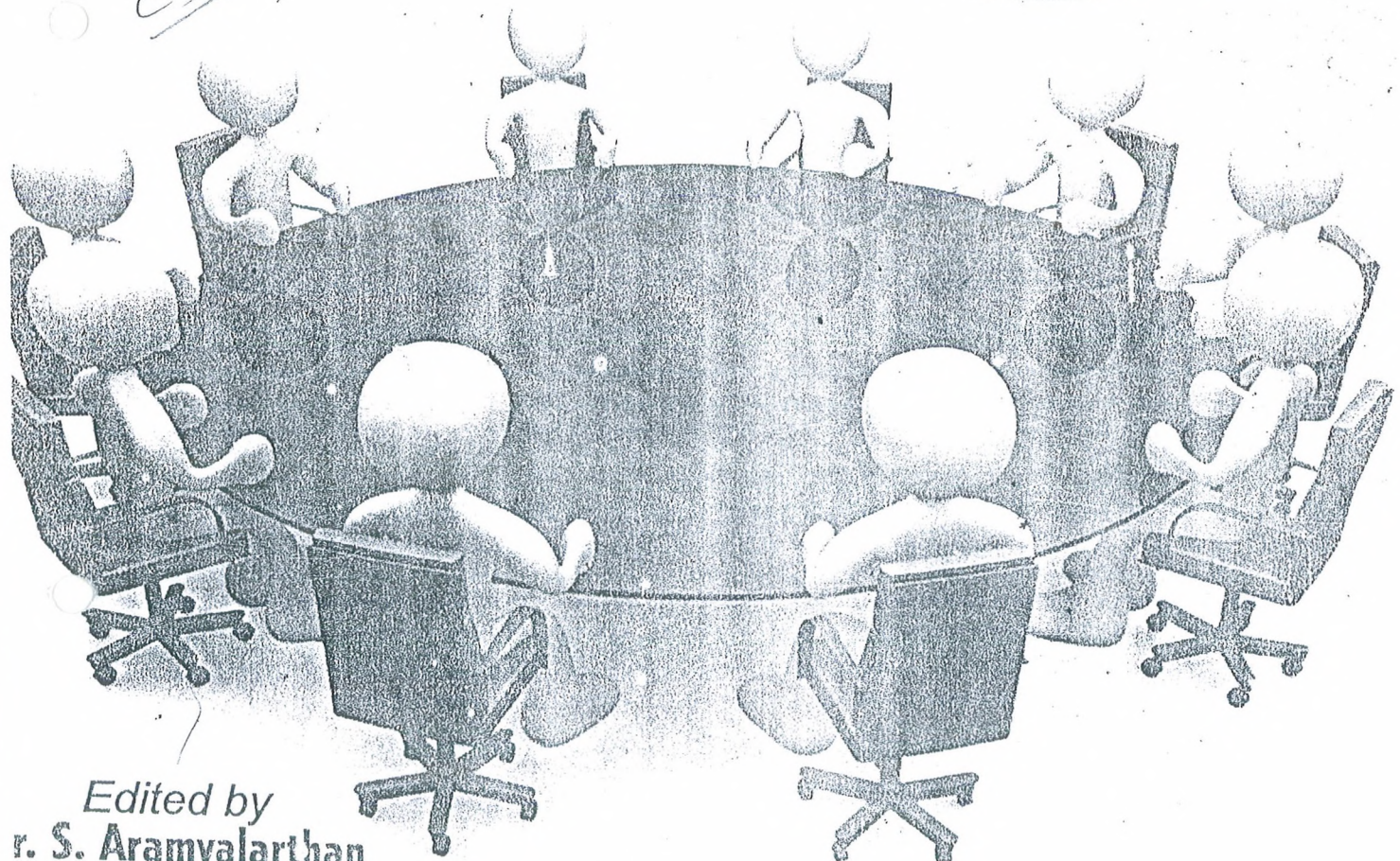


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WORK-HOME ROLE CONFLICT-BALANCING SUPPORT SYSTEM

D. Geetha

Indian economy is developing fastly. The focal point of successive plans has been generation of employment and poverty alleviation. Prime Minister's Rozghar Yojana (PMRY) bank loan scheme seeks to address this unemployment problem. It plans to give employment to more than a million persons every year during eighth plan by setting up 7 lakh micro enterprises. PMRY was launched on 2nd October 1993 to cover urban areas and in 94-95 to whole country.

My doctoral research study titled "An appraisal of the performance of PMRY in Coimbatore district-(with special reference to women entrepreneurs)" was conducted during 2004 in Coimbatore.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

To assess the performance of PMRY scheme and its impact on economic development of women and socially weaker sections of the society.

PMRY scheme had become popular, as no security is required to get bank loan. From 93-94 Government of India had disbursed Rs.6800 crores to 11,89,000 PMRY beneficiaries. In Coimbatore, from 93-94-2000, Rs.6480.55 lakhs was disbursed to 10,279 beneficiaries.

METHODOLOGY

Selection of five Taluks, Coimbatore North, South, Avinashi, Ud .malpet and Pollachi was purposely made, as 50% of PMRY loanees hail from these taluks. 10% of 10,279 was selected and only 518 gave full information in the questionnaires. Around 100 women entrepreneurs were selected for this research study. To become a successful women entrepreneur work- home role conflict must be solved and a balancing support system should be suggested. To achieve this objective, it is very essential to conduct this small research study.

WORK-HOME ROLE CONFLICT

Men and women are changing from traditional and comfortable roles to new ones that are vague and undefined. When such a change occurs in the work place but not at home or vice versa the resulting dissonance can be destructive. The individual's home and her work organization suffer, so a new integration of work and family role is needed.

The central issue for women is the difficulty of combining a commitment to work with a satisfactory personal life. Women entrepreneurs set an impossible ideal of a 'super woman who simultaneously excels at both the traditional and new roles. Thus they make their lives increasingly complex with pressure with long intense hours at work and at home with the family involvements and juggle time to satisfy and fulfill both the roles.

A real time crunch makes it difficult to do all the things that many working women want to do. Women entrepreneurs in addition to their enterprise work usually take complete charge of the house and the children, manage relations, maintain religious or community involvement and provide the family with a peaceful life from the daily pressures of work. They may receive some extra help than women at home in the form of servants, parents and family, but still the entire responsibility of home rests with the women.

But problems remain, as the women entrepreneur is not a super women and there follows a conflict. The issues to be considered are (a) areas of major conflict; (b) priority areas requiring more attention according to women and (c) areas requiring less attention.

Women entrepreneurs are having conflict in their dual role. Only the area of conflict, the extent and degree of conflict is to be determined. Fourteen possible areas of conflict were identified and women entrepreneurs were asked to indicate the degree of conflict, as always, often, occasionally, rarely and never and rank the areas of conflict according to priority and intensity. The higher the percentage, the higher was the conflict. The maximum conflict could be ranked 1 – 100 % and the minimum ranked -14.

Table 1: Areas of Conflict between Domestic and Entrepreneur Roles

S. No.	Areas of Conflict	Rank	Number/ Percentage (%)
1.	Domestic work	2	99
2.	Being a good spouse	13	45
3.	Family members inconvenienced	8	76
4.	Affection to children	11	63
5.	Children's education	9	74
6.	Hobbies and entertainment	3	90
7.	Time with family	4	87
8.	Overloaded with work in both roles	1	100
9.	Hampered from giving best to the enterprise	10	70
10.	Unable to expand enterprise	12	60
11.	Delay in having children	14	8
12.	Close ties with relations	6	81
13.	Profitability of enterprise	7	78
14.	Religious and community life	5	84

The Table No1 revealed that the role conflict though existed was not to a very great extent. The percentages vary between a maximum of 100 to a minimum of eight. It meant that the conflict between the roles was ranked between occasionally and never.

ITEM-WISE ANALYSIS

Women felt that they were over loaded with domestic responsibilities and also they had less time to attend to domestic work (rank 1 and 2 with scores of 100% and 99%). This meant they valued their time and did not want to occupy themselves with domestic chores as women traditionally had done. This therefore being area of maximum conflict was the least to be bothered about and other area

where conflict arose, due to least priority given, was the self. A women forgoes all her hobbies and likes for the enterprise. She sacrificed her other interests for the enterprise and takes herself as last priority (rank 3-90%). Spending enough time with the family and leading a more cultural and traditional life were also areas of conflict (rank 4 and 5 -87% and 84%). Close ties with relations were not possible due to the pressure on their dual role (rank 6-81%). To a certain extent the profitability of the enterprise also suffered as they had to attend to family responsibilities (rank 7-78%). Family members had to put up with certain inconveniences and children's education suffers (rank 8 and 9-76% and 74%).

All the pressure of the conflict then would be on the entrepreneur and the entrepreneur would not be able to give her best to the enterprises (Rank 10-70%). The next ranked on the list of conflict areas was the children, who at times were deprived of motherly attention (rank 11-63%) unable to expand enterprise comes next (rank 12-60%). Women give greater importance to marriage and being a good spouse and having children. The table revealed that the women entrepreneurs did not find it conflicting with their enterprise work (rank 13 and 14-45% and 8%). Thus the percentages represented the extent of role conflict present according to the conflict area. The percentages could also be less due to the less importance being given by the women entrepreneurs to certain conflict areas.

Maximum importance was given to the husband and children and relationship with them. That is, the home came first to the women entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship was a fulfillment of their need for autonomy and self-expression but they considered it to be secondary to their home and family. They did not mind, postponing or curbing their profitability to some extent to satisfy their other wants.

Women entrepreneurs also defined their priorities according to the time available and the duties they performed. They regarded their children's education more important than household chores, which could be postponed or performed with domestic help also. A women entrepreneur perceives herself to be of less importance and gives the least importance to her likes and dislikes. From the response of women entrepreneurs, it could be concluded that they were attending to their family responsibilities satisfactorily at the cost of additional work to themselves or foregoing their hobbies and pleasure.

Women entrepreneurs thus were trying to integrate the two different systems of work and family which were in a dynamic state. As in all systems that interact, change in one eventually affects-change in the other, whether positive or negative. However, women seek fulfillment in self, family and work and thus adopt different strategies for a successful work and family integration.

DEGREE OF ROLE CONFLICT

Women entrepreneurs after their long hours at business have a feeling of guilt and self-critical about their laziness at home. Under the notion of a super women they tend to strain themselves at home, meeting the demands of husbands, children, in-laws and society as dictated by traditional role, which makes it difficult to take care of personal needs. All this lead, to a conflict within the 'two-selves' experienced by the women entrepreneurs. As, a change in one, would automatically lead to a change in the other, it is important to gauge the degree of the conflict. All the 100 women entrepreneurs were asked to mark the extent (degree of) role conflict they face generally as 'never, rarely, occasionally, often and always'.

The role conflict responses of the women entrepreneurs for all areas brought out degree of conflict of entrepreneurs. To understand that the women entrepreneurs had responded in affirmative for extreme conflicts, the data in percentage of such responses was presented in Table No.2 and Figure 1.

Table 2: Women Entrepreneur-Degree of Work-Home Role Conflict

Degree of Role Conflict	Overall Number	Percentage (%)
Never	46	46
Rarely	18	18
Occasionally	21	21
Often	12	12
Always	3	3
Total	100	100

This Table No.2 indicated that there was response to the extent of 3 % for extreme role conflict of always considering total of all areas and entrepreneurs. When the responses were further reviewed to identify whether the extreme role conflict was more evident in any areas of conflict, it was seen that the responses were distributed among all the areas of conflict. Thus it could be concluded that the presence of role conflict was always attributable to the individual and her problems and perceptions.

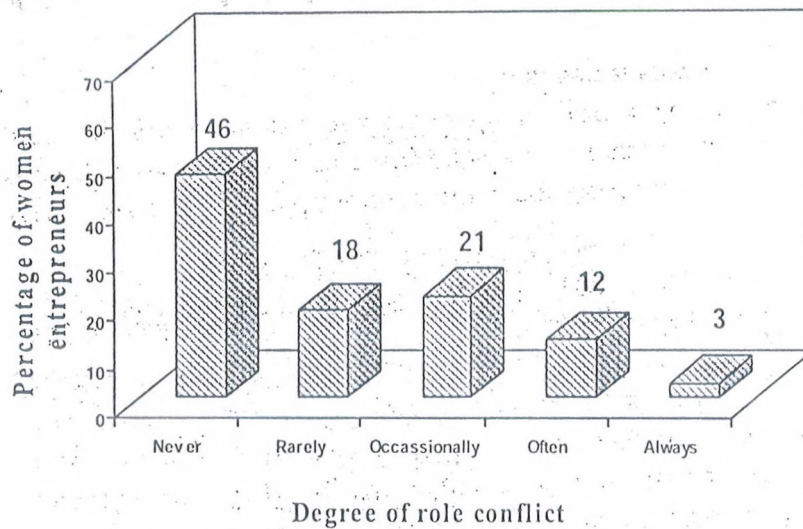


Fig. 1: Women Entrepreneur-Degree of Work-Home Role Conflict

If the role conflict were to be high indicating 'conflict always' in many areas the women entrepreneurs would not have been able to continue with their enterprise. There were not entrepreneurs who could say absolutely that they did not have any conflict at all. This indicated that conflict was present, but the degree varied from individual to individual. There were more number of entrepreneurs who had conflict occasionally and rarely, and also a few who had often.

It can be concluded that there existed role conflict but the degree was not very high. Forty six per cent stated that they never had conflict and 39 % told rarely or occasionally they had conflict. Only 15% said that they faced often conflicts. The reason for lesser degree of role conflict could be due to the fact that women entrepreneurs sacrificed their time for personal hobbies and requirements to meet the demands of family. Role conflict when tasted showed that it was within manageable limits.

The women entrepreneurs having more role conflict could be due to working hours being long and not within their control and lack of encouragement from family resulting in lesser co-operation from family members.

BALANCING SUPPORTS SYSTEM-FAMILY TIME

Time Apportionment for various Activities by Women Entrepreneurs

As Peter Drucker said management is nothing but resource management. Time is the most valuable resource possessed by all, but is recognized only by a few.

Women entrepreneurs work at home, put a lot of pressure on her work at enterprise and vice versa. The time devoted by a women entrepreneur is an important measure of assessing the performance of an enterprise. Entrepreneurial success also depends to a large extent on the quality time devoted by the entrepreneur to the respective enterprise.

The time spent by a women entrepreneur in different activities on a typical working day were analysed and presented in Table No.3 and Figure 2.

Table 3: Time Spent by a Women Entrepreneur in Different Activities on a Typical Working Day

Activities	Percentage (%)	Hours and Minutes
Personal grooming	4.17	1.00
Household duties	15.63	3.45
Children and family	11.46	2.45
Work	35.41	8.30
Rest	29.16	7.00
Entertainment	4.17	1.00
Total	100	24.00

The analysis pictured well the activities of a women entrepreneur. On an average women entrepreneurs spend 8½ hours on work, 7 hours on rest, 3¾ hours on household duties, nearly 3 hours to children and family. Only two hours totally left for personal grooming and entertainment is spent for herself.

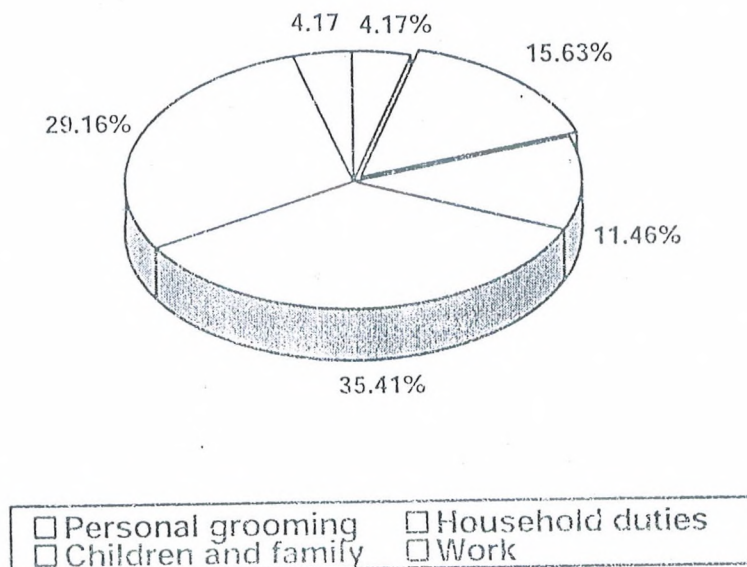


Fig. 2: Time Spent by a Women Entrepreneur in Different Activities on a Typical Working Day