



## ATTITUDE OF URBAN EMPLOYED WOMEN TOWARDS VARIOUS GENDER ROLES

**Sneha Chandrapal** Assistant Professor, Anand Institute of Social Work, Anand, Gujarat

### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Women constitute nearly half of the population contribute more than half of the duties and responsibility of the family, but are hardly empowered to participate in decision making. They were not given any rights; they were supposed to do domestic work and to look after their children. Gradually, with the passage of time, the concepts of “Working Women” come in to existence. Women had begun to come out of the domestic sphere and have begun to take up professional roles outside their homes. This has helped them to realize their potential, to broaden their outlook and to create a new meaning in their lives. **Methods:** The research design is exploratory in nature as it explores the attitude of employed women towards gender issue. It is descriptive in nature as it describes views of urban employed women on various gender issues. So, the research design of study is exploratory cum descriptive in nature. 70 urban employed women from Anand city were selected as its sample size by using simple random sampling procedure. **Findings:** Most of the women (44.28%) are from 24-34 years age group. Majority of the employed women (84.28%) believe that responsibility of taking care of children should be equally divided between mother and father; most of the respondents (35.71%) strongly agree that both husbands and wives should share equally in housework.

**KEYWORDS :** Employed, women, attitude, gender

### INTRODUCTION:

Gender is a range of characteristics used to distinguish between [males](#) and [females](#), particularly in the cases of [men](#) and [women](#) and the [masculine](#) and [feminine](#) attributes assigned to them. Depending on the context, the discriminating characteristics vary from [sex](#) to [social role](#) to [gender identity](#). Gender equality is regarded to be one of the core factors of any democratic society and the facilitator of economic growth and societal well being.

Gender can be defined as a set of characteristics, roles, and behavior patterns that distinguish women from men socially and culturally and relations of power between them (Women Information Centre, 2005). These characteristics, roles, behavior patterns and power relations are dynamic; they vary over time and between different cultural groups because of the constant shifting and variation of cultural and subjective meanings of gender (Hirut, 2004). The difference in power relations between men and women results in different gender roles, social roles and socially appropriate characteristics and behaviors. All are culture-specific. Kabira and Masinjila (1997) identified action, locus, visualization and power, among other things, as components in the identification of different roles of men and women.

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The traditional role of a house-wife has gradually evolved into the dual and more fulfilling role of a “Working Women” and “House Wife”. As is well known, the right of every individual to earn livelihood is the expression of one's economic freedom. This change is due to education and economic independence. Education and economic independence play a vital role in changing mind-sets and attitudes. Education increases woman's awareness and leads to their overall development thereby helping the nation to prosper. Working women have an image that is distinct to that of non working women in the eyes of society. The attitudes of various members of the family towards working women are evaluated.

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Every person has got a typical personality structure characterized by a distinct set of beliefs, a personal conviction etc, which not only affect her perception, but also considerably influence of her actions. Attitudes are relatively enduring entities reflecting the mental readiness of the person to act or behave in a particular manner, in a given situation-and, beliefs refer to that part of cognitive work, which may not necessarily be true but are considered to be so, because of their long standing culture sanction, and their transmission to successive generations through various channels of communication of these traditional knowledge banks.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Deepa Mathur's research (Ibid: 107) revealed that out of 225 working women studies, 38% had high home –adjustment, 43% moderate home-adjustment & 19% low home-adjustment. As regards the level of job-adjustment, 44% showed high 30% moderate & 26% low adjustment. The level of job adjustment was found to be varying with the nature of job, length of service, access to power & future plans. Against this, the level of home-adjustment depends upon the structure of family, size of family, husbands & in-law's co-operation and self-esteem. Taking the two situations (home & work place) together, it may be stated that the working women generally succeed in developing strategies that allow them to pursue their occupational aspirations while simultaneously living up to their domestic responsibilities. Though the working women spend their income mostly on raising the living standards, though they are accused of becoming proud, self-centered, arrogant and negligent, yet, they manage to break through the life shell of narrow domestic existence & participate in the large life of the nation & even humanity.

**Locke (1979)** in his study stated that a cause-effect relationship is available between family functioning and work life, this cause-effect relationship could work in both directions, that is, work attitudes

could affect family attitudes and vice versa. The mechanism that is positive in bringing about such effect is emotional generalization of spill over.

**M.R Wood (1979)** in his study of middle class urban sanitary women un Gujarat showed that some of the women is his sample including one whose marriage was arranged, had established a give and take relationship with their husbands, Women also take part in important decisions.

**Sharpe (1979)** in his book titled 'Double Identity' stated that, there are some signs of change. Men are now recognizing and having to reconcile work and family demands. When it comes to the division of labour in the home, however, despite some optimistic fore casting women still do the large majority of tasks associated with house work and childcare. Thus while men are increasingly making career discussions with their partners and families in mind, nevertheless most men do not do their share of house hold and child care tasks. This makes it more difficult for most women to be serious contenders in the competition for promotion in their career.

**METHODOLOGY:**

The study was conducted with a view to know various gender differences perceived by urban employed women. Research design of the present study is exploratory cum descriptive in nature. The universe of the study includes all employed women from Anand Town. The Sample of the study includes 70 employed women respondents. The sample is adopted by using Simple Random Sampling method. The study was conducted in the year 2011. Self designed interview schedule using Likert's five point scale was used to collect data from the women.

**RESULTS & DISCUSSION:**

**Demographic Information:**

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
<b>Age Group</b>		
24 – 34	31	44.28
34 – 44	28	40.00
44 – 54	09	12.85
54 – 60	02	02.85
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	62	88.57
Muslim	01	01.42
Christian	07	10.00
<b>Caste</b>		
Schedule Caste	09	12.85
Schedule Tribe	05	07.14
Other Backward Class	05	07.14
General	51	72.85
<b>Education</b>		
Illiterate	01	01.42
10 <sup>th</sup> pass	05	07.14
12 <sup>th</sup> pass	06	08.57
Graduation	38	54.28
Post Graduation	14	20.00
More than P.G.	06	08.57
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	66	94.28
Widow	03	04.28
Divorce	01	01.42
<b>Occupation</b>		
Private Sector	30	42.85
Business	03	04.28
Government Sector	37	52.85

Out of 70 respondents, most of the women belong to the age group of 24-34 years i.e. (44.28%). It can also be seen that majority (88.57%) of the respondents follow Hindu religion. From the above table 1 it can

be also viewed that majority of the respondents say 72.85 percent (n=51) belong to General Category. As far as education and occupation of the women are concerned majority (54.28%) of the women are graduates and they are working in Government sector. It can be observed from the above table that a large majority of the respondents say 94.28 percent (n=66) are married.

**Attitude towards Home and Child care:**

Statements	Strong ly Agree	Agree	Neutra l	Disagr ee	Strong ly Disagr ee
The responsibility of taking care of children should be divided between the mother and the father.	59	08	03	0	0
Boys and girls should be encouraged to do the same things around the house.	60	05	05	0	0
Both husbands and wives should share equally in housework such as cooking, washing dishes, and housecleaning.	25	25	07	13	0
Both father and mother should work and provide money for the family.	39	17	5	9	0
Husbands and wives should have equal responsibility in decisions about financial matters.	40	14	14	2	0
Families should provide equal medical care to daughters and sons.	61	5	4	0	0
Family should spend as much money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons.	56	8	0	6	0

From the table 2 it can be inferred that majority of the women strongly agree with the statement that the responsibility of taking care of children should be divided between the mother and the father. Regarding the child care majority of the women is of the opinion that boys and girls should be encouraged to do the same things around the house. About the house hold work and responsibility, most of the respondents opined that both husbands and wives should share equally in housework such as cooking, washing dishes, and housecleaning. As far as the financial matters and decisions pertaining to finance in the family are concerned majority of the women strongly agree that both father and mother should work and provide money for the family and according to them it is the joint responsibility of both husband and wife to take the decisions regarding financial matters.

About the Child Care, majority of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that families should provide equal medical care to daughters and sons. They also opine that family should spend as much money on the education of daughters as on the education of sons.

**Attitude towards Work Life**

Regarding the opportunities as well as wok life, majority of the respondents strongly agree that boys and girls should be treated equally and have the same opportunities. While asking about the leadership holds by men and women at work place, majority of the women strongly disagree with the statement that men are usually better leaders than women.

Majority of the employed women opine that women should be allowed to have maternity leave being afraid of losing their job while

they are away as well as men should be allowed to have paternity leave being afraid of losing their job while they are away.

It is also found that most of the respondents strongly agree that engineering is more appropriate career for a man than a woman while medical profession (doctors and nurses etc.,) is more appropriate career for a woman than a man.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

It can be concluded that most of the respondents are between the age group of 24 to 34 years. As far as educational qualification is concerned, majority of the respondents are graduates which shows the level of education among women is higher among urban women. Majority of the respondents believe that there should be equal distribution between mother and father for taking responsibility of their children and their education and also equal distribution of household work. The study also reveals that majority of the respondents opine that it should be the responsibility of both husband and wife to make decisions regarding financial matters.

The concept of sex-role typing is prevalent in our Indian culture but the study reveals that majority of the respondents believe that boys and girls are encouraged to do the same thing in the house.

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