, 1971), teachers (Tosi & Tosi, 1970), supervisors and operating employees (Ivancevich & Dobbelly, 1974) found no relationship. Keller (1975) reported that role ambiguity is negatively correlated with satisfaction with work, but is unrelated to satisfaction with pay, co-workers, supervision, and promotion. This finding suggests that a general measure of job satisfaction might not sufficiently discriminate the potential outcomes of role ambiguity. Similarly, most studies report a positive relationship between role ambiguity and tension or anxiety, but two studies report no relationship (Tosi, 1971; Tosi & Tosi, 1970)

There are evidences to the effect that role incumbent with high levels of role ambiguity respond to the situations with anxiety, depression, physical symptoms, a sense of futility or lower self esteem, lower levels of job involvement and organizational commitment, of supervisors and of themselves (Brief & Aldag, 1976: Greene, 1972).

The relationship between role ambiguity and performance is also unclear. Negative correlations have been found between role ambiguity and measure of

performance for nurses' aides (Brief & Aldag, 1976) and managers (Greene, 1972) but no relationship was found for paramedical workers (Szilagyi & Sims, 1975) and managers (Tosi, 1971). Beehr et al. (1976) found that role ambiguity is negatively related to effort towards quality but unrelated to effort towards quantity. Role ambiguity was found negatively related to supervisory evaluation of performance but unrelated to self perceptions of work quality (Rief & Aldag, 1976). Another study established a negative relationship between role ambiguity and compliance (Greene, 1972). Greene suggests that the role incumbents are ambiguous about the behaviour required of them by supervisors and that they may be working at the wrong things and are probably unaware that they are doing so.

The present study shows that **there is no relationship between job satisfaction and role ambiguity.**

Job involvement and role ambiguity

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role ambiguity on job involvement.

Hypothesis(RA-H12): There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives.

Table 5.12

Correlation between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity & job involvement	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.052	0.73	Not significant

Table 5.12 shows the relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement. The 'r' value is -0.052 and the 't' value to 0.73 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence not significant. The negative trend in relationship means that when higher role ambiguity results in lower job involvement. The result obtained does not support the hypothesis (RA-H12) that there is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement though the trend is in a negative direction.

The conclusion arrived at from the present study is **that there is no relationship between role ambiguity and job involvement.**

Job stress and role ambiguity

Various studies established a positive relation between role overload job stress. The following hypothesis formulated from these studies, is tested by the data given in table 6.13.

Hypothesis(RA-H13): There is a significant positive relationship between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives

Table 5.13

Correlation between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role ambiguity & job stress	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.123	1.72	Not significant

Table 5.13 indicates the 'r' value and the 't' value of role ambiguity and job stress of women executives. The 'r' value is 0.123. The 't' value to 1.72 which is lower than the table value at 0.05 level and hence is not significant. The observed positive correlation shows that higher role ambiguity may lead to job stress. However, this result rejects the hypothesis (RA-H13) that there is a positive relationship between role ambiguity and job stress.

Lyons (1971) reports that the need for clarity moderates ambiguity turnover, satisfaction and propensity to leave relations, but has no effect on the association between ambiguity and tension. Miles and Petty on other hand, found that the need for clarity moderates the ambiguity-tension relation but does effect the correlation between role ambiguity and satisfaction.

Personality characteristics particularly individual differences in perception and adaptability can moderate the association between objective and experienced levels of conflict and ambiguity (Van Sell, Brief & Schuler, 1981).

Rosenheim (1976) found that anxiety is directly related to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.

"Ego strength" is found to moderate the relationship between role ambiguity and company satisfaction. A low ego strength subject in terms of his low emotional maturity and neurotic behaviour may view the job, the organization and the role stress with dissatisfaction (Harigopal, 1980).

Flora (1977) in her study found that role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload correlated positively with anxiety. Parasuraman (1978) demonstrated that stress and ambiguity were positively and significantly related to employee turnover.

Lamble (1980) found role ambiguity adversely related to perceived personal ineffectiveness. Lyon (1971) found in his study a negative relationship exists between role clarity and employee turnover.

Madhu and Harigopal (1980) in their study on male executives found role ambiguity negatively related with job performance and role conflict did not exhibit any significant relationship with job performance.

Singh (1990) observed that junior and middle level managers differ significantly on certain stress dimensions. Junior level managers experienced greater

lack of group cohesiveness, role conflict, role ambiguity, feeling of inequity, role overload and inadequacy of role authority.

Flora (1977) found that greater amounts of role conflict and role ambiguity might cause lower job performance. Peltit (1973) reported job related tension to be positively related to ambiguity and conflict.

The present study gives the conclusion that **there is no relationship between job stress and role ambiguity experienced by women executives.**

Summary of findings on Role Ambiguity

The findings obtained in the present study are summarised as follows:

The comparative study of role ambiguity experienced by women executives in different types of organizations lead to the conclusion that a significant difference in role ambiguity exists only in the case of consultancy and service organizations.

Role ambiguity holds a negative relationship with age, experience, educational level, job satisfaction and job involvement. It is positively related to family responsibilities and job stress.

Hypothesis		Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis	Remarks
No.			
RA-H1	There is a significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RA-H2	There is significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives of private and public sector organization.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RA-H3	There is significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives of manufacturing and consultancy sector organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RA-H4	There is significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives of manufacturing and service sector organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RA-H5	There is significant difference role ambiguity experienced by women executives of consultancy and service sector organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant
RA-H6	There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and age of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RA-H7	There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and experience of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant

Hypothesis		Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis	Remarks
No.			
RA-H8	There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and educational level of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant
RA-H9	There is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and span of control of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RA-H10	There is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant
RA-H11	There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RA-H12	There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
RA-H13	There is a significant positive relation between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level

Chapter 6

ROLE OVERLOAD

Role overload is a condition in which the individual is faced with a set of obligations, which require him/her to do more than he is able to cope with. Margolis et al. (1974) reported that job performance was be affected by overload conditions as it is associated with lowered confidence, decreased work motivation poor decision-making quality, deteriorating inter-personal relations and even accident rates.

Piotrkowski (1979), Bohlen and Viverous Long (1981) and Voydanoff (1988) among others have analysed the relationship between family system and work among dual-earner wives with a view to delineate inter role conflicts, role overload, and personal stress among working wives/mothers. The demands work and family systems place are often viewed as incompatible and consequently, working wives engage in a zero sum activity, that is the more they devote themselves to one sphere, the less energy and time they have for the other. More significantly, the positive or negative feelings derived from the work place by individuals have an impact on their family relations. Likewise, domestic relations tend to influence the work role of individuals. The psychological carry over effect from work to family roles can affect psychological availability and the amount of energy available for performing the other role.

Correlation among the three dependent variables, viz. role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload has been computed to verify the association that exist

among these variables. The computed 'r' value between role conflict and role overload is 0.133 and the correlation between role overload and role ambiguity is -0.092.

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship of eight independent variables viz. age, education, experience, span of control, family responsibilities, job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress to the role overload experienced by the women executives in addition to exploring the differences, if any of role overload with gender, types of organization and nature of work.

Presence of heavy work load or the double burden in the family and work force may be the cause for role overload. The superior managers expect the subordinates to act in one direction. Work and home stresses or the demands of each may generate inter personal conflict and negative emotional states leading to role ambiguity and role overload.

The relationships of eight independent variables such as age, education, experience, span of control, family responsibilities, job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress with the role overload experienced by the women executives and other variables are examined in this chapter.

Hypotheses relating to role overload are listed below :

- ROL-H1 There is a significant difference **between male and female executives** in the experienced role overload .
- ROL-H2 There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by the women executives of the **public and private sector organizations**.
- ROL-H3 There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by the women executives of the **manufacturing and consultancy organizations**.
- ROL-H4 There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by the women executives of the **manufacturing and service oriented organizations**.
- ROL-H5 There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by the women executives in the **consultancy and service oriented organization**.
- ROL-H6 There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and **age** of women executives.
- ROL-H7 There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and experience in terms of **job tenure i.e. number of years of service** of women executives.
- ROL-H8 There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and **educational levels** of women executives.
- ROL-H9 There is a significant positive relationship between role overload and **span of control/supervision** of women executives.

- ROL-H10 There is a significant positive relationship between role overload and **family responsibilities** of women executives.
- ROL-H11 There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and **job satisfaction** of women executives.
- ROL-H12 There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and **job involvement** of women executives.
- ROL-H13 There is a significant positive relationship between role overload and **job stress** of women executives.

The objectives of this study is to examine the role overload experienced by the women executives due to their multiple roles in the work organization and family. How the experienced role overload is associated with socio-biographical factors such as age, education, number of years of experience, family responsibilities and what are the work related outcomes of such overload are also enquired into in this chapter.

Gender difference

Gender difference in role overload has been reported in various studies. The responses from male and female executives are coded and analyzed to verify the earlier findings.

Hypothesis (ROL-H1): There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by male and female executives.

Table 6.1

**Gender difference in role overload experienced by male and female executives
in the same age group (age 35-40 years)**

Category	Number of women executives	ROL score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference between the means	obtained 't' value	Remarks
Male	32	28.72	2.54	3.26	4.86	Significant at 0.01 level
Female	52	31.98	3.68			

Table 6.1 indicates that there is a significant difference in male and female executives in the experienced role overload. The mean value of role overload of male executives is 28.72 and that of the female executives is 31.98 and the mean difference is between the means is 3.26. Standard deviation score distribution of the male executives' role overload is 2.54 and that of the female is 3.68. The calculated 't' value is 4.86 which is higher than the table value at 0.01 level and hence the observation of difference is highly significant at 0.01 level.

One explanation for the observed higher role overload of women executives is that employed women are likely to have greater combined work and family work loads than employed males (Pleck, 1985). Wortman et al. (1991) also reported similar observations and explanations.

Deepa Mathur (1989) reported that female employees who had infants, pre school going and/or school going children experience high role conflict and role overload than the male members.

Working women experience greater role overload and inter role conflict than either men or non-working women (Uma Sankar Jha, Arati Mehta, & Latika Menon, 1998). Although, the theory of role accumulation (Sieber, 1974) asserts that such conflict and overload may be reduced by the multiple roles, there is convincing evidence that working women do face tension due to their dual role. Hibbard and Pope (1987) found that married working women faced greater health risks than men because of their dual roles of work and family responsibility.

Andrey Smith and William Reid (1986) reported that married women employed full time often experience role overload and role strain.

Multiple roles may compete for a person's time. Time spent on activities within one role generally cannot be devoted to activities within another role. Time based conflict is consistent with the excessive work time and schedule conflict dimensions identified by Pleck et al. (1980) and role overload identified by Kahn et al. (1964).

In this study, it is observed that **there is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by male and female executives.**

Public and private sector organizations

The women executives working in different types of organizations (viz. public and private sectors) may experience different levels of role overload. The following hypothesis is formulated and tested.

Hypothesis (ROL-H2): There is significant difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in private and public sector organization.

Table 6.2

Role overload experienced by women executives in private and public sector organizations

Category	Number of women executives	Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of Means	Observed 't' value	Remarks
Private	39	28.4	3.4	2.1	2.39	Significant at 0.01 level.
Public	34	26.3	4.1			

Table 6.2 shows the mean value and standard deviation of the role overload experienced by the women executives in the private and public sector organizations. The mean value of role overload of women executives in the private sector organization is 28.4 and that of the public sector is 26.3. The difference between

the means 2.1 the standard deviation of the role overload observed with private sector is 3.4 and in the public sector is 4.1. The calculated 't' value is 2.39 which is higher than the table value at 0.01 level. From this, it is clear that women executives working in the private sector organizations experience higher role overload than those working in the public sector organization.

This results supports the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by the women executives working in the private and public sector organization.

This difference in role overload experienced by women executives in the private and public sector organizations may be due to the nature of work schedule, shift work, difference in the management and flexibility in the time schedule. Women executives in the Private sector organization experiences higher role overload than the women executives in the public sector organization. Different organizational factors such as organizational climate, flexibility work schedule etc are applicable for this result. Such factors are not included in this study.

There is no adequate references are available for this difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in the private and public sector organization.

It can be concluded from the present study that **private sector women executives are experiencing more role overload than their public sector counter parts.**

Manufacturing and consultancy organizations

Following hypothesis is formulated and tested to examine the role overload experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

Hypothesis (ROL-H3) There is significant difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations.

Table 6.3
Role overload of women executives in manufacturing and consultancy organizations

Type of organization	Number of women executives	ROL score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of Means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Manufacturing	74	34.5	5.2	2	2.12	Significant at 0.05 level
Consultancy	49	32.5	5.1			

Table 6.3 shows the role overload experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations. The mean value of role overload in the manufacturing organization is 34.5 and that in the consultancy organization is 32.5. The standard deviation of the role overload in the manufacturing sector is 5.2 and that of in the consultancy sector is 5.1. The calculated 't' value is 2.12 which is higher than the table value at 0.05 level and hence the difference is significant at 0.05 level.

This difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy organizations are due to the nature of work difference and the difference in the time schedule. There is no literature available for supporting this result.

Result given in table 6.3 support the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the role overload in the manufacturing and consultancy organizations. **The women executives in the manufacturing sector organizations experiences higher role overload than the women in the consultancy organizations.**

Manufacturing and service sectors

In the following table, results of the analysis to examine the role overload experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service organizations is given.

Hypothesis (ROL-H4) There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and service organizations.

Table 6.4
Role overload of women executives in manufacturing and service organizations.

Type of organization	Number of women executives	ROL score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of Means	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Manufacturing	74	34.1	5.3	0.8	0.94	Not significant
Service	73	33.3	5.1			

Table 6.4 shows the mean and standard deviation of role overload experienced by the women executives in the manufacturing and service organizations. The mean value is 34.1 in the manufacturing organization and 33.3 in the service organization. The standard deviation of manufacturing sector is 5.3 and that of service sector is 5.1. The calculated 't' value is 0.94 which is less than the table value at 0.05 level and hence not significant to warrant a generalization.

The above result rejects the hypothesis that there is significant difference in the role overload in the manufacturing and service organizations. There is no difference in the experienced overload of women executives of manufacturing and service organizations.

There is no difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and service sector organizations is due to the flexibility of the time schedule. Even though the nature of work is different, the organizational climate

and policies may be same. Such factors not included in this study. There is a scope for further research in this area.

There is no difference in the role overload experienced by women executives in the manufacturing and service organizations.

Consultancy and service organizations

The role overload experienced may be different due to the nature of the work the executives are performing. Data obtained from women executives in consultancy and service organizations are analysed to test the following hypothesis.

Hypothesis (ROL-H5) There is significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of consultancy and service organizations.

Table 6.5

Role overload of women executives in consultancy and service organizations.

Type of organization	Number of women executives	ROL score Mean	Standard deviation	Difference of Mean	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
Consultancy	49	32.5	5.1	0.8	0.85	Not significant
Service	73	33.3	5.1			

Table 6.5 shows the mean and standard deviation of role overload experienced by the women executives of the consultancy and service sector organizations. The mean value with consultancy organization is 32.5 and that of the service organization is 33.3. The standard deviation of consulting organization is 5.1 and that of service sector is also 5.1. The calculated 't' value is 0.85 which is less than the table value at 0.05 level implying that the observed difference is not significant to warrant any generalisation.

The above result rejects the hypothesis that there is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by women executives of the consultancy and service organizations.

The result of the present study shows that **there is no difference in the experienced overload of women executives working in consultancy and service organizations.**

Age and role overload

Age is a key variable in understanding the socioeconomic status of an individual. Age signifies the physical and mental maturity of an individual. The following hypothesis is tested to understand the relation between age and role overload experienced by women executives.

Hypothesis (ROL-H6) There is a significant negative relation between role overload and age of women executives.

Table 6.6

Correlation between role overload and age of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and age	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.143	2.00	Significant at 0.05 level

Table 6.6 indicates relationship between role overload and age of women executives. The 'r' value is -0.143 and the calculated 't' value is 2.00 which is significant at 0.05 level. The negative relationship indicates that the female executives in the lower age group experiences higher role overload or when age increases role overload decreases.

Inference from the data given in table 6.62 supports the hypothesis that there is a negative relationship between role overload and age.

Younger executives experience role overload because of their insufficient exposure to the organizational tasks. But as they get familiarised with people and job context they gain confidence in overload situation by adopting various personal and professional strategies. More responsibility is generally assigned to the subordinates from the top displeasure from the superiors. People who are adaptable and those who do well are rewarded with more work in Indian conditions (Pandia, 1991) Generally younger executives will fall into this category. Subsequently these younger executives experience role overload .

Role overload is maximum in the younger age group of women executives because in the younger age group the children are small or pre schooling , the women executives were difficult to adjust with family responsibilities of child caring, and the executive job leads to the physical and mental exhaustion make s role overload .

So it may be concluded that that there is **significant negative relationship between age and role overload experienced by women executives.**

Experience and role overload

Number of years of experience may be a major factor affecting the role overload of women executives in organizations. The following hypothesis is tested from data given in the table 6.8.

Hypothesis (ROL-H7). There is a significant negative correlation between role overload and experience of women executives.

Table 6.7

Correlation between role overload and service experience of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and experience	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.052	0.73	Not significant

Table 6.7 shows the relationship between role overload and service experience. The 'r' value is -0.052 and the calculated 't' value is 0.73. The obtained 't' value is not significant at 0.05 level. The negative 'r' value indicates a trend that higher job experience (number of years of service) may decrease the role overload.

Data given in table 6.6 showed a significant negative relationship between role overload and age; i.e. role overload is maximum in the lower age group. Job experience, however does not show a significant negative relationship with role overload, though the trend is negative. This indicates that age is more a significant factor than experience with respect to role overload.

Managers who are younger and those having lesser tenure of service experience more role overload. (Gupta & Prathap, 1987) reported that " a linear increase was observed in the extent of role overload as function of service length (cf. Pestonjee 1992; p.102)

Role overload is negatively correlated with age , length of service and span of control (Philip C Koshy, 1994)

The data given in table 6.6 gives the conclusion that number of years of service is not significantly related to role overload experienced by women executives.

Education and role overload

Education is one of the major tools which provides individuals the necessary qualifications to fulfill socioeconomic roles. In the case of women, higher education has much importance as it helps them to find their rightful place in the society. The following hypothesis is on the possible relationship between role overload and educational level.

Hypothesis (ROL-H8) There is a significant negative relationship between role over load and educational level of women executives.

Table 6.8

Correlation of role overload and educational level of women executives.

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and educational level	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.014	.196	Not significant

Table 6.8 shows the 'r' value of the relationship between role overload and education. The 'r' value is -0.014 and the 't' value is 0.196 . The 't' value was found not significant at 0.05 level. But the negative 'r' value shows a trend that higher educational qualifications may result in lower role overload. But the hypothesis that "there is a significant negative relationship between role over load and educational level of women executives" is rejected as the 't' value was not found significant even at 0.05 level.

There is no adequate supporting studies to account for or object to the present findings. There is a possibility of higher education level favourable in reducing the role overload as the higher education may help better adjustment with colleagues and/or with the new technology development. Introduction of new technology in organization may also enable employees with higher level of education to play the assigned role efficiently.

The present study gives the conclusion that **there is a no relationship between role over load and educational level of women executives”**

Span of control vs. role overload

Few studies have examined the relationship between role overload and span of control. i.e. how the number of individuals working under the supervision of one person affects the overload experienced by him. The following hypothesis is tested to examine this fact, with reference to women executives.

Hypothesis (ROL-H9). There is a significant positive relation between role overload and span of control of women executives.

Table 6.9

Correlation between role overload and span of control of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and span of control	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.130	1.8	Significant at 0.05 level

Table 6.9 indicates the correlation between role overload and span of control of women executives. The 'r' value is 0.130 and the 't' value is 1.8. The obtained 't' value is significant at 0.05 level. This result indicates that larger the span of control leads to higher role overload.

This data and the analysis supports the hypothesis that there is a positive relationship between role overload and span of control.

Complexity of the job also determines the span of control, when the nature of this job is complex, it needs constant supervision, and frequent interaction with the subordinates. This might result in role overload for the supervisors more so when the span of control is larger (Srilatha, 1991).

Role overload decreases when the span of control increases. It is quite evident that more subordinates at disposal will bring down the overload. Work will be shared by more people and hence the superior executives experience less role overload.

The result obtained from the present study shows **that there is a significant positive relationship between role overload and span of control.**

Family responsibilities and role overload

A working women also has to look after the family and the family members satisfied. In order to accomplish everything, she must not only budget her time; but she must also be flexible, since she is expected to be available round the clock. The following hypothesis is tested to verify this fact.

Hypothesis (ROL-H10): There is a significant positive relation between role overload and family responsibilities of women executives.

Table 6.10
Correlation between role overload and family responsibilities of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and family responsibilities	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.196	2.3	Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6.9 shows the 'r' value of role overload with family responsibilities. The 'r' value is 0.196 and the 't' value is 2.3. The obtained 't' value is found significant at 0.01 level. The positive correlation indicates that when there is high family responsibilities, then there is also high role overload. This result accepts the hypothesis that there is a significant positive relationship between role overload and family responsibilities.

Aryee (1992) reports that family domain variables and spouse support will be negatively related to work – family conflict while spouse's occupational commitment, spouse's number of hours of work per week, responsibility for household chores and child caring and parenting demands will be positively related to work family conflict and role overload.

Multiple roles may compete for a person's time. Time spent on activities within one role generally cannot be devoted to activities within another role. Time based conflict is consistent with the excessive work time and schedule conflict dimensions identified by Pleck et al. (1980) and role overload identified by Kahn et al. (1964).

According to Keenan and Mc Role (1981) overload occurs when parents must attend to the rigors of employment as well as to domestic and childcare chores. Because employed women still perform most of the household chores and child rearing duties they have somewhat higher levels of overload (Lewis & Cooper 1987; Pleck, 1985). However, role overload is inversely correlated with maintaining a positive family climate for men as well as women (Wiersma & Vanden Berg, 1991) Although egalitarian role sharing between husband and wife helps decrease overload. Pleck (1985) has suggested that women complain of role overload not because of exhaustion or doing too much, rather her husband is doing too little.

The result obtained from the present study shows **that there is a significant positive relationship between role overload and family responsibilities.**

Job satisfaction and role overload

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role overload on job satisfaction.

Hypothesis(ROL-H11) There is a significant negative relation between role overload and job satisfaction of women executives.

Table 6.11

Correlation between role overload and job satisfaction of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and job satisfaction	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.175	2.5	Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6.11 shows that there is a negative relationship between role overload and job satisfaction. The 'r' value is -0.175 and the calculated 't' value is 2.5 which is higher than the table value of 2.326 which means that the observed difference is a significant at 0.01 level. This result supports the hypothesis that there is a significant negative relation between role overload and job satisfaction of women executives.

Batesman (1981) in his study, reported that role overload resulted in poor job satisfaction.

According to Mishra (1988), role overload does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between job involvement and job satisfaction.

The result obtained from the present study shows that there is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job satisfaction.

Job involvement and role overload

The following hypothesis is formulated and tested to establish the effect of role overload on job involvement.

Hypothesis(ROL-H12) There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job involvement of women executives.

Table 6.12

Correlation between role overload and job involvement of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and job involvement	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	-0.150	2.1	Significant at 0.05 level

Table 6.12 indicates the relationship between role overload and job involvement, the 'r' value is -0.150 and the 't' value is 2.1. The 't' value obtained is found significant. The negative 'r' value indicates that when role overload is higher, the job involvement becomes lower. This shows that the observed 't' value is significant at 0.05 level.

Pestonjee (1992) opined that an optimum level of stress may result in increased motivation, involvement and commitment to the job in the organization. Orpen & Bernath (1987) suggests that the different aspects of role uncertainty do not

have the same negative impact on performance. For instance, of the various kinds of uncertainty, sent role conflict and role overload have strong negative effects on performance.

The negative effect of role overload stems from the fact that it is just not physically possible for an individual to do his job properly if he is given far too many extra duties and tasks to perform (Higgins, 1991).

The result supports the hypothesis that there is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job involvement.

The result obtained from the present study shows **that there is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job involvement.**

Job stress and role overload

Various studies established a positive relation between role overload job stress. The following hypothesis formulated from these studies, is tested by the data given in table 6.13.

Hypothesis(ROL-H13): There is a significant positive relation between role overload and job stress of women executives.

Table 6.13

Correlation between role overload and job stress of women executives

Number of women executives	Correlation between role overload and job stress	Obtained 't' value	Remarks
196	0.241	3.4	Significant at 0.01 level

Table 6.13 shows the 'r' value and the 't' value of the role overload and job stress of women executives. The 'r' value is 0.241 and the calculated 't' value is 3.4. The 't' value was found significant at 0.01 level. This result supports the hypothesis that there is a positive relation between role overload and job stress. When the role overload is higher the job stress also becomes higher.

Rosenheim (1976) found that anxiety is directly related to role conflict, role overload and role overload.

Examining the relationship between role stress and work related outcomes, Keenan and McBain (1979) found positive relationship between tension and role overload

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affect the individual in terms of emotional exhaustion (Schwab, 1981). These factors is also observed to result in low turnover, low job performance, and low employee morale (Parasuraman, 1978; Lyon

1971; Flora, 1977; Helwig, 1979; Lamble 1980; Beehr 1976; Chonko, 1979; Szilagyi, 1980; Bateman, 1981; Libby, 1978).

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affects the organization related individual consequence resulting in job threat and job related tension (Hammer & Tosi, 1975; Senatra, 1977; Carter 1978; Peltit, 1973; Miles, 1974).

Examining the relationship between role stress and work related outcomes, Keenan and McBain (1979) found positive relationship between tension and role overload

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affect the individual in terms of emotional exhaustion (Schwab, 1981). These factors is also observed to result in low turnover, low job performance, and low employee morale (Parasuraman, 1978; Lyon 1971; Flora, 1977; Helwig, 1979; Lamble, 1980; Beehr 1976; Chonko, 1979; Szilagyi, 1980; Bateman, 1981; Libby, 1978).

Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload affects the organization related individual consequence resulting in job threat and job related tension (Hammer & Tosi, 1975; Senatra, 1977; Carter, 1978; Peltit 1973; Miles, 1974).

The result obtained from the present study shows that there is a significant positive relationship between role overload and job stress.

Summary of findings on Role Overload

Hypothesis		Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis	Remarks
No.			
ROL-H1	There is a significant difference in the role overload experienced by male and female executives.	Accepted	Difference significant at 0.01 level.
ROL-H2	There is significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of private and public sector organization.	Accepted	Difference significant at 0.01 level.
ROL-H3	There is significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of manufacturing and consultancy organizations.	Accepted	Difference significant at 0.01 level.
ROL-H4	There is significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of manufacturing and service organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant
ROL-H5	There is significant difference role overload experienced by women executives of consultancy and service organizations.	Rejected	Difference not significant
ROL-H6	There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and age of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
ROL-H7	There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and experience of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant

Hypothesis		Acceptance/ Rejection of hypothesis	Remarks
No.			
ROL-H8	There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and educational level of women executives.	Rejected	'r' not significant
ROL-H9	There is a significant positive relation between role overload and span of control of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.05 level
ROL-H10	There is a significant positive relationship between role overload and family responsibilities of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.05 level
ROL-H11	There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job satisfaction of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level
ROL-H12	There is a significant negative relationship between role overload and job involvement of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.05 level
ROL-H13	There is a significant positive relationship between role overload and job stress of women executives.	Accepted	'r' is significant at 0.01 level

Chapter 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The summary of the study with main findings is given in this chapter.

The hypotheses generated were tested based on the data collected from the executives of the organizations: 196 women executives and comparable age equated male executives from four organization in Alwaye – Ernakulam area. Influence of certain bio social variables on role conflict, role overload and role ambiguity, and the outcomes or role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload in terms of to job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress were also examined. Gender, nature of work and organizational difference on the role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload were also examined. Main findings from chapters 4 to 6 are presented below.

A. ROLE CONFLICT

1. There is no significant difference between male and female executives in the experienced role conflict.
2. There is no significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the women executives in the public and private sector organizations.
3. There is no significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the manufacturing and consultancy oriented organizations.

4. There is no significant difference in the role conflict experienced by the executives in the manufacturing and service oriented organizations.
5. There is no significant difference in the role conflict experienced women executives in the consultancy and service oriented organizations.
6. There is a significant negative relationship is obtained between role conflict and age of women executives.
7. There is no significant negative relationship between role conflict and experience in terms of job tenure i.e. number of years of service.
8. There is no significant negative relationship between role conflict and educational levels of women executives.
9. There is no significant positive relationship between role conflict and span of control/supervision of women executives.
10. There is a significant positive relationship between role conflict and family responsibilities of women executives.
11. There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction of women executives.

12. There is a significant negative relationship between role conflict and job involvement of women executives.

13. There is a significant positive relationship between role conflict and job stress of women executives.

B. ROLE AMBIGUITY

1. There is no significant difference in the role ambiguity experienced by male and female executives.

2. There is no significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives in private and public sector organizations.

3. There is no significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and consultancy oriented organizations.

4. There is no significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives in manufacturing and service oriented organizations.

5. There is a significant difference in role ambiguity experienced by women executives in consultancy and service oriented organizations.

6. There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and age of women executives.

7. There is a significant negative relationship between role ambiguity and educational level of women executives.
8. There is a significant negative relationship is obtained between role ambiguity and service experience of women executives.
9. There is no significant positive relation between role ambiguity and family responsibilities of women executives.
10. There is no significant positive relation between role ambiguity and span of control of women executives.
11. There is no significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job satisfaction of women executives.
12. There is a significant negative relation between role ambiguity and job involvement of women executives.
13. There is no significant positive relation between role ambiguity and job stress of women executives.

C. ROLE OVERLOAD

1. There is a significant difference in the role over load experienced by male and female executives.

1. There is a significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of private and public sector organizations.
3. There is a significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of manufacturing and consultancy organizations.
4. There is no significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of manufacturing and service organizations.
5. There is no significant difference in role overload experienced by women executives of consultancy and service oriented organizations.
6. There is a significant negative relation between role overload and age of women executives.
7. There is no significant negative relation between role over load and educational level of women executives.
8. There is no significant negative relation between role overload and service experience of women executives.
9. There is a significant positive relation between role overload and family responsibilities of women executives.
10. There is no significant positive relation between role overload and span of control of women executives.

11. There is a significant negative relation between role overload and job satisfaction of women executives.

12. There is no significant negative relation between role overload and job involvement of women executives.

13. There is a significant positive relation between role overload and job stress of women executives.

Age and job satisfaction are negatively significant with respect to role overload. Other factors such as, family responsibilities and job stress are positively related to role over load. A significant difference is observed in the role over load experienced by male and female executives.

Based on this research study the following statements are found valid:

1. There is no gender difference in role conflict and role ambiguity, but gender difference is there in role overload.
2. Age is negatively related to role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.
3. Span of control is positively related to role conflict, but not with role ambiguity and role overload.

4. 'Family responsibilities' is positively related with role conflict, and role overload, but not with role ambiguity.
5. Job satisfaction is negatively related with role conflict and role overload, but not with role ambiguity.
6. Job Involvement is negatively related to role conflict and role ambiguity, but not with role overload.
7. Job stress is positively related with role conflict and role overload, but not with role ambiguity.
8. Education is negatively related with role ambiguity only.
9. Experience (Years of service) is negatively related with role ambiguity only.

Due to the double burden female executives are experiencing more role overload compared to male executives. There is no male/ female difference in the experienced role conflict and role ambiguity. This may be due to several physical, psychological and social factors, such as the number of children and their age, occupation of the spouse, number of dependent family members and their age and also the physical health of the individual herself etc.

Women executives are too often left unsure of the scope of their responsibilities, They do not know when and where their job begins and ends. With

the advancement of the technology, every day life will be changing and fast moving. Because of the double burden, women executives are exhausted with the family role and the executive role pressure which leads to the role overload and stress.

Due to the multiple roles many of the women face a lot of problem. Most commonly experienced is that of work overload which leads to straining of physical and emotional resources. The second most common problem is that division of domestic labour continues to be based on gender identity and traditional conceptions. Thus women continue to bear the burden of performing crucial domestic chores despite their employment status. Expectations of the two roles are somewhat antithetical, hence devotion of self to one role is necessarily a curtailment of the other.

Majority of the studies reported that there is a gender difference in the role conflict experienced by the executives. But this study reports no gender difference in role conflict experienced by the executives. This may be true because now a days more and more women are employed in higher positions which were 'monopoly' of the male earlier. In other words, the modern women are able to cope with the situations of dual role. Age is the major factor effecting the role conflict experienced by the executives.

However, this study reveals that there is a gender difference in the role overload experienced by women executives. Different women related movement are fighting for the equality irrespective of gender. This may not be true in the case of role conflict and role ambiguity, but in the case of role overload female executives have to play more than two roles and this double burden effect the role overload.

Age is one of the major factors effecting an individual. Age signifies the physical and mental maturity of an individual. In terms of occupations, age has a major role to play. In the case women executives, the role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload were maximum at the lower age group. This study also reports that age is negatively related with role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.

From this study it can be suggested that age is related to conflict, ambiguity and role overload, but one cannot fully stress the fact that with increase in age, there arises lesser role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. Because contradictory findings have been obtained in other studies.

Number of years of service (experience) is found to be negatively related to role ambiguity. As people acquire more experience they tend to experience less of role ambiguity, in their job. This may be explained. Familiarity and experience with ambiguity situations tends to reduce the negative effect on experienced people, hence ambiguity may not be that stressful for them. Having resolved similar ambiguity in the past, they are used to these stressful situations. More over in terms of their experience they might be well tuned to the expectation of their role set members. And interpersonal relations built over time may induce the role set members to put less of role pressures on the focal person. Familiarity with the focal person may help the role set members to tune their expectations in consonance with the focal person's own expectations.

Education is a key variable in the exploration of socio economic status of an individual. In the case education for women, it may be said that it is the only channel

through which women can find their rightful place in the society. Education gives not only a modern outlook and rational perspective but it also liberates individuals from insularism and dogmatism.

When educational qualifications are not suited for one's job, one tends to experience lack of role clarity both in terms of goals as well as responsibilities. Such a situation leads to role ambiguity.

Span of control is positively related to role conflict. That is, higher role conflict may be due to the larger span of control. Though one may hypothetically presume a larger span of control to be associated with more conflict, the relationship may not be one-to-one because of a number of intervening variables that tend to influence the relationship. These variables are complexity of the job, the type of technology employed in the organization, competence of the subordinates, interpersonal relationships between the focal person and subordinates and others. Only when such relevant variables are taken into consideration and controlled for, the exact nature of relationships between role conflict and span of control may be clearly established. However, such an investigation is not under the purview of the present study.

The results of the study support the earlier stated hypothesis concerning the relationship between role conflict and job satisfaction. Women executives with low role conflict are found to exhibit a higher degree of satisfaction. Several conflicting factors such as pay, promotion, working conditions, relationship with coworkers, motivational factors also effecting the job satisfaction. But these intrinsic and extrinsic factors effecting the job satisfaction were not studied in this present study.

In the case of job involvement, the same negative relationship was obtained. This may be due to the fact that there is a consistent correlation between job satisfaction and job involvement.

Theoretical and practical significance of this study

A theory can be said to have several characteristics. Theory is a set of conventions created by theorists (Hall & Lindsey, 1985, p. 10) as a way of representing reality. A theory is a means of organizing and integrating all that is known concerning a related set of events (Hall & Lindsey, 1985, p.13). Theory has another function to indicate gaps in the knowledge so that further research will present a more comprehensive understanding of any phenomena (Wrightman, 1972, p.6). The present research study explored facts of role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload experienced by the women executives.

The theoretical implementation of this study is that women executives were purely adjusted with the family role and work role. There is no work-family conflict existing in the modern women. Only role overload is predominant due to their double role. Role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload are distinctive and separate phenomenon that deserve special treatment for each rather than clubbing them together.

Practical implications for streamlining human resource management strategies can be drawn from the results of this study. In most cases role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload has negative consequences and every effort should

be directed towards alleviating the negative outcomes detrimental to the productivity of the organization and for achieving better quality of work life for the women executives.

Keeping in view the problems of women executives, especially when they perform dual roles, a few suggestions may be offered to alleviate their problems. The age related developmental tasks as identified by Havighust (1953) should include and emphasize career and house hold orientation for both male and females. The sex roles should be reinterpreted as overlapping and reciprocal rather than distinct. Role overload is the most significant factor that create problem for women and this factor is to be taken into account in human resource management practices.

Scope for further research

The limitations realized and results obtained in the study provide scope for further research in the role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload.

The scope of the study could be widened to other sectors such as health care institutions, government departments, defense service etc.

Methods of detecting role related problems through certain clinical methods may be explored.

There is enough scope for conducting an in depth research on the effect of family size, family pattern or role enactment problem. Other factors such as

motivational level personality traits industrial relations climate may also be explored to find their impact on role enactment problems.

Role conflict resolution methods by certain intervention strategies may also be explored in future research with special focus on the role of women and impact of women in such conflict resolutions.

Limitations of the study

1. Comparative study on all possible role conflict related variables like general political and economic pressures, organizational climate, and personality style motivational factors etc could not be included.
2. Role conflict resolution methods are not studied.
3. The sample selected in this study only covers the limited women executives in the Cochin - Alwaye industrial belt; the study was not focused on the other women workers.
4. The job satisfaction studied is only the over all job satisfaction and not the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of job satisfaction.
5. The resolution of the work- family conflict, or the work time flexibility, and the training for reducing the role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload are not included in this study .

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Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRE AND SCALES

Part A. Bio Social Factors

1. Designation : _____
2. How old are you? _____ years (approximately)
3. Sex
 Male Female
4. Educational Qualifications
 Graduate Post Graduate
5. Marital Status
 Married Unmarried
6. How long have you been working for this Organization?
_____ Years _____ Months
7. How many employees are under your immediate control?
Number _____ (Approximately)

Part B. Family Responsibilities

Please tick (✓) the response category you think appropriate

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I am doing most of my household work myself.					
2.	I have enough times to attend to my children's educational and physical needs.					
3.	I have enough time to do the kitchen work.					
4.	I have enough times to manage social relations/social visit/social gathering.					
5.	I am managing the financial matters of my house.					
6.	I have enough time to attend to my children during illness.					
7.	My family members help me in family affairs.					
8.	I am satisfied in attending to husband's and children's needs.					
9.	I am compelled to take more leave than sanctioned by office due to my family responsibilities.					
10.	I find it difficult to be punctual at office due to my house hold work.					

- SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
N - Neutral
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

Part C. Role Conflict

Please tick (✓) the response category you think appropriate

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I am uncertain about how much authority I have					
2.	I have to do things that should be done differently					
3.	I work under incompatible policies and guide lines					
4.	I receive conflicting requests from two or more people					
5.	I work on unnecessary things					
6.	I work with two or more groups that operate quite differently					
7.	I receive an agreement without adequate resource and materials to execute it.					
8.	I get orders from more than one person					
9.	I have to bread a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment					
10.	I receive insufficient information related to my immediate job to do it properly.					

- SA - Strongly Agree
 A - Agree
 N - Neutral
 D - Disagree
 SD - Strongly Disagree

Part D. Role Ambiguity

Please tick (✓) the response category you think appropriate

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I have just the right amount of work to do					
2.	I know exactly what is expected of me					
3.	I do not know if my work is acceptable to my superior					
4.	My superior always lets me know how satisfied he is with my performance					
5.	I am corrected when I do not really expect it					
6.	I know what my responsibilities are					
7.	I perform tasks that are quite simple and easy					

- SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
N - Neutral
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

Part E. Role Overload

Please tick (✓) the response category you think appropriate

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I feel I have more to do than I can comfortably handle					
2.	I feel physically drained when I get home from work					
3.	I feel emotionally drained when I get home from work					
4.	I feel, I have to rush to get everything done each day					
5.	I feel, I don't have enough time for myself					
6.	I have a good balance between my job and my family time					
7,	I wish, I had more time to do things for the family					
8.	Family life interferes with work					
10.	My time of work does not match other family members' schedule well.					

- SA - Strongly Agree
 A - Agree
 N - Neutral
 D - Disagree
 SD - Strongly Disagree

Part F. Job Involvement

Please tick (✓) the response category you think appropriate

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	The most important things that happen to me are related to my present job.					
2.	I will stay overtime to finish my job, even if I am not paid for it.					
3.	My job is only a small part of me as a person					
4.	I am very much personally involved in my job					
6.	I come early or stay late when I have more work to do					
7.	I willingly accept all the assignments given to me.					
8.	Quite often I cut short my lunch hour to complete the job					
10.	I have very strong ties with my present job which would be very difficult to break					
11.	I get depressed when I am not working					
12.	I wait impatiently for holidays					
13.	Sometimes I would like to kick myself for the mistakes I make in my job					
14.	I do not mind over exerting myself on the job					
15.	It annoys me to have to leave work unfinished					

- SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
N - Neutral
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

Part G. Job Satisfaction

Please tick (✓) the response category you think appropriate

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	My job is like a hobby to me					
2.	My job is interesting enough to keep me from getting bored					
3.	I enjoy my work more than my leisure time					
4.	I am satisfied with my job for the time being					
5.	I feel fairly well satisfied with my job					
6.	I consider my job rather unpleasant					
7.	I am often bored with my work					
8.	I feel unhappy for taking up this job					
9.	I am satisfied with my salary					
10.	I get some feelings of accomplishment from the work					
11.	I feel that I am happier in my work than most other people					
12.	I would quit this job at once, if I could get anything else to do					
13.	I would take almost any other job in which I could earn as much as I am earning now					
14.	I would like to exchange my present job for the same line of work					
15.	I often find the work itself distasteful for me					

- SA - Strongly Agree
 A - Agree
 N - Neutral
 D - Disagree
 SD - Strongly Disagree

Part H. Job Stress

Please tick (✓) the response category you think appropriate

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	I usually fear, I may be terminated from my job					
2.	I have been upset because something happened unexpectedly					
3.	I feel that my officers and colleagues neglect and disregard me					
4.	I often apprehend that my colleagues may be promoted earlier than me					
5.	I think that top management does not understand my work related problems					
6.	I often feel that I have not selected a suitable job					
7.	I am confident that I can achieve the goal of my life through this job					
8.	I usually think and worry about my promotions					
9.	My officers and co-workers misunderstand me					
10.	I do my work under heavy mental strain					

- SA - Strongly Agree
A - Agree
N - Neutral
D - Disagree
SD - Strongly Disagree

Appendix B

PRELIMINARY STUDY

This study reports forty case studies dealing with the role conflict experienced by four different categories of post-graduate women. The observations are relevant in formulating meaningful hypotheses for further research in the role conflict of working women.

The study is concerned with work role and family role conflict of women executives. Forty cases are selected on the bases of homogeneity in terms of their educational level.

The method of data collection was an interview with a schedule paying attention to the problems they experienced in managing the family without affecting their work or in managing the work effectively without affecting the family demands.

The report was in the form of case studies in four different categories. viz:

Category I: Post Graduate unemployed housewives with family responsibilities
(husbands staying with the family)

Category II: Post Graduate unemployed housewives with family responsibilities
(husbands staying away from the family)

Category III: Post Graduate women executives with family responsibilities
(husbands staying with the family) (women executives with their husbands working in the similar status either in the same organisation or in other organisations)

Category IV: Post Graduate women executives with family responsibilities (husbands staying away from the family) (women executives with their husbands working elsewhere away from the family i.e. , managing the house is in the hands of women executives)

Observations and Discussions

Observations in terms of number of cases in four categories reporting various levels of Role Conflict including role ambiguity, role overload are given below

From this study, it is observed that in category I (Post Graduate unemployed housewives having their husbands staying with them) two of them have overload because their husbands have no time to support their wives in household management. Other three in this group are not experiencing any type of role conflict. They have enough time to pay the respective roles. Role ambiguity and role differentiation are clear in the three cases reported under this category.

In the category II (Post Graduate unemployed housewives having their husbands staying away from the family) none of them is experiencing inter role conflict [(person-role conflict) experienced conflict] in playing a particular role as an individual by her temperament and attitudes is finding it difficult to play the given role. All of them in this category are experiencing intra-role conflict (Two or more roles in the same situation or in different situation by the same individual. Here they have to play the role of mother and father. All of them have

role ambiguity and certain degree of role overload. (Spouse is working away from the family).

The category III (post graduate executives having their husbands staying with them). One of them is not experiencing intra role conflict because her husband is very much cooperative in household affairs. Others have inter role conflict partial intra role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. This partial intra role conflict is due to the fact that the husband is busier than themselves having no time to assist their wives in the family management.

In the category IV (post graduate executives having their husbands staying away from the family) all of them have intra role conflict, partial inter role conflict, role ambiguity and role overload. (Spouse is working away from the family). They have to play three roles such as mother father and executive. One of the problems of this group is that all of the family responsibilities are taken care of by the women executives themselves.

Summary and Conclusions

From this study, it is observed that the postgraduate housewives (not employed) with their husbands staying with them and in a supportive nature have no role conflict. The employed housewives with their husbands staying with them have higher degree of role conflict. ie, the post graduate executives with their husbands staying away from the family. Comparing Category I and Category II, one has no role conflict two has certain degree of role conflict especially intra role

conflict. Comparing the category III and category IV, the degree of intensity of role conflict is higher in category III than category IV. Category III has less intra role conflict while category IV has less inter role conflict. (because of the feeling of freedom and absence of inter-personal conflict at home). Comparing category II and category IV both of them have intra role conflict and role ambiguity. The degree of intensity of role conflict is higher in IV than II. Comparing category I and III, category I has no role conflict while category III has maximum role conflict.

This case study leads to the following hypothesis which may be used for detailed study for further research

1. Role conflict is maximum among women executives with their husbands in the family but without much role clarity and role differentiation in managing the house.
2. Role conflict is minimum among women executives when there is role clarity and role differentiation between husband and wife in managing the family. This is possible
 - a. when women executives are managing the family in the absence of the husband.
 - b. when there is role clarity and role difference in the family in presence of husband.
3. Inter-personal relation between husband and wife is a major factor in deciding the role overload, intra role conflict and inter role conflict of working women.

Appendix C
SPSS OUTPUTS

Correlations

		ROLECONF	AMBIGUIT
Pearson Correlation	ROLECONF	1.000	-.095
	AMBIGUIT	-.095	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	ROLECONF	.	.185
	AMBIGUIT	.185	.
N	ROLECONF	196	196
	AMBIGUIT	196	196

Correlations

		ROLECONF	OVERLOAD
Pearson Correlation	ROLECONF	1.000	.133
	OVERLOAD	.133	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	ROLECONF	.	.063
	OVERLOAD	.063	.
N	ROLECONF	196	196
	OVERLOAD	196	196

Correlations

		AMBIGUIT	OVERLOAD
Pearson Correlation	AMBIGUIT	1.000	-.092
	OVERLOAD	-.092	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	AMBIGUIT	.	.199
	OVERLOAD	.199	.
N	AMBIGUIT	196	196
	OVERLOAD	196	196

Correlations

		JSATISFA	JINVOLVE
Pearson Correlation	JSATISFA	1.000	.066
	JINVOLVE	.066	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	JSATISFA	.	.360
	JINVOLVE	.360	.
N	JSATISFA	196	196
	JINVOLVE	196	196

Correlations

		JSATISFA	JSTRESS
Pearson Correlation	JSATISFA	1.000	-.078
	JSTRESS	-.078	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	JSATISFA	.	.276
	JSTRESS	.276	.
N	JSATISFA	196	196
	JSTRESS	196	196

Correlations

		JINVOLVE	JSTRESS
Pearson Correlation	JINVOLVE	1.000	-.122
	JSTRESS	-.122	1.000
Sig. (2-tailed)	JINVOLVE	.	.089
	JSTRESS	.089	.
N	JINVOLVE	196	196
	JSTRESS	196	196

Appendix D

INTER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN PERFORMANCE/ BEHAVIOUR RELATED OUT COMES.

Employee satisfaction is one of the most investigated topics of organizational behaviour (Ganesh, 1990; Khandwalla,1988; Sinha & singh, 1995; Nazir and Nazir 1998). Studies have revealed job satisfaction to be of great significance for the effective functioning of any organization.

Job satisfaction or dissatisfaction is a function of perceived relationship between what one expects and obtains from one's job and how much importance or value he attributes to it (Kemelgor, 1982; locke, 1976; Mobley & Locke 1970)

A thorough review of literature on job satisfaction by Herzberg, Mausner, Peterson and Capwell in 1957 included 1795 references on the subject. Mitchell and Larsen (1987) have indicated that over 3000 studies have been carried out on job satisfaction over the last 60 years. The consequences of job satisfaction are very important to an organisation in terms of efficiency, productivity, employee relations, absenteeism and turnover (porter and Steers 1973, Mowday 1981, Scarpello and Campbell 1983) and to employees in terms of health and well being (Farnham and Scaffer 1984, Hodgson 1985).

Job involvement can be considered as an important measure of organizational effectiveness and it may be least in part, influenced by job satisfaction.

In recent years job involvement has been widely studied by industrial psychologists with special reference to employee's job satisfaction. It seems to have been receiving considerable amount of theoretical as well as empirical attention of the researchers.

It has been investigated by Weissenberg and Gruenfeld (1968) that job involvement is significantly related to satisfaction with motivational variables. Schwyhart and Smith(1972) observed a positive relationship between job involvement and company satisfaction. Sharma and Kapoor (1978) have reported that higher salary leads to higher job involvement.

Job satisfaction may be defined as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience.

This chapter deals with the inter correlation between performance / behaviour related out comes. The behaviour related variables selected in this study are job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress.

In this chapter an attempt is made to study the relationship between job satisfaction and job involvement, job satisfaction and job stress, and job involvement and job stress.

The computed results using SPSS package is given in Appendix C. The same test is done in the case of performance/ behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress. Correlation between job satisfaction and job involvement is 0.066 and that of job satisfaction and job stress is -0.078 . The 'r' value between job involvement and job stress is -0.122 . From these data on 'r', it seems that all the performance/ behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress are independent since the 'r' value between them is not significant.

There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and job involvement (Sagar Sharma and Sadhna Sharma 1978)

Tannenbaum(1966), Manherin(1975) and Sharma & Kapoor(1978) reported that individuals at higher ranks in job satisfaction are more involved among the employees of a large manufacturing firm. They found positive correlation between these variables. Hall, Schneider and Nygren(1970) found that job involvement was significantly related to satisfaction of autonomy and self- fulfillment needs only.

Lawler and Hall (1970), Weissenberg and Gruenfeld (1968) reported that job involvement is typically related to satisfaction of intrinsic rather than extrinsic needs. Herzberg (1968), Lawler and Hall(1970) suggested that where job design provided greater responsibility and autonomy in job, employees were likely to be more involved in their jobs. Smith, Kendall and Hunts(1969) concluded that job involvement was positively related to job satisfaction. In another study Anantharaman and Subha (1980) found that no relationship exists between job involvement and satisfaction of various needs except self actualization need.

Kanungo (1979) has proposed a motivational approach to the study of job involvement that maintains a conceptual distinction between intrinsic motivation and job involvement. This distinction was supported by the work of Lawler & Hall(1970) by their statement that while satisfaction might increase the likelihood of the job involvement, it is not a definition of the job involvement itself.

According to Anantharaman and Subha(1980), no relationship exists between job involvement and satisfaction.

Mukherjee(1969) found that in the Indian context, there was a lack of relationship between job satisfaction and job involvement. Kulkarni (1976), Weirsanberg & Gurnfed (1968) studied the job satisfaction - job involvement relationship by applying Herzberg's dichotomization of motivator and hygiene variables and established a low coefficient of correlation.

According to Gopikumar and Achamamba (1993), job involvement is positively correlated with job satisfaction. Sharma and Sharma (1978), Mishra (1987) Anantharaman and Kaliappan (1982) found a positive relationship between job involvement and job satisfaction.

According to Sasi Misra and Amar Kalro (1981) job involvement is positively correlated with the satisfaction of salient needs, for both intrinsically motivated groups and extrinsically motivated groups.

Beena.C & Produval P.R (1997) found that male executives show higher job satisfaction than the female executives.

According to Hulian & Smith (1964) female workers were less satisfied with their work than males. While females were found to be slightly more satisfied with their pay, they were less satisfied with their work, promotion etc.

There are some studies reporting higher level of job satisfaction (Price 1971 and Cortis 1973); low job satisfaction (Gakhan & Sachdena 1987 and others) among female teachers and no difference between male and female teachers (Di Caprio 1974; Doyle 1975; Start and Laundry 1973; Rao 1986; Urhasnee, Reddy and Vinoly 1995)

Prathap and Gupta (1986) found sex difference in job satisfaction-female are more satisfied than male. Bharathi (1989) found that women's life satisfaction and job satisfaction were higher than those of men. Rajasekhar T, Bharathi T & Sivasankar Reddy K (1991) found significant difference between men and women in job satisfaction.

Beena, C & Poduval P.R (1997) found that there is no relationship between job satisfaction and job involvement. According to Mishra P.C (1997) overall job satisfaction was significantly related to job involvement.

Schwenk (1990) showed that high conflict is associated with high quality for the executives of non-profit organizations but with low quality for executives of profit organizations.

Andrisani and Shapiro (1978) reports that job satisfaction is very low among working women in their thirties and forties .

Hall Copur(1990) reported that role conflict experienced by faculty are not found to be related to general job satisfaction but are significantly correlated with faculty dissatisfaction in decisions that affect their work and work environment.

Job satisfaction and general anxiety are negatively related (Sagar Sharma & Sadhna Sharma 1978).

Gita Mehra & P. C Mishra (1993) reports that worker's opinion seeking moderates the negative relationship between their perceived occupational stress and intrinsic job satisfaction. The workers participation in opinion seeking attenuates the adverse effects of perceived occupational stress on their job attitudes.

Negative relationship between stress and organizational commitment was stronger in conditions of high as compared to low social support. (Vashishtha and Mishra 1998).

From the present study, it is concluded that performance/ behavioural outcomes such as job satisfaction, job involvement and job stress are independent since the 'r' value between them is not significant.