

**THE PRIVATE SPHERE OF WOMEN
WORKING IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
SECTOR: A STUDY IN URBAN KOLKATA**

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Certified that the Thesis entitled

The Private Sphere Of Women Working In Information Technology Sector: A Study In Urban Kolkata: Submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of Professor Dr Bholanath Ghosh (Retd.). And that neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/elsewhere.

Countersigned by the

Candidate:

Supervisor :

Dated :

Dated:

Dedicated

To

My Mother (Mrs Manjita Ghosh)

&

my father

(Late Mr Sujit Ghosh)

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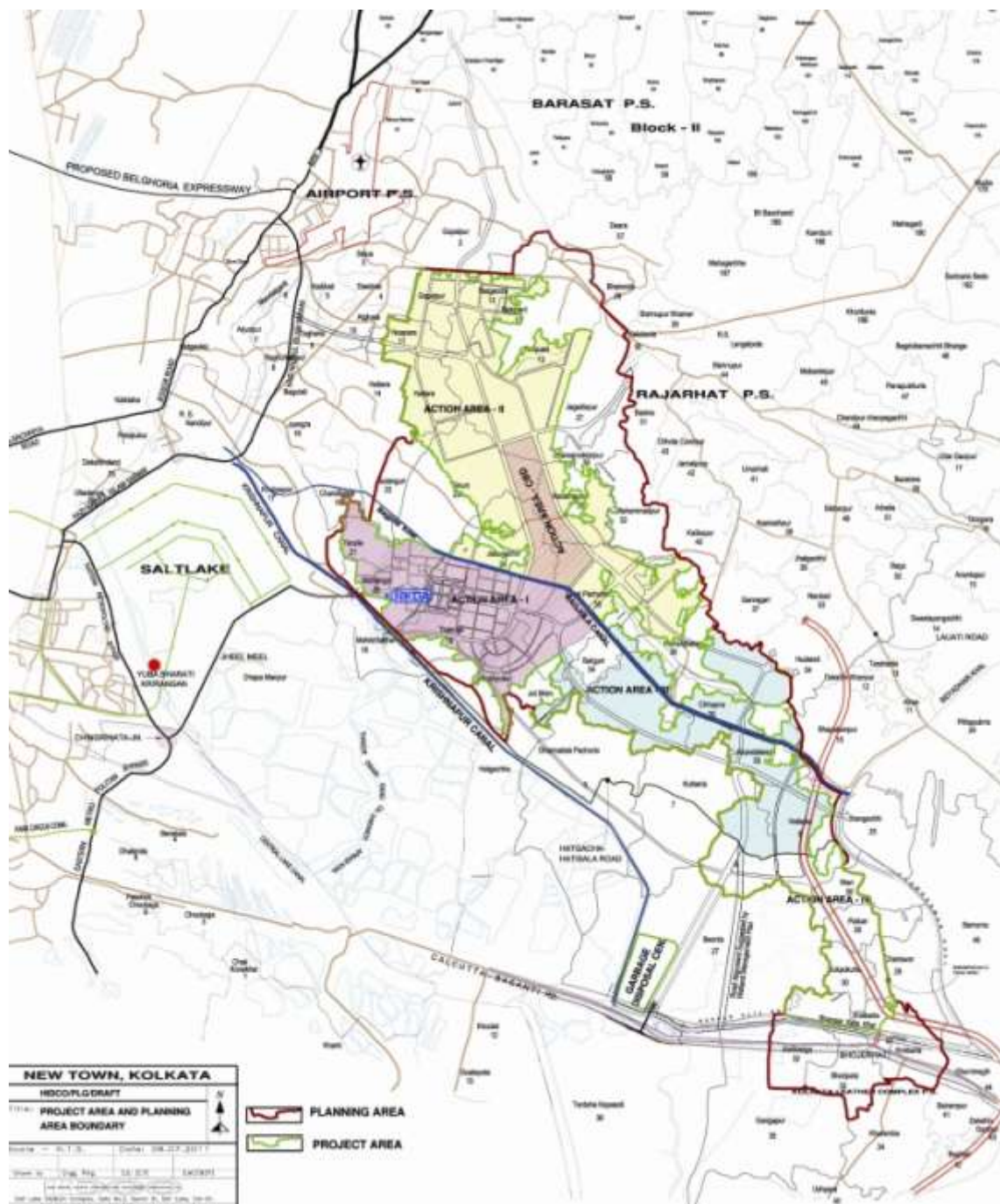
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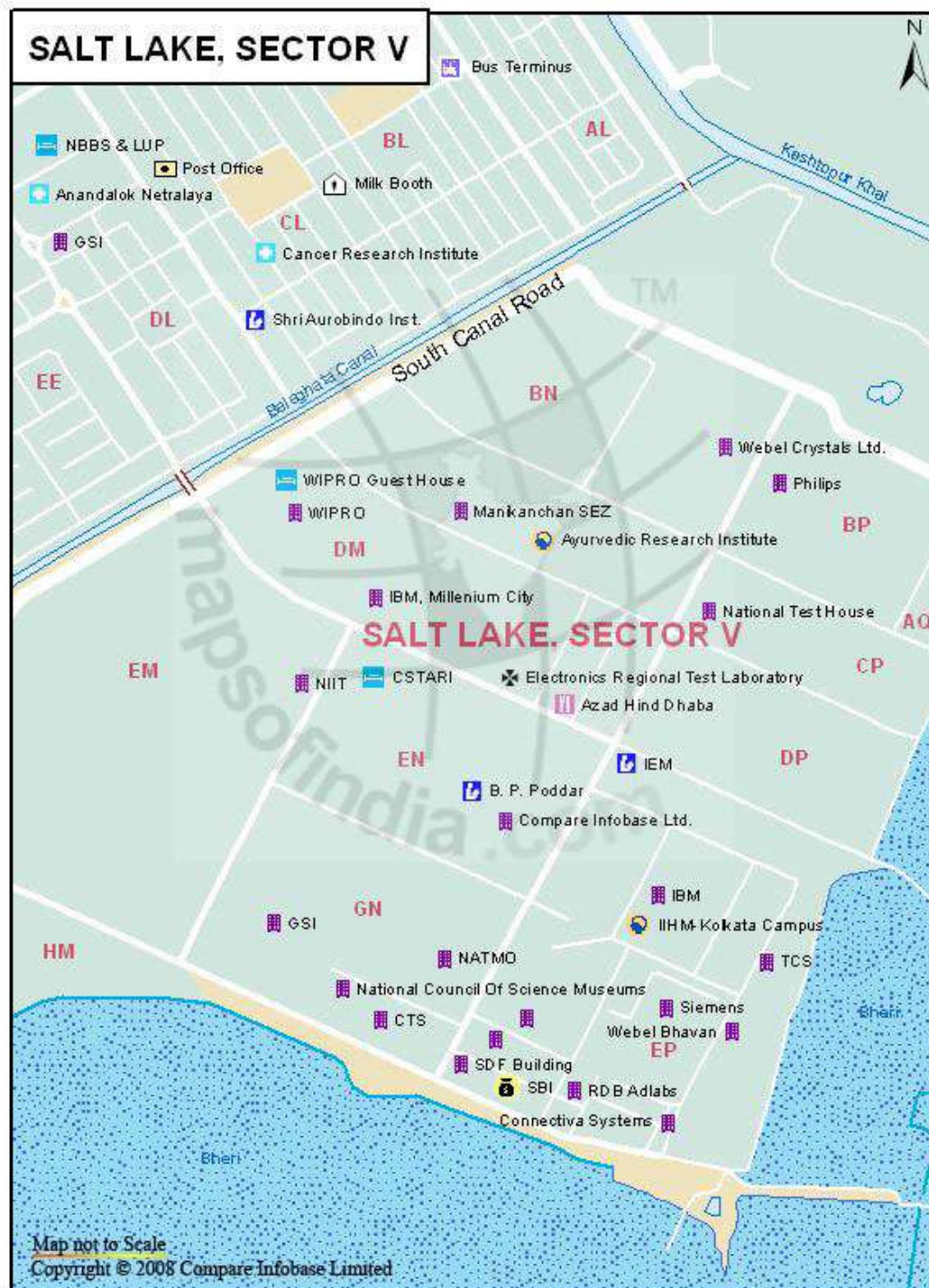
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Map 1: Area of Study



Map 2: Area of Study



Map 3: Area of Study

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

22nd June, 2011, a young newly married woman returns home after her shift at the leading corporate office in Kolkata, satisfied with the job and her life overall. She has a job she likes and married to the guy she was in a relationship with for the last few years. Cut to a certain day in 2017, the same woman came back home after submitting her resignation post child birth sabbatical citing over stress and prioritizing child rearing as reasons to quit.

This is not a story, but a real life incident played out in my immediate vicinity, my neighborhood. Women quitting job post child birth or opting for part time jobs was a common sight a couple of years back. This tendency on the part of women to quit mid career has always been exploited by the employers to keep the women away from the primary labour market; thus creating a situation where they are required to ‘choose’ between career or family. The ‘choice’ rhetoric has always formed the part of the liberalistic, pro-choice advocates’ agenda who interpret the decision making capability of the women by camouflaging the constraints that underlie the choices made by them; the circumstances in which those choices are made and the amount of ‘well being’ associated with the choices made by women. The above incident came as a matter of introspection for the researcher in me since I know her really well and her love for her job has been pretty well known to me. It brought two burning questions that required appropriate explanations: firstly how enveloping are the traditional structures that can visibly mould the agents within it, and secondly, how the agents, who are categorically defying the structural dictates by moving between spaces even after child birth, capably striking the work-life balance.

The introduction of the IT hub in Kolkata has not only increased the job opportunities but carefully reproduced a culture different from the usual 9 to 5 pattern associated with the public sector jobs. Though it is true that most jobs are stressful but IT jobs are considered more so because of their inability to stick to a fixed schedule. The proliferation of the IT jobs calls for a restudy of the society, especially family as a societal unit that is affected by the rise of the two-job couples. It is the prevalent saying that IT industry produces the maximum number of mid-career female dropouts calls for an investigation as to the truth behind the sentence and also study those women who are choosing to stay in the job even if it is demanding. This study also involves a thorough

understanding of the private sector and the structural- functional changes within it associated with rise of the corporate culture.

This is an empirical study of 155 married women, with or without children (majority with children) working at the IT hub of Kolkata. The IT hub of Kolkata spreads over to places- Salt lake sector 5 and Rajarhat, New Town area with some portions of New Town declared as Special Economic Zones, enjoying tax concessions from the government. This study is a result of a fieldwork that spanned over 4 years with questionnaire and interview as research tools to gather data. A quantitative-qualitative amalgamation ensures that the multifaceted nature of the topic has been taken care of to get an in-depth understanding of the problem. Influenced by the work of Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung, *The Second Shift* (1989), the study takes into consideration the lived experience of the women who decide to continue working even after child birth but unlike Hochschild and Machung, this study focuses only on the women's question or women's perspective. The toughest part of the study has been to conceptualize the 'lived experience' since the everyday experience of an individual is mediated by factors which are ingrained in the structures in which they find themselves- family, job and that includes the bulk of the relationships they engage in these two structured platforms. Apart from the relationships and interactions an individual engages in, lived experience is nestled within the greater ambit of education level, the social class and the overall socialization that an individual has been exposed to. Hence there exists an ontological loophole in studying experiences by avoiding discussions about the factors that are leading to the production of these experiences. Though the problem is very individualistic, but the first solution came in the form of the similar socio-economic background of the respondents chosen, which mitigates, if not eliminates the problem of different backgrounds responsible for creating varied responses and definitions of situation. Keeping the individualistic nature of the study in mind, the narratives of few chosen respondents have been included, since each respondents came with their unique ways of dealing with their day to day affairs. The major part of the study deals with the way childbirth creates the differences in experiences for women. It should be kept in mind that the study is not an attempt to reduce women's experience into a unanimous 'universality' because such attempt tends to erode the uniqueness of experiences and interpretation. In the words of Judith Butler (1992), "The term 'universality' would have to be left permanently open, permanently contested,

permanently contingent, in order not to foreclose in advance future claims for inclusion. Indeed, from my position and from any historically constrained perspective, any totalizing concept of the universal will shut down rather than authorize the unanticipated and the unanticipatable claims that will be made under the sign of the ‘universal’. In this sense I am not doing away with the category, but trying to relieve the category of its foundationalist weight in order to render it as a site of the permanent political contest” (p-8). Hence, there are multiple ‘universals’ when it comes to women’s experience, out of which this study deals with a part of it. The issues pertaining to women rarely adhere to unilinear analysis, but this is an attempt to make it as simple as possible and present it in lucid and layman terms.

For the sake of lucidity of the study, stating the precise meaning attached to each and every term used in the title is an imperative. It is imperative to present the way these terms are conceptualized the succinct manner in which they will be subsequently used throughout the thesis. The title is self explanatory; it is the study involving only the married women working at the IT sector. Considering only the married women does not imply the lack of importance accorded to the ‘unmarried’ women. But it is my discretion as a researcher to study the married women, preferably with children, to understand the coping strategy used by the women to deal with the ever mounting responsibilities. Though no particular age group has been considered but IT sector is characterized by a cohort of young workers. With its focus on incessantly changing technology, the pressure to perform is even more at the Information Technology (IT) sector of Kolkata. IT hub refers to a physical place that houses new technology related start-ups. In Kolkata this area roughly covers the whole of Sector V in the Salt lake city and the proposed hub coming up in Rajarhat, New Town and Bantala. Salt lake falls under the Bidhannagar municipality of the North 24 pargana district of West Bengal, popularly known as the IT hub of Kolkata due to multitude of firms operating from that region. The study focuses on the women working as the full time worker of at the IT sector. By full time worker, I mean those women who are gainfully employed for the whole year (4-5 days a week) and drawing a monthly salary and not paid on an hourly basis.

The rationale behind undertaking this study is to provide an understanding of the ‘private sphere’ of the women working at the IT sector. The private sphere, in this context not only refers to the physical zone, sequestered from the public with the shroud

of 'privacy' attached to it to prevent its encroachment and limit its accessibility, but private sphere has been conceptualized by focusing on the way it is manifested through the daily interactions, enactment of relationships spread across time and space and performances of the chores (child rearing, taking care of the members, overall house husbandry). These relationships and chores are exclusive to the sphere called private since they are characterized by certain level of intimacy like the relationship of the respondents with the in-laws or with their child(ren). The focus of the study is to tap on these relationships to understand the way they are experienced by the respondents, the meaning they attach to them and the changes that are percolating in these apparently structured relationships due to the penetration of work in to the private sphere.

This study also assimilates the feministic idea of the dichotomy of spheres into private and public because private has to be understood in reference to public. One cannot exist without the existence of the other. Hence, the dichotomy has to be focused to understand the women's position in it. It also endorses the opinion that as long as the dichotomy exists and feminized, the work-life balance concern will remain primarily a woman's issue. The study argues that the existing dichotomy serves the capitalistic purpose of creating profits in both the spheres at the expense of the women, while state, in this case the organizations, are discounted from relieving them from the burden of child care. The private sphere, the way it has been conceptualized in the study involves both the structural organization as well as the existing relationships within it that shape the experiences and the interpretive capability of the women. Structuration¹ being the guiding theory on which this study is premised, hence there is a focus on the way agents are promoted and constrained by the structures in which they are placed. Women are most definitely moulded by the demands of the private sphere and subsequently exposed to the public sphere that exerts a new kind of influence on them. It is interesting to understand the way they handle the sometimes conflicting demands of both the spheres, the strategies they apply and how successfully they negotiate with patriarchy. Patriarchy as an ideological tool is exercised to keep women confined in the private sphere, therefore, women's involvement in the public world of works is an attempt to redefine the boundaries and ultimately do away with them through transcendence.

¹ See the chapter on Research Methodology.

This journey of the women towards debunking the dichotomy of spheres has been a long drawn struggle which sometimes shows signs of waning like when they quit jobs due to conflicting demands post child birth. There are certain terms associated with the study like the leaking talent pipeline and mommy tracks which are staples for the women in the corporate and are explained in the present day context in various chapters. The advent of the two-job family has redefined the private sphere to a great extent making it more susceptible to the market forces like the fluctuation in prices involved in outsourcing services determines the disposable income available to the individuals which in turn affects the overall macroeconomic activities. In the same way the existing relationships within the private sphere are also undergoing modifications because of the increasing involvement of the women in the public world of works; this makes the study a fascinating contribution in the body of exiting knowledge about women's engagement in the primary labour market and its impact on the family. As a researcher, I considered *married* women as my unit of analysis which can be interpreted as biasness on my part to attach importance to the problematique specific to women post marriage to. In my defense it can be said that I was intrigued by the birth of the mommy brain that forces women to redefine and relearn many situations in life the repercussion of this is mainly seen on their career. How far the women are ready to adjust and how successful they are balancing the two is the matter of concern in the study. The objectives of the study are -

- i. Understanding the private sphere of the married corporate women, especially the gender roles in a two-job family, the way these women experience their everyday surrounding and the way they strike their work-life balance in a demanding job-home scenario, especially after child birth.
- ii. The study also highlights the problems faced by these women in transcending the spheres and their coping strategies.
- iii. Conceptual categories like 'choice' and 'agency' has been explained in the context of the corporate women and an attempt has been made to refrain from equating financial independence and 'empowerment'. Cogent arguments have been presented to explain that choices are value laden but these values are 'taught' or are 'internalized' that guide the overall decision making capability of the women, be it corporate or otherwise. The objective is to find out whether with the change in spheres the agency and

empowerment get altered and subtracted from each other. The study also criticizes the propensity on the part of the economists to explain the private sphere and internal strategies with the help of game theory by presenting the counterview that decision making in the private sphere is much complicated. In a game involving two genders the probability of similarity of choices available to both to make informed decisions is rather low.

- iv. The wider objective of the study is to negate the age old public/private dichotomy by busting myths related to existing gender segregation and spaces. It is premised on the idea that only mean to unstick the stalled revolution is to do away with the spatial segregation and gendering and hierarchizing of jobs. 'Fluidity of space' refers to the intermingling of the elements of both the spheres that eats into the apparent 'structuredness' of a sphere; where space can be conceptualized as the continuum. The most important has been the structural change in the family with the rise of the IT sector and the subsequent urban conurbation associated with it.

The chapterisation is indicative of the objectives of the study discussed above. The first chapter lays out the overall theme, along with the researcher's introduction to the study. The chapter reveals the author's rationale and rhetoric behind selecting the topic. The chapter also introduces the readers to the various aspects of the thesis and what to expect in the subsequent chapters.

Review of Related Literature forms the second chapter. The existing relevant literature has been covered, though there is a whole repertoire of knowledge to be unearthed when feminism, spatial analysis, globalization and corporate culture are combined. The sheer volume of the works to be reviewed prompted me to add literature review as a separate chapter all together. The chapter discussed the relevant works on the topic along with an explanation of how this study adds to the existing body of knowledge. The corporate sector being a recent addition to the urban Kolkata work culture and the involvement of the women in the corporate work being at a budding state, there is rather limited number of works that combine corporate work and married women.

The third chapter suggestively titled *Research Methodology* sums up the stages of doing the research which includes the way a conceptual framework is turned into an empirical

one. Research methodology introduces the readers to the methodological paradigm, the choosing of the method and the rationale behind sticking to the particular method of doing research, the theoretical perspectives, modes of sampling used, the field survey and the problems faced during the overall process of data collection. This chapter will definitely provide a guideline for the potential researchers who want to replicate the study or conduct similar researchers in the same field.

The fourth chapter *Rise and Rise of the Corporate Sector- Tracing the Rise and Growing Influence of the IT Sector in India with special reference to Kolkata* gives a detailed account of the rise of the IT hub in India in general and Kolkata in particular. The revenue generated by the IT sector in India shows an upward surge economically but sociologically the effect on the IT culture in India is not negligible either. The chapter outlines the growth of Nabadiganta (covers the whole sector v in Kolkata, known as the industrial area) and its impact on the employers, the chapter also discusses the introduction and proliferation of the corporate culture and how it separates the IT work from the public sector jobs.

From the fifth chapter to chapter seven, data collected through the fieldwork have been analyzed and presented. The fifth chapter *Situating Work within the Family: A descriptive study of the Married Corporate Women in Kolkata* is in actuality the first chapter based on the empirical study of the 155 women working at the corporate sector that corresponds to the first objective of understanding the private sphere of those who have consciously chosen to continue working even after the maternity sabbatical. The chapter is descriptive that gives a glimpse of the scenario of the corporate women, their family, their relationships and their aspirations. The chapter also deals with the work-life balance of these women and how the balance has shaped their identity and agency.

The sixth chapter *Corporate Women and Public/Private dichotomy: Problems, Solutions and Modifications* is a take on the problems faced by the corporate women in striking the work-life balance, the conflicting demands of both the spheres and how the women are handling the problems which is in turn modifying the spheres. This chapter is an analysis of the spaces frequented by women and how these spaces are transforming overtime. This chapter will give an idea of the emerging forms of family in urban Kolkata as a result of proliferation of IT hub in the outskirts leading to urban conurbation. The chapter discusses the various reasons for the structural-functional

changes in the family of which the rise of two-job couples is one. Inspired by the latest work of Husain and Dutta (2014) this chapter combines game theory with sociological analysis where the former is an attempt to provide a solution to the problematique discussed by the latter. The problems faced by the women in both the spheres have been discussed to arrive at a holistic understanding.

Empowerment, Agency and Constraints: A Glimpse of the Gender Socialization and 'The Culture of Adjustment', the seventh chapter of the thesis introduces the researcher to the detailed discussion of the concepts like empowerment, agency with the introduction of the newly coined culture of adjustment after drawing the similarity with Lewis' subculture of poverty. Empowerment and Agency have always been discussed within the context of women's right but this chapter analyses the two concepts within the spatial context i.e, how these concepts are applied in the both public and private spheres along with the constraints women face in the daily realization of them. The chapter also tries to understand the ontological problem of situating empowerment and agency within the culture of adjustment, the latter being so strongly ingrained within the fabric of the society. The attempts have also been made to understand the concepts in the context of corporate culture in urban Kolkata. To highlight the inherent discrepancy between the theoretical meaning attached to the two concepts and the practical constraints involved in realizing the same, the narratives of the chosen 5 women have been added to impart authenticity to the study and to help readers understand the real life situation.

The eighth chapter, the concluding chapter, *Public/Private Dichotomy and the Stalled Revolution* is the last chapter that is based on the empirical study of 155 women. Keeping the theme of the study in mind, the chapter sums up the repercussion of the movement of women between spaces and also discusses the lack of reciprocal involvement of the men in the private sphere. The chapter attempts to provide a typology of the women working at the corporate sector in Kolkata; typology premised on the combination of the effort and attitude of the women towards work-life balance. The typology is not exhaustive or mutually exclusive, thus proving room for the future scholars to make modifications to it. 'Stalled Revolution' made its appearance first in the work of Hochschild and Machung (1989); this chapter tries to analyze the probability of applying the same term in the context of two-job families in Kolkata. The

emerging fluidity of the public/private dichotomy has been discussed along with debunking of the notion of 'private' or 'privacy' when one tries to situate work in family or vice versa. Inspired by the saying that 'home is more dangerous than street at night', this chapter extends tacit statistical proof to it to show that the dichotomy is farcical in actuality. Two categories of crime have been taken into consideration to arrive at the statistical analysis, one committed in the private sphere like domestic violence and one committed in the public like sexual harassment at work place. Then a t-test has been done to arrive at the conclusion which is explained in details in the chapter. Certain crimes have been deliberately kept out of the purview of the dichotomization due to the inability to ascertain the spatial nature of the crime committed.

This study is the fruit of almost six years of research which brings the readers face to face with the current situation in a two-job family, explained from the perspective of the women in urban Kolkata. There are lots of scopes to extend the study to include both the genders to make it more inclusive. This study is also recommended for the corporate organizations to make the office more women friendly and prevent the leaking talent pipeline due to childbirth. Childbirth and career can go simultaneously with the overall involvement of the organization in general and men in particular. For turning a child into a responsible citizen through proper socialization involvement of both the parents is an imperative; where 'working mother' and fathers working 'second shift' at home are equally normalized for the child rather than they being presented as deviation from the accepted societal standards.

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REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2. Introduction:

Existence of a rich literature on gender, gender roles, globalization and corporate culture, dichotomization of the public and the private sphere is the clear manifestation of the importance of the field under study. The review of literature is undertaken to realize three crucial purposes- i. it helps in obtaining a deeper understanding of the area under study, ii. to embed the ongoing study into the larger body of literature available, iii. to compare and contrast the ongoing work to show how it differs from and adds to the existing body of literature. The vastitude of the literature available on the area under study can be organized in a thematic fashion for a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Depending on the objectives of research, the literature available can be thematized into literature on space/sphere and the emergence of the public/private dichotomy, literature on understanding sex and gender roles performed in both the public and private sphere and transformations in the same in modern society, literature on women employment, and effects on private sphere (work-life balance) and literature on the rise of the IT sector and the gradual changes in the private and public spheres which has been discussed in a separate chapter (chapter 3) altogether.

2.1 An Introduction to the idea of Space/sphere:

‘Space’ in its lexical sense refers to the area occupied by a certain individual or object. The concept of space has been theorized to the extent that the physical proximity or distance is often used as an indicator of the nature and the level of intimacy in a relationship. Starting from Anthony Giddens to Erving Goffman to Pierre Bourdieu, almost all sociologists and ethnologists have highlighted the significance of space and how each individual has his/her own boundary, encroaching which can result in the alteration and modification of the social interaction in everyday life. Erving Goffman (1978) theorized in his characteristic lucidity, the relevance of occupying a space to ‘give’ or ‘give off’(Turner 2014, p-391) certain cues that either facilitate social interaction in a particular social setting or become an impediment in furthering the conversation resulting in the cessation of the setting altogether (sense of one’s space). Bourdieu (1985) tried to incorporate the spatial feature in understanding the class structure and thus introducing the idea of ‘social space’. The social world “can be

represented as a space (with several dimensions) constructed on the basis of the principles of differentiation or distribution constituted by the set of properties active within the social universe in question i.e, capable of conferring strength, power within that universe, on their holders” (p.723-724). The power differentiation in a particular social setting depends greatly on the position occupied by the agents and the kind of capital they are possessing thus producing different ‘classes’ consisting of people sharing the similar position within a setting (similarity can be drawn between Weber’s and Bourdieu’s understanding of the category ‘class’). The thrust is thus on the ‘space of relationships’ (Bourdieu,1985) which has been assigned the same importance as any geographical space.

A discourse on space remains incomplete sans the reference to the work of Michel Foucault *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* which is replete with the idea of time- space convergence. His conspicuous interest in history is manifested in his underlining of ‘hierarchic ensemble of spaces’ (Foucault & Miskowiec, 1986)-existence of which corresponds roughly to the Middle Ages- the binary division and organisation of spaces into sacred and profane, rural and urban, protected and open. Overarching grip of the apparent sacredness of certain designated places has prompted Foucault to deny the process of desanctification of space, a denial which can come in handy to explain the continued existence of the Indian obsession with religiously sanctioned ‘pure and polluted spaces’ i.e., there remains certain tactile areas that bear an implicit warning against any form of encroachment. As pointed out by Edward W. Soja (1989) that “he (Foucault) takes an integrative rather than a deconstructive path, holding on to its history but adding to the crucial nexus that would flow through all his works: the linkage between space, knowledge and power” (p-20). Foucault’s hierarchy of space has found a resonance in Anthony Giddens’ *Sociology* (2006), where he has provided the readers with a typology of the space and in the process has been sufficiently successful in separating personal space from a social one, calculated solely on the basis of the physical distance between the two individuals in a social setup. Another interesting observation made by Giddens is regarding the gender based usage and manipulation of space as he pointed out that two women sit more closely in a given social setting than two men (p-131-134).

The concept of space has been further elucidated by sociologist Georg Simmel whose cogent discussion on the process of metropolisation and sequestration of the leisure spaces in modern society has resulted in the germination of sociological interest in space. Exclusivity and the uniqueness of the space, social subdivision of the space and the creation of social boundary, the types of interaction and the resultant social formations have been the main focus of his 'Sociology of Space' (Fearon 2004), an extension of his theory on formal sociology and forms of sociation (Coser, 1971). Hence, space forms a crucial part of everyday life as the whole social scene played out in a particular setting is largely dependent on the positioning of the individuals within a given space and the physical and social characteristics of the space itself- the relation between the two is almost dialectical. Space, as a physical entity has formed the major part of the discourse on urbanism and urbanisation and the Chicago School's contribution in this respect has been instrumental in heightening the interest of people in the spatial analysis of the ecological units as all the social facts are embedded in a physical space. But this ubiquitous understanding of the concept of space has been challenged by the future sociologists and urban ecologists who raised a conundrum question and deconstructed the uniform characteristic of space to highlight the separation of virtual 'space' from a physical 'place' (Ritzer 2011, p-565-572). This space/place dichotomy has been further facilitated with the innovation in the field of communication technology, thus assigning a new dimension and definition to space as "what place become when the unique gathering of things, meanings and values are sucked out" or in other words "place should not be confused with the use of geographic or cartographic metaphors that define conceptual or analytical space" (Logan 2012, p-509).

The space/ place distancing in addition to the concept of time has been one of the iridescent features of Anthony Giddens' discourse on 'radicalised modernity'. Giddens elucidated the emergent tendency of the separation of space from physical place and the increasing probability of being present in 'virtual space' coinciding with the capability of maintaining a simultaneous absence in 'physical place', facilitated by the immergence of modern technology and internet. Giddens further pointed out that the physical characteristics and the location of an organisation in real world is turning insubstantial as long the organisation is virtually accessible. The arrival of the symbolic tokens like money that makes trans-national financial dealings possible and an expert

system like a group of doctors, engineers, have been catalytic in the process of prolific ‘distanciation and disembedding’ in the globalized world which has led many sociologists to refer to the ‘placelessness’ of the post modern world (Agnew 2011).

From the above discussion, it can be discerned that with the evolution of theoretical perspective, the concept of space has been eventually deconstructed and divorced from the category ‘place’. The category place is concrete with specific geographical existence but in the due course it has come to be subordinated to the concept of ‘space’ which may be devoid of the concreteness of the place but has tremendous influence on individual nonetheless. It is a herculean effort to provide all-satisfying stipulated answer, but apparently the relation between the social processes and spatial features is dialectical- a circular pattern of causal relationship as each influence the other. Space, therefore, can be defined as the set of relations and subsequent interactions spanning across time and place- it may have a physical characteristics (a location where social interaction and processes may be rooted) or can be entirely virtual (e.g anonymous chat zones in the internet). Space can be produced, as has been explored, in the Marxist theory ‘by the powerful economic forces that commodified land and thereby limited what any one person other than those who owned it could do with it’ (Agnew 2011, p-11). Echoing Marx’s understanding, the same analysis can be applied to decipher how spaces are ‘gendered’, or in other words to describe how the ‘gendered spaces’ are the conscious production of the patriarchal society to keep the woman in a constant state of subjugation by usurping their power to control and manipulate space coupled by the restriction on their movement between spaces.

2.1.1 The literature on the emergence of the Public/Private Dichotomy: Gendering Spaces:

The unprecedented rise in the feminist critique of the existing power relationship based on gender both within and outside the domestic domain can be credited with recognition of the process by which a space is deconstructed, bracketed and defined in terms of ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ characteristics and this dichotomisation has provided the necessary justification to the gender segregation in the society. The traces of the public/private divide premised on the sexual division of labour was witnessed even in the simple hunting and gathering societies in the pre modern era where hunting tasks were designated to men and gathering to female, a division based on the mere physical

strength or the lack of it. In her attempt to trace the germination of the ubiquitous subjugation of the female sex, Simone de Beauvoir (1949) theorised that in the simpler societies frequent pregnancies and menstruation often diminished the capability of the women to participate in predominantly 'male' tasks and therefore, 'it was man who controlled the balance between reproduction and production'(p-74). Beauvoir posited sound reasons for the adamant refusal of the society to consider birth and breast feeding as activities. According to Beauvoir, 'the worst curse on woman is her exclusion from warrior expeditions' owing to her imprisonment by the biological forces and since men are not debarred from taking part in such expedition and showing off his masculine valour and subjugating forces of nature, they come to unambiguously claim a superior status- 'that is why throughout humanity, superiority has been granted not to the sex that gives birth, but to the one that kills' (p-76).

Labelling the tasks as predominantly 'male' and 'female' further promoted the germination of the process of gendering of spaces which got refined with the subsequent societal formations. The nomadic life of the hunters and gatherers got substituted as they opted for a more settled pattern of lifestyle with the development of the agriculture and the simplistic sexual division of labour, characteristic of the preceding society took a bit convoluted route in the agrarian society with home becoming the venue for both production and consumption. It should be borne in mind that the sexual division of labour still existed, the nature of work done by the men and women still varied but agrarian society witnessed a more active participation of women in the fields alongside their traditional functions of bearing and rearing of children. Women were still confined in the domestic sphere; the domain of their relationships was rather parochial in comparison to men. This statement can be further elucidated and backed by evidence if the reference is made to the emergence of markets, a space dominated and appropriated by the overwhelming presence of men indulging in various transactions which proves the flexibility and stretchability of a man's space and how some spaces came to be spelt as being exclusively male.

The space got further stretched as men transcended local boundaries with the development of industries as it became a rule for men to leave their domestic sphere and move to a distant place for the sake of employment. Women, on the other hand were not granted such a privilege of outdoor income owing to the societal importance attached to

their wombs which meant the obvious parochialisation of their boundary and binding their movement within a limited physical space. This transition tightened and paved the way for the institutionalisation of the public/private set up. Arneil (2001) stated that public/private dichotomisation has been ubiquitous, is reflected in John Locke's *Two Treatises of Government* where he claimed that the 'marriage is a contract formed in the state of nature between husband and wife', but the authority within the family or outside falls to the man's share since he is 'abler and stronger'. Explaining Locke's stand on public/private split, Arneil (2001) wrote that 'the natural rights in the state of nature, including the right to negotiate any conditions within the marriage contract, are eliminated in the civil society with the introduction of the private/public split, the enforcement of the subordination of women and, most importantly, the fundamental goal of government to preserve the husband's right to private property, all supported by the civil law' (p-34). But despite describing conjugal contracts as a natural outcome in the state of nature, Arneil (2001) while elucidating Locke's position pointed out that Locke still described men as abler and stronger and therefore the true recipient of the familial authority, thus situating patriarchal control- that runs its course throughout the society- at domestic level.

The emergence of the public/private sphere can be attributed to this tendency to gender spaces and to create a realm exclusive to women. Exclusivity and confinement have unfortunately been synonymous for a long time until the rise of the feminist interpretation of the spheres that categorically delineated the way spaces are getting gendered. The emergence of the private property and its acquisition has also been posited by the socialist feminists as the reason for the female subjugation in society in general and in private sphere in particular. In doing so, the socialist feminists are heavily indebted to Friedrich Engels' (2010), *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, where he theorised that the emergence of the private property and the attempt at the appropriation of the same by the men has brought about 'the world- historic defeat of the female sex'. Communal way of living gave way to monogamous marriages and pairing family because of the masculine desire to pass on the property to the biological child and thus women were debarred from having multiple sexual partners. Matrilineal clan was substituted with patrilocal residence and patrilineal descent which resulted in subordinated position of women and confined them to the roles of housewives and mothers in the domestic sphere.

The theory deployed by Engels thus connects the emergence of the public/private divide with the rise of capitalism and newer forms of technology, beyond the prehensile capability of the women which made Beauvoir (1949) claim that “powerful when technology matched her possibilities, dethroned when she became incapable of benefiting from them” (p-65). This fallacious societal set up can be remedied solely by the socialist revolution after which all forms of differences and inequalities between classes, including gender, would wither away. Though this importance accorded to class cleavage and downplaying of gender cleavage as an offshoot of the former has been criticised by the later socialist feminists but gendering of spaces as a byproduct of capitalism can be regarded as a probable explanation. In a capitalistic patriarchal society, home is considered to be repertoire of untapped labour where women serve as a reserve force of production and because of their biological capability to reproduce; they also ensure constant flow of labour. Thus women are instrumental for the continuation of capitalism where the private sphere cushions and enables the hassle free functioning of the public sphere; yet the absence of the computation of the money value of the household chores results in private sphere being treated as a non entity, subordinate to the public sphere.¹ It is a herculean task to designate the actual period of the emergence of this public/private dichotomisation as mainstream has always been categorised as the ‘male’stream; man is always treated as the universal sex, woman is the ‘other’ or a deviation from the mainstream. This structural positioning of the women in the private realm is instrumental for the exclusivity of the women’s experience, unadulterated by the legislative measures and treated as being outside the purview of the state. A tabular representation of the dichotomy can be shown as:

	Public	Private
Male	Productive	‘His castle’
Female	‘loose women’	Reproductive

Table 1: Tabular representation of the way women are projected in each sphere

The table above is the clear pictorial manifestation of the way public/private sphere has always been perceived. The divide is just the symbolic ramification of the underlying

¹ As evaluated by the socialist feminists, women contribute about one third of the total production but own less than 3% of the world’s property. See Andrew Heywood, *Feminism, Political Ideologies*, Palgrave Macmillan Publication, United Kingdom, 2003.

enveloping patriarchy that runs through both the spheres. A woman's entry into the public sphere without the patriarchal protection and surveillance can get her labelled as a 'loose woman'. The fear of stigma works as an invisible control limiting the movement of women between spaces.

2.1.2 Public/private Dichotomy in the Indian Context:

Discourse on gender in the Indian context presents interesting insights that conform to the third wave feminists' claim of social opprobrium and gender oppression being devoid of uniformity. India provides a classic case of intersectionality which identifies the interaction of various forces - caste, class, race, and religion- contribute to define the position of women. Gender oppression belies the linear causation ascribed to it by the western feminists. India, with its multi religious, multi racial and multi ethnic facets, provides the perfect backdrop for the study of intersectionality.² The meta-feminist framework of defining gender oppression has limited applicability in the Indian context because of the existence of myriads caste, religious, racial and ethnic groups, which negate the idea of universal form of patriarchal domination propounded by the western feminists.

Given the unique history of colonial oppression in India for nearly 200 years, women liberation movements were believed to be the offshoots of the nationalist struggle for independence. The major source of difference between the western feminists movements to liberate women in the late 19th and early 20th century and Indian reformist movements is that the former were initiated by the women themselves with little or no masculine support but as far as India is concerned, reform movements catering to women were the brain child of the male reformists. Acts like abolition of sati (1829), child marriage (1929), introducing widow remarriages (1856), opening of schools for girls and many more such reformative measures were introduced in British India because of the Indian male reformers.

It can, therefore, be safely said that women reform movements and nationalists struggle were intertwined. But a negation of the importance given mostly to the male reformers to the exclusion of the women social workers also hints at the tendency of history to

² Intersectionality refers to the interconnected social characteristics like race, religion, caste, gender, which overlap and create an interdependent system of discrimination.

remain oblivious to the contribution of women and to treat them as playing subordinate role vis-à-vis men. This historical invisibility of the women reformers invited severe criticisms from the India feminists like Madhu Kiswar, Malvika Karlekar. Despite the attempts of the Indian reformers to remedy the position of women during the British rule, public/private divide was not tampered with –“most social reformers believed in the separation of the roles played by male and female in the society. Though they were not against women working outside their homes, they were not in favour of independent careers of women in the wider world” (Shah 2004). In reality, introduction of women in the public sphere was limited and the acts guaranteeing them more or less equal access to the privileges accessible to men were present only in paper.

It is interesting to note that even precaution was taken not to jeopardise women’s role in the private sphere. To adduce it can be said that though schools were opened for women but the curriculum was designed so as to meet the demand of the domestic sphere. Emergence of Public/ private divide in the Indian context dates back to Vedic ages and can be said to be the handiwork of ancient texts like *Manusmriti*, *Arthashastras*, *Vedas*, *Samhitas* and many such religious texts. According to Mukherjee (1978), sacred texts have dichotomised women into two categories- ‘noble and good, or inferior and vile creatures needing constant surveillance’(p-3). This categorisation is indicative of the restriction of movement outside the domestic sphere, transgressing which could invite a woman being labelled as ‘vile’.

Sacred texts have always stressed that the ideal position of women is in the private sphere and have upheld the domestic duties as obligations to be fulfilled by women, failing which could result in her being excommunicated from the society. So strong is the all pervasiveness of the domestic sphere in India that made Liddle and Joshi comment that “although females were segregated in the upper castes into the domestic sphere, this separation did not imply an inferior evaluation of the domestic, since that arena was crucial to the maintenance of caste purity” (Shah 2004,p-142). This observation not only hints at the superiority of the domestic sphere and the justification for the women being confined into it but also highlights the intersectionality that is so characteristic of Indian society. There exists a simultaneous relegation of the women in the domestic sphere and the caste based unequal treatment meted out to them.

The study of gender inequality in India provides few fascinating insights. An Indological approach reveals that the unlike in the Western world, the position of women in the Indian Society has deteriorated through various periods in history; especially during the post Vedic period. This is also the period which accounts for the emergence of the stringent public/private dichotomisation “through the imposition of the brahmanical austerities on society” (Mukherjee 1978, p-5). Most of the ancient religious texts have described women as malicious and vile and therefore unfit for any public appearance. The ancient texts played a crucial role in popularising the idea that women should be protected and put under patriarchal surveillance- first by the father/husband and then by the husband. Deconstruction of the epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* highlights the prevailing consensus that ‘women were fickle by nature and given to sensual enjoyment only’ (ibid., p-11). The following paragraph from the work of Mukherjee (1978), gives a clear insight into what resulted in the formation of the public men and *private women*:

“Referring to the tale of a pigeon couple, Bhishma instructed Yudhishthira about the necessity of a good wife to a man. The word *grhini* (housewife) is derived from the word *grha* (house), which is otherwise like a jungle. Without a housewife, the house looks empty even if full of other people. She helps her husband to practice dharma, artha and kama. Blessed is he whose wife is faithful, does not know any other man except her husband and is always engaged in doing whatever is good and dear to him. A wife with the above virtues makes life even under a tree as happy and comfortable as living in a house. One without such a wife should go and live in a forest”. (p-14)

Religious texts, through such expositions created and institutionalised the concept of private women. Domesticity of women was not only elevated as a form of virtue but it was intrinsically linked to the attainment of salvation and peace for the men as well thus making it a moral crusade for women to become and remain virtuous.

Such legacy has been forward thus tightening the divide into water tight compartments in India. Unlike the feminist movements in the West, India was virtually unaffected and unaltered during that period. Though it would be a fallacy to remain oblivious to the contribution of women during the colonial period and also to overthrow the British

reign, but the roles given to women were mostly inconsequential like the role of a messenger or shelter providers to the freedom fighters.

In India forms of oppression varies depending upon the caste-religion affiliation of the victim, making intersectionality a stark reality and is responsible for the variation in the way public/private sphere is dichotomised and hierarchized. Various studies have shown that this confinement was more pronounced for the women belonging to the higher caste than those belonging to the lower ones. This particular trend has survived even today and the attempt to locate the causality will lead to a multi causal explanatory model. The main reason for the virtual non existence of the purdah among the dalit women is the caste-class nexus which tie up the ritual position with the occupation- “dalit women in low skilled, caste based labour continue to suffer in the menial, filthy and highly defiling occupations such as manual scavenging, tannery and mid-wifery wherein the sexual division of labour push them to the most polluting segments of the caste based occupations”.³ Thus for the dalit women their unrestricted movement in the public sphere, though apparently empowering and liberating in comparison to the women belonging to the higher caste, comes at a cost of inescapable humiliation, blatant discrimination and sexual abuse at the hands of the high caste men.⁴

What is worth noticing here is that public/private divide runs parallel with the defining of the gender roles within each sphere. In another way the role segregation within the sphere concretizes the dichotomy even further. The concretization is made absolute by limiting the movement of the women between spaces which is getting increasingly challenged with the rise of the jobs catering to women in the public sphere of which IT forms a major part.

2.2 Understanding Sex, Gender, Gender Roles: Formation and Transformation

The divorce of sex from gender can be credited to the rise of the second wave feminism, which claimed that mere political emancipation of the women would not guarantee a

³ Debi Chatterjee: Dalit Women and the Public Sphere in India in Pursuit of Social Justice, <https://www.academia.edu/6761525>, accessed on 1st July, 2016.

⁴ The case of Bhanwari Devi, a dalit social worker (saathin) in Rajasthan can be cited in this respect. She was gang raped by the members of a high caste family in protest of her attempt to stop the practice of child marriage. The High Court acquitted the victims on the grounds of lack of evidence and the fact that high caste men could not deign themselves by touching a dalit, let alone rape her. The case of Bhanwari Devi proved a crucial step in the women’s movement for justice and led to the passing of the Vishakha Guidelines which state that the sexual harassment at the work place is an infringement of the fundamental rights.

total emancipation from all forms of discrimination. Second wave feminism in general and radical wing of the feminism in particular singled out family to be the place of germination of oppression against women that runs through all other sectors of the society (Heywood 2003). Feminists like Betty Freidan (1963), Germaine Greer (1971,2014), Kate Millet (1970) have categorically highlighted the procedure by which sex and gender are tied with one thread and explained the societal pressure to live up to the expectation when an individual turns out to be a cissexual.⁵ Freidan in her *Feminine Mystique* (1963), categorically presented the plight of the women (though she focused mainly on the American women in her work) in these lines:

...Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and brownies, lay beside her husband at night- she was afraid to ask even to herself the silent question- "is this all?" (p-15).

Pre *Feminine Mystique*, women rights wing was concerned about the equality of women in the public sphere. Their demands were limited to the right to vote, right to education, right to equal pay at work- demands made on the ground that privileges enjoyed by the men should be extended to women on the ground of similarity between men and women. Freidan retorted to this constricted view of emancipation by stating that women were taught to devalue careers, higher education and political rights in order to live up to the societal expectation of being ideal. In response to the claim that women were entering the labour force in the late fifties Freidan wrote "a third of American women now worked but most were no longer young and very few were pursuing careers. They were married women who held *part-time jobs*, selling or secretarial, to put their husbands through school, their sons through college, or to help pay the mortgage. Or they were widows supporting families. Fewer and fewer women were entering professional work"(p-17). Freidan succinctly highlighted the 'mystique of feminine fulfillment' that enveloped the American culture post World War II, where the mystique refers to the imaginary cocoon of emancipation that American women were introduced to with the coming of the 'women-friendly' domestic equipments- "their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition to have five children and a

⁵ Cissexual is a term coined by Julia Seran, who has defined **cissexual** as "people who are not transsexual and who have only ever experienced their mental and physical sexes as being aligned".

beautiful house, their only fight to get and keep their husbands.” (p-18). Categorically denying the existence of the problem characterized the women at that time, which made Freidan to define it as a ‘the problem that has *no name*’. This enforced patriarchal straitjacket has always been the norm, but it was Freidan, who diagnosed the symptoms of ‘the problem that has no name’, a problem till then overlooked in the mainstream feminist discourses, marking the commencement of the second wave feminism.

The societal construction of gender and its separation from sex has been dealt with by the second wave feminists and became the theoretical base of the post modern feminism. Psychoanalytic theories, focusing on the separation of the sex and gender and the differential development of sexuality in children has always proved to be vanguard of the larger discourses on sex and gender. Psychoanalysts, guided by Freud have discussed the sexual development of a boy and a girl, detailing the differences in the psychological procedure. According to Freud, ‘..the beginnings of the sexual life of a girl child are so ‘obscure’, ‘so faded with time’ that one would have to dig down very deep indeed to discover beneath the traces of the civilization, of this history, the vestiges of a more archaic civilization that might give some clue to women’s sexuality” (Irigaray 1985, p-28). Women’s sexuality, though initially ignored by Freud, but later formed the main ingredient of his psychotherapy that prompted the feminists to highlight the importance given to the male sex organ vis-à-vis female in the theories of the psychoanalysts. The Freudian assertion that ‘libido is male’ as they possess a sexual organ external to their body, prompted Luce Irigaray to counter that ‘but woman has sex organs more or less everywhere. She finds pleasure almost anywhere. Even if we refrain from invoking the hystericization of her entire body, the geography of her pleasure is far more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is commonly imagined- in an imaginary rather to narrowly focused on sameness” (ibid, p-28)

Freudian assertions have been categorically negated by the *women* psychoanalysts like Karen Horney and Melanie Klein. The italicization of the word women is to stress the fact that psychoanalysis or development of gender consciousness has always been dealt with by men, spearheaded by Freud. Therefore, it was an imperative for the women psychoanalysts to free themselves from the men imposed linguistic and interpretive shackles and engage in knowledge creation based on their lived experiences. Horney in

her works refrained from negating the occurrence of ‘penis envy’ in young girls, but she logically modified Freud by claiming ‘in this perspective, “penis envy” is no longer prescribed, nor inscribed, by/in some feminine “nature”, a correlative of some “anatomical defect”, and the like. Rather, it is to be interpreted as a defensive symptom, protecting the woman from the political, economic, social, and cultural condition that is hers at the same time that it prevents her from contributing effectively to the transformation of her allotted fate. “Penis envy” translates women’s resentment and jealousy at being deprived of the advantages, especially the sexual advantages, reserved for men alone” (ibid, p-51). Freudian tendency of sexual reductionism has been, to some extent, taken care of by Horney by her refusal to accept penis envy as an anatomical flaw that is inbuilt in women, on the contrary she describes it as a ‘symptom’ that sprouts out as a result of being deprived of both creative and sexual expressions. Even Klein corroborated Horney’s interpretation of penis envy describing it as ‘a secondary reaction formation compensating for the difficulty that the girl, the woman experiences in sustaining her own desire’(ibid, p-52).

Ergo, according to the psychoanalysts, the sexual development starts with the awareness about the presence or ‘lack’ of genitalia. The unconsciously forced identification with the parents of the either sex determines the traits a girl or a boy child imbibes. But a socio psychological lens will reveal an unmistakable societal process that connects the development of sex with construction of gender. Though it will be dealt with in details in the succeeding chapters, gender is believed to a social construct, unlike sex that is biologically determined- a position thoroughly negated by the post modern feminists. The sexual reductionism, allegedly engaged in by the psychoanalysts in developing their understanding of the evolution of sex and sexuality was toned down with the advent of the feminist interpretation separating sex from gender, defining the latter as something socially manufactured through the process of socialization. Freudian analysis of the development of the sexuality has posited the male sex organ as something superior to female organs, a position modified by the later psychoanalysts. But the psychosexual account of the development of sex gives too much emphasis on the genitals thus justifying the inherent differences between a man and a woman. This biological difference have always been interpreted by the society to mean a form of hierarchy where the man is the ‘mainstream’ and the woman is the ‘other’, a base and vestige of the patriarchy.

Anatomical difference finds expression in the way sex roles are conceived for both male and female. This sex role difference has never been the main concern of the first wave feminism that commenced with the publication of Wollstonecraft's (1995) book *A vindication of the Rights of the Women*, the demands that time were limited to the rights of the women in the public sphere, with private sphere relatively untouched. But the fact that the political emancipation of the women is farcical unless backed by the freedom in the private sphere has been brought to the forefront by the second wave feminists. As pointed out by Greer (1971) in her work, "Marriage, the family, private property and the state were threatened by their (women) actions, but they were anxious to allay the fears of the conservatives and in doing so the suffragettes betrayed their own cause and prepared the way for the failure of emancipation" (p-13). In referring to the loopholes in the cause of the first wave feminist, Greer also lamented that, "The cage door had been opened but the canary had refused to fly out. The conclusion was that the cage door had never to have been opened because canaries are made for captivity; the suggestion of an alternative had only saddened them"(p-13). Talking about female sexual organ, Greer maintained that vagina has always been obliterated from the imagery of the femininity as the female sexuality has been dealt with from the context of passivity. Critics of the pro-Freudian analysis of the sexuality have always questioned the preponderance given to penis vis-à-vis vagina, so much so that sexual offenders or rapists have been described by Freud and his followers as a 'victim of an uncontrollable urge, that was infantile in nature, the result of a thwarted natural impulse to have intercourse with his mother. His act of rape was a neurotic overreaction that stemmed from his feeling of inadequacy". (Brownmiller, 1975; p-178) Therefore, for men sexual development involves identification with male sexual organ and successful completion of the Oedipus phase, where they learn to curb their erotic desire towards their mother and recognize with the father. This has formed the very basis of patriarchy as the suppression of desire is much more pronounced in men than in women, a contention later clarified by Nancy Chodorow (1978). Chodorow (1978) categorically explained the different emotional development in men and women that result in women forming more close and long term emotional bond with others unlike men. Chodorow (1978) reasoned that the length of the relationship with the mother is the indicator of the emotional development in men and women. In other words, men break away from their maternal attachment and identify with the father much before a woman (Freudian hangover)

while women maintain their close bonding with the mother for many years which make them identify with the maternal figure. Owing to the early detachment with the mother, men therefore are unable to verbalize their emotional craving resulting in the phenomenon called the 'male inexpressiveness' or suppression of their innate 'feminine side' gets manifested in the 'pervasive rejection of feminine in society'; whereas women are naturally inclined to define themselves in terms of relationships and therefore more capable of forming long term emotional bonds- "feminine identification processes are relational whereas male identification processes tend to be counter relational, defined more by rejection than by acceptance" (Metzl 2003; p-56) For Chodorow, emotional development in men and women takes different deep rooted psychological route that has undeniable connection with sex; a connection totally negated by the radical feminists' claim that sex is assigned but gender is socially constructed. Psychological approach to the understanding of sex and sexuality has a strong Freudian hangover of describing it in terms of sexual organ and thus describing sex as an accident of birth.

Sociological analysis of the sex and gender differs from the psychoanalysis as the former divorces sex from gender. As mentioned earlier, with the advent of the feminist school, especially radical feminism, gender has been defined as socially constructed and so are the 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. Sociological and feminist theories situate gender in a social context, totally challenging the claims of the inherent traits of the sexes as proposed by the psychoanalysts. Gender is a lived experience of an individual born with a sex which can be described in the words of MacKinnon (1987)- "Gender emerges as a congealed form of sexualization of inequality between men and women. So long as this is socially the case, the feelings or acts or desires of particular individuals notwithstanding, gender inequality will divide their society into two communities of interest. The male centrally features the hierarchy of control. Aggression against those with less power is experienced as sexual pleasure, an entitlement of masculinity. For the female, subordination is sexualized, in a way that dominance is for the male, as pleasure as well as gender identity as femininity. Dominance, principally by male, and submission, principally by women, will be the ruling code through which sexual pleasure is experienced. Sexism will be political inequality that is sexually enjoyed, if unequally so" (p-6). The societal structure is premised on the gender inequality and gender itself is the manifestation of the 'inequality of power' (Ibid, p- 8), the man is at the center of this power loci and the

sexual abuse is a 'form of terror creating and maintaining this arrangement' (ibid ,p-7). By situating gender hierarchically in the social setting and placing the 'enjoyment of sexuality' within it, gender inequality gets its requisite justification and support. MacKinnon, being a champion of the cause of the radical feminist have abnegated the gender interpretation of the liberalists and the leftists or the socialist feminists. Liberalists posit gender within the equal rights paradigm and explain it as a denial of rights to one group of individuals; while socialists believe gender to be an offshoot of capitalism. These interpretations have been vehemently criticized by the radicals who place gender as the basic premise of injustice within the family and beyond. To identify with a particular gender or to be a cissexual is so vital that any transgression from it is severely sanctioned. Many of the feminists have later conjectured that heterosexuality as a dominant societal arrangement- where female pleasure has been either defined from the male perspective or remain subdued- is a way man maintains his hegemonic control. An alternative system where a man chooses another man or a woman links with another woman is taken as a threat to the maintenance of the societal structure so much so that they have been either criminalized or described as a form of deviance. The threat of homosexuality towards an apparent social equilibrium has been elucidated by MacKinnon (1987)- "abstract equality undermines substantive inequality, but it reinforces it at the same time. For example, sexual choice that is abstract as to gender, say men sexually choosing men, can challenge the premises of masculinity. It also, in substance can reaffirm male supremacist sexuality: men come first. Similarly, women sexually choosing women can challenge the position of women as sexually acted-upon. This choice undermines the automatic exclusivity of male sexual access to women". (p-14) Thus, conforming to one's gender along with heterosexuality or normative sexuality can be defined as the ploys orchestrated by the patriarchal society to maintain its domination. Identifying with one's gender is therefore enforced and not spontaneous outcome of being born with a sex; it has no connection with how an individual experiences the society with his/her body and consciousness. Gender is, therefore learned and enacted as per societal requirements. But the problematique lies not in the difference in gender but the way the gender has been conceptualized and hierarchised, thus according more access to societal resources to one gender while depriving the other.

The whole idea of sex and gender has been reconstructed by the post modern feminist like Judith Butler. In *Gender Trouble* (1990), Butler has digressed from biological sex/social gender dichotomy to claim that sex too is a social product and gender is a notion associated with performance that made her coin the term 'gender performativity'. Drawing upon Foucault's idea of discursive formation, Butler (1990) has put forward the idea that 'gender is in fact the predominant cultural agent which operates on the body, thus constituting the concepts of masculinity/femininity and identities of heterosexuality/homosexuality.'⁶ Homosexuality and lesbianism have always been treated as cultural confabulations that tend to undermine the existing heterosexual male economy- "in criticizing gender identity, rendering it as performative or performativity based, Judith Butler is undermining the distinction between gender and sex. She draws attention to the fact that this distinction suggests that given (natural) sexual body can 'put on' different genders (being the product of social construction)."⁷ Gender is performed based on the societal expectation; it is premised on the societal rejection of homosexuality and modeled on preponderance given to heterosexual sexuality as a normative form. Gender and gender roles are synonymous in the sense that performance of gender can be interpreted as performing gender roles. As explained by Menon (2012), "to be a feminist is to understand that different identities- located hierarchically as dominant or subordinate-are produced at different times and in different spaces, but also to be aware particularly of the progress of gendering. By 'gendering', I mean the ways in which people are produced as 'proper' man and women through rules and regulations of different sorts; some of which we internalize, some of which have to be violently enforced." (p-4) Feminists across generations have produced discourses against the forced conformity to gender rules- "the question of gender-appropriate behavior is thus inextricably linked to legitimate procreative sexuality. That is, sexuality strictly policed to ensure purity and continuation of crucial identities, such as caste, race and religion." (p-4) If Marxist analogy is used to define the relation between sex and gender then it can be said that sex is the base of the society and this base is heterosexual supporting a male economy; gender and corresponding gender roles form the superstructure.

⁶ <http://culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.in/2011/07/judith-butler-gender-trouble-summary.html>.

⁷ <http://culturalstudiesnow.blogspot.in/2011/07/judith-butler-gender-trouble-gender.html>.

Ergo, there is a desperate attempt on the part of the society to treat homosexuality and lesbianism as threats to the heterosexual societal base so much so that they were earlier treated as pathological manifestation of the human psychology and later sequestered as criminal tendencies. Post modern feminists later took it in their stride to condemn this exclusionary tendency of the society by debunking the ideas of both sex/gender, masculinity/femininity. The fluidity of sex has been highlighted by Menon (2004) by making references to eunuchs and men and women with non definite feminine or masculine characteristics. To stress the point Menon (2004) writes- “A grieving mother, who seeks advice about her eighteen- year- old son whose sudden depression she stressed to the fact that ‘his nipples and breasts are bulging out, which disgusts him’. The doctor’s reassuring reply is that nearly 30 percent of men ‘suffered’ from what is termed ‘gynecomastia’ at some time or other”(p-18). This bodily anomaly is then corrected through a surgery to make an individual cissexual.

The crux of the matter is if sex is assigned on the basis of being born with certain organ (phallus) or the lack of it (vagina); then the presence of such ‘pathological’ form of body does two things i. makes us revisit the whole strict gendering of body as body structure itself is fluid, ii. invites anxiety and ways to rectify it medically. Thus the whole idea of ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ is resting on an uneven brittle ground. But despite the progress made by the feminists, gender roles are still categorically defined and religiously followed. Confinement of the women in the domestic sphere, marking of that sphere as feminine and upholding its sanctity are still widely prevalent. A socialist feminists’ examination of the domestic sphere will reveal the overt and covert forms of exploitation women face in the name of abiding by the gender roles. Socialist feminists have always concerned themselves with the production of the commodity and its value in a set up where the labour is not paid (in this case women and their housework). This set up definitely qualifies as the gender counterpart of the capitalist appropriation of the surplus value that forms the core of the Marxism- “They have questioned Marxism for its narrow concentration on particular forms of labor (especially industrial labor and secondly agricultural labor) as the major forms of productive labour, and secondarily, for concentrating on those forms of labor for which a wage is paid and which therefore involve a labor market transaction. Much of the labour performed by the women is either considered unproductive or without value because it does not result in the production of commodities for a wage in a market. Therefore, feminists have argued that

there is an even more hidden mode of production, namely the reproduction of the family, hence the reproduction of workers as adults and children that Marx at times himself designated as ‘natural domain’, rather than one with its own social and economic structure and dynamics.” (John 2017a, p-74). This fact is the corroboration of what Engels conjectured in his *The Origin of Family, Private Property and State* (1884) regarding the rise of the private property and the ‘world historical defeat of female sex’ that came with the transition from matriliney to patriliney- “Engels was quite openly critical of the kind of dominance that men could exercise over their wives, so much so that he described such dependence as the ‘crassest prostitution’, if only to one person, and acknowledged the husband’s brutality as well”(ibid, p-74).

As regard to the socialist feminists, Juliet Mitchell (1966) remarked that liberation of women remains a normative ideal, an adjunct to socialist theory, lacking in structural integration. Equating patriarchy with class system; and theorizing the demolition of the latter to ensure the emancipation from the former, according to Mitchell is the simplistic take on the form of gender oppression. Women perform four functions for the upkeep of the capitalistic societal set up, i. through their housework; they enable the men to toil hard in the workplace without stress, ii. Women form a reserve army of labour which can be pumped into the economy at the time of need and pumped out at the time of economic depression, iii. because of the reproductive activities, women ensure the continuity of production by reproducing and socializing a docile army of labour, iv. They can be used as sex objects. According to Juliet Mitchell, a true emancipation of the women would mean a total freedom from these four bondages and not only capitalism. One of a kind work in this regard has been *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) by Shulamith Firestone, where she acknowledged the biological difference between men and women stemming from the latter’s ability to reproduce and this ability has been exploited to the disadvantage of the women. Therefore the revolution to challenge the existing gender roles that has resulted in the subordinated position of the women should be waged not against capitalism but against nature itself- “Feminists have to question, not just all of *Western* culture, but the organization of culture itself, and further, even the very organization of nature. For feminist revolution we shall need an analysis of the dynamics of sex war as comprehensive as the Marx-Engels analysis of class antagonism was for the economic revolution. More comprehensive. For we are dealing with a larger problem, with an oppression that goes back beyond recorded history to the animal

kingdom itself.” (p-2). Firestone, with her undeniable optimism, banked on the cultural revolution for coalescing male (technological mode) with female (aesthetic mode) which will result in the creation of an androgynous society where individual will be judged on the basis of their merit rather than gender. Such a gender neutral society also guarantees a possibility of breaking free from the gender molds, a dream indirectly called utopian by critic like Mitchell- “That the technological-ecological revolution of the future will transcend and harmonize the biological and cultural dualities – male/female – in no sense makes that a dialectical moment. Dialectical materialism posits a complex (not dualistic) structure in which all elements are in contradiction to each other; at some point these contradictions can coalesce, explode and be overcome but the new fusion will enter into contradiction with something else. Human society is, and always will be, full of contradictions. Never can the complex structure become a simple whole in the way Firestone suggests.” (Mitchell, 1966, p.75-122).

The merciless debunking of the possibility of developing a simple whole or androgynous society by Mitchell, where gender is treated as redundant, may have some truth to it.

Gender roles are too deeply ingrained in the societal fabric so much so that attempts at uprooting them have rarely been attempted for the fear of dislocating the societal harmony. Every action of the society is somewhat directed towards maintaining the male/female divide and good example is the gender socialization, explained in chapter 6. But the transformations and modifications in the straitjacketed gender roles are hard to be missed with the rise of the modern society. If the evolution of society is studied carefully then the change in the roles meant for ‘men and ‘women’ commenced with the growth of urbanization and industrialization. It heightened during the World War I, as women were pumped in to the economy to supplement the loss of income as their husbands went to serve the country. Despite the concentration of the women in the secondary labour market, World War I marked the starting point of the participation of the women as productive labors. But sex and gender are not the only dichotomization through which individuals are categorized. Wood (2012) has talked about a third category which is often used to put people in respective boxes- “Sex and Gender are not the only ways to define people. We also define ourselves and others in terms of our sexual orientation and whether we are transgendered or transsexual or gender

nonconforming. The United States classifies people by sex (male or female), gender (masculine or feminine) and sexual orientation (heterosexual, gay, lesbian, bisexual or bicurious)”(p- 26). Sex, gender and gender roles have been dealt with in great details by innumerable theorists, psychoanalysts and feminist writers. There are discourses both in favor of and against such a dichotomization of the society based solely on gender. Defenders of this dichotomy have treated this as necessary division to maintain the societal equilibrium (Structural functionalists) while feminists have been vociferous in their attempt to criticize this position labeling this as a patriarchal chain to keep the women domesticated. But most of these schools have developed in the west, where the gender oppression has been defined in a unilinear fashion and hence simplified. As pointed out by Wood (2012), “terms such as women and men are troublesome because they imply that all women can be grouped together and all men can be grouped together”(ibid, p-17) She further clarified, “the fact that social meanings of gender are taught to us does not mean we are the passive recipients of cultural meanings”(ibid, p-22). This statement totally resonates when it comes to conception of gender and gender roles in India.

The gender theories mostly have a strong western hangover and sometimes fail to take into cognizance the condition of women in the other parts of the world. What differentiates India from the other countries is the vast rural-urban divide that is hard to bridge. India is a land where the non material culture of the traditional India sometimes comes in contradiction with the one introduced by the western rule and further crystallized with the rise of globalization. This contradiction has been exposed succinctly by Dhurjati Prasad Mukherjee who believed that Indian Society can tread the path of progress not by severing ties with the tradition but by inculcating and assimilating the traditional culture into the modern one to experience holistic development. Hence, simultaneous presence of the traditional and modern can be felt in various parts of the country. Contradiction in the conceptualization of gender roles is not only limited to the rural- urban division but also with the urban and rural spaces. Paradoxically, many of the studies have shown that rural India being an agrarian economy witnesses more involvement of the women where they work alongside men in the field. Many studies have further claimed that though patriarchal, domestic sphere in the Indian society is dominated by women and that too the sphere has a caste bias to maintain the purity of the high caste women. The existence of the traditional joint family

with defined gender roles has always been the characteristics of the Indian society. Traditional joint family in India is characterized by the presence of a strong patriarchal head (generally the eldest male member of the family), it's a place where filial and fraternal relationships are given more importance than the conjugal ones⁸ with centralized decision making systems and clearly defined gender roles. As Menon (2012) noted- "However, so naturalized are assumptions about gender roles that the Indian census did not recognize this as 'work' for a long time, since it is not performed for a wage, but is unpaid labour around the family....Women's work thus remained invisible." (p-13). The status of a woman in the traditional Indian joint family is ostensibly linked to her husband; hence a mother-in-law unanimously enjoys a higher status than a daughter-in-law in the Indian society. Again Menon (2012) has a fascinating take on the relationship between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in a virilocal Indian residence- "Why are there no battles for power between the father-in-law and son-in-law? Because their spheres are entirely different. Because the power game between them is not such that increased power for one means reduced power for the other. But women in virilocal households derive their power solely from men- their husbands, and their sons who eventually become some other woman's husband. Power struggle between women are inbuilt in this kind of structure; and are inevitable. This is not because they are 'women' but because they are put into positions that are pitted against one another" (p-43). Therefore, the delegation of roles along the gender lines has always been a part of the Indian society. Reforms in the Indian society had done little to blur the gender roles; even the educational curriculum was framed to mould women for the domestic roles. Advancement in the field of education was followed by the 'feminization' of the subjects like arts, humanities and history; men came to dominate science and economics, the latter believed to be directly associated with the societal advancement. Thus education became gendered, though the manifestation of this has decreased overtime with the increasing visibility of the women studying science and technology. Further transformation came with urbanization of the Indian society, which took a toll on the 'jointness' of the traditional joint family; thus breaking down into urban nuclear family. From the economic point of view employment of the women in the urban area has become a necessity to make the both ends meet given the ever increasing cost of living; which brings us to the next part of the literature.

⁸ See Ram Ahuja, *Society in India*.

2.3 Women Employment and the effects on the Private Sphere (with special reference to the urban West Bengal): Transcending boundaries

From the point of view of the Socialist feminists, women are responsible for one third of the world's production but own less than 1% of the world's property. This colossal inequality can be attributed to the lack of money value of the household chores done by the women that invariably get them tagged as unproductive labour. If employment is described as work in lieu of a monthly wage or salary, there has been an invisibility of women in the public sphere for a long time. It has been reported that the earliest occupation that women engaged in was either hawking on the streets/vendors or prostitution and later as domestics. With regard to the condition of women workers in India, Chakravarty and Charkravarty (2008) pointed out that "the middle class ideology of glorifying the housewife as against the working woman was quite influential even among the lower levels of Bengali society. Devaki Jain (1985) observed this cultural inhibition still present in the 1970s. She has also pointed out that cultural inhibition against paid outside work pushed women to such gender-specific occupations as domestic service, begging and prostitution" (p-96). But codification of these works as proper jobs is sadly lacking in any government reports, thus bringing down the work participation rate of women.

Concentration of women in this unorganized sector is still prevalent with little or no change in the working conditions. Earliest report on the inclusion of women in the male dominated sector has been presented by Alexander Hamilton, *Report on Manufacturers* (1791), where he conjectured that women form a category of untapped labour which, if exploited, can lead to unprecedented economic growth. Despite the report, women remained outside the purview of salaried labour for a long time. Even the miniscule number of women involved in manufacturing in those early years were discriminated against by the male workers, who viewed women as a threat to their income and status as the sole bread winner- "When Alexander Hamilton wrote his *Report on Manufacturers* in 1791, seeking ways to develop industry in the United States, he identified women and children as a source of cheap labor. Later, in the 1820s, the textile mills of New England, most notably those in Lowell, Massachusetts, hired young women from the surrounding farms as workers, viewing them as more tractable than men and more willing to earn less, since presumably they would stop working once they

married. To make matters worse for female laborers, workingmen often saw them as threats to their status, especially as new machines permitted less skilled operatives to perform tasks formerly assigned to craftsmen. Thus, it is not surprising that as men attempted to unionize in order to combat declining pay and status, their leaders often ignored female workers”.⁹ Civil war and the World War I marked the formal entry of the women in the labour force to supplement the income of the family as their husbands went to war. First labour union among women was recorded among the newly emancipated black women or women of colour during 1900s. As reported in the website –“One of the ways that working women sought to overcome male indifference or hostility was to join forces with upper-class women in the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL), an organization founded in the United States in 1903”.¹⁰ Thus a holistic approach was forged to ensure the smooth entry of the women and their peaceful coexistence with male workers in the public sphere. This period roughly merges with rise of the first wave feminism in Britain that resulted in the women gaining the right to vote, first introduced in New Zealand (1890) later emulated in Britain and US (1920). This move solidified the presence of the women in the public sphere which was further reinforced with the acceleration of participation of women in the workforce during the Second World War. The initial displeasure of the society to see women at the public sphere came to be thawed with a number of reforms and conventions in favour of eliminating discrimination. Notable in this regard in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, an international treaty adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979. CEDAW 1979 was preceded by Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1954), Convention to the Consent of Marriage, Minimum age of Marriage, and Registration of Marriages (1964) and Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1974). CEDAW describes discrimination against women as- “Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural,

⁹ <http://www.thelaborsite.com/women1.cfm>

¹⁰ <http://www.thelaborsite.com/women1.cfm>

civil or any other field”.¹¹ CEDAW is one of the earliest attempts to encourage agency on the part of the women. This was followed by declaring the 195-85 as the International Women’s Decade by the United Nations that helped in creating further awareness regarding the urgency of creating spaces conducive for women working in the public sphere. But CEDAW puts an onus on the ‘state’ to ensure gender equality and the state being patriarchal, the fulfillment of the conditions laid down in the articles remain doubtful; thus even if it ensures agency on the part of the women, it is more of a state controlled, patriarchy-approved agency. CEDAW was followed by the Beijing Plan of Action (1995), where focus was given to the improvement of the 12 critical areas to ensure holistic development and participation of women. Beijing Plan of Action was followed by similar conventions with the basic focus to uplift the status of the women and the unanimous view regarding this has been to encourage women employment.

A review of the history of women’s employment will show the concentration of women in jobs that demand more skill than knowledge. In India, the concentration of women labour has been seen in menial jobs like bidi making (Burra: 1995), carpet making, sewing and similar such works which are more based on the acquisition of skill than formal schooling. Another view regarding the visibility of the women in the public sphere is that “the general argument in most studies on women in South Asia (Butalia 2002; Manchanda 2001; Banerjee 2008) is that conflict pushes women into public sphere and enables them to carve out a space to cope with the changing realities around them. The conflict could be communal, ethnic, or an armed state-insurgent conflict” (Sharma 2018, p-48). As stated earlier, women in capitalism are always viewed as surplus labour force, pumped into the economy at the time of economic exigencies. Though employment and empowerment have always been considered to be the two sides of the same coin, but the latter is a more elaborate concept than the former. Empowerment, in the Indian context involves ‘i. abolition of gender-based discrimination in all institutions and structures of the Indian society and ii. participation of women in policy and decision making processes at the private and public levels of assorted activities, qualified by all dyadic relations among mind, matter, politics of knowledge, gender politics, and poetics of lack and desire” (Misra 2006, p-867) or

¹¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Convention_on_the_Elimination_of_All_Forms_of_Discrimination_Against_Women

“Participatory in nature, empowerment is women, dispriveleged and disadvantage” (p-872). But Indian women and empowerment hints at a certain oxymoron as the former have been both valorized and devalorized based on the needs of the patriarchy- “with the reference to the position of women in Hindu civilization it can be summed up that the Indian woman is mostly subaltern”(p-869) and this is mostly because housework is largely a woman’s responsibility even to this day. Misra (2006) has also gone on to categorize state on the basis of the attitude that state develops towards women- “State functions, specifically in relation to the roles played by and the powers gained, acquired, consolidated, sustained, harnessed, and perpetuated by women either as (i) the benevolent father state, (ii) the autocratic father state, (iii) the neutral State, and (iv) a complex hybridized entity. When the State is a benevolent father, it acts as a friend to women. When it is an autocratic father State, it (re)(in)forces capitalist societal relations. If the state is neutral, it provides equal opportunities to both women and men to define, explore, and fulfill their needs and desires. If the State is something of everything of the aforesaid three kinds of State, it authors and imposes contradictory policies. Woman-power is neither recognized nor harmonized in and by any of the four kinds of the State, explained above” (ibid, p-870).

There is no denying the fact that state is overtly patriarchal and it is shown in the usage of the word ‘father’ in describing the attitude towards women, but state being a dynamic entity changes have percolated, though limited, in favour of women in terms of welfare policies and policies encouraging employment of women. As pointed out by Dutta (2000), “in India women from the lower economic groups have always worked in agricultural fields, in factories and in unskilled jobs. They have also rendered domestic help in more economically stable families. Because Indian society was characterized by a strict adherence to tradition until the 1970s, it was considered unacceptable for women from the middle classes to take up paid employment”(p-217). But the data provided by the NSSO (National Sample Survey) shows that there has been a sharp decline in the employment of women in the rural areas and the simultaneous growth of employment of women in the urban areas from 2004-05 to 2011-12. As discussed by Srivastava and Srivastava (2010), ‘In 2004-05, while in urban areas, 16.6% women and 54.9% men (of all ages) were employed, in rural areas, these percentages were 32.7 and 54.6 respectively” (p-50). The female labor force participation rate declined from around 30% to 23% between 2004-5 and 2009-10. NSSO data also show a concentration of

women in jobs with ‘subsidiary status’.¹² Srivastava and Srivastava (2010) have made some interesting observations regarding the employment trend among the women based on the 2006 NSSO data and the trends have remained more or less unchanged if 2011 data is taken into consideration:

- i. There is a positive correlation between level of education and employment in case of men both in the rural and urban areas, while this link is reverse in case of women. More rate of employment has been seen in case of women who are illiterate than those who have certain level of education. But education increases the chances of getting non-agricultural jobs for women.
- ii. Female work participation rate is more among the scheduled castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) women as poverty rate is generally higher among these marginalized groups.
- iii. If religion is to be considered, Muslim women have lower work participation rate ‘nearly half the national rate for women of all religions’. Strict social rules among the Muslims have debarred the requisite mobility needed among the women to engage in any productive work outside the domestic sphere. A study in the Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala showed the same relationship between religion and women employment as Muslim married women has higher rate of unemployment than married women from other religions (Panda 2003, p-4037).
- iv. With the improvement in the economic status of the household, work participation decreases among rural women while ‘in contrast, for urban women, work participation shows a broad v shape, declining as economic status improves, but rising again with highest consumption decile. The latter reflects the higher educational attainments of women associated with higher incomes and greater availability of

¹² NSSO categorizes workers as engaged in gainful employment in terms of number of working days. A person is said to have ‘principal status’ if he/she is employed for the major part of the year but ‘subsidiary status’ is accorded if the employment covers on a part of the year.

employment opportunities in urban areas” (Srivastava and Srivastava 2010, p.50-51).

- v. There is a stark difference in wages between male and female laborers- ‘women workers rarely get the minimum wage stipulated by the government’ (ibid, p-53). There are some works which are categorized as ‘women’s work’ e.g nursing as women are natural care givers, beading necklaces is believed to be mastered by women, carpet weaving has been ‘feminized’ as intricate designs that carpets demand can be done by women as they have nimble fingers. The moment the work is mechanized women are replaced with men owing to the general belief are women are not proficient in handling machines (Burra 1995).
- vi. Agriculture has undergone a ‘creeping feminization’ with men moving out to more profitable non-agricultural works while women remaining stagnant in the fields.
- vii. Women are mostly seen as concentrated in jobs with low upward mobility-‘in health and education sectors, women are concentrated at the lower end as paramedics, teachers in lower grades, or support staff’(ibid, p-54).
- viii. Migration of women due to employment is very low as compared to men. Studies have shown that “more than half of the women in urban India were classified as associational migrants (combining marriage and migration with parents or other earning member of the family)” (Banerjee & Raju 2009, p-116). Women with a certain level of education continued to work post migration but the level of employment post migration tends to decrease in case of married women than unmarried women. Research also suggests that women from the higher caste are debarred by the prevalent social norms to continue work post marriage and migration; while “women belonging to OBCs not only had the highest proportion of work force participation; fewer of them withdraw from work after migrating to urban areas” (ibid, p-120).

- ix. The enveloping presence of the caste system in India can be revealed in the fact that lower caste women are mostly involved in menial tasks. Apart from this research has also shown, “Even as highly educated women were least likely to withdraw from the labour market as a result of their migration to urban locations, relatively more women from the higher caste with similar educational levels were opting out of the workforce. It can thus be conjectured that both ‘high castes’ and ‘highly educated’ categories were diverse and career paths did not follow a straitjacket caste/education nexus, as we traditionally understand it” (ibid, p-122).
- x. The economic contribution of the women in the household depends on their marital status as well. Panda (2003) shows in his study that “U-shaped relationship between class status and women’s employment holds true only for married women, even after including the controls. In other words, it suggests that among poor households, both daughters and wives/daughter-in-laws contribute towards household strategies for survival by getting jobs. On the contrary among the well-off households, unmarried daughters do not seem to be part of the strategy for social and economic mobility; however, such a role is apparent for married women” (p-4038).

There exists a vast difference in employment of women in rural and urban India. While there exists a negative correlation between education of women and employment in rural areas i.e., probability of getting a job that is at par with the educational qualification is very low owing to the lack of employment opportunities and the existence of social boundaries that prevent women from migrating to the urban areas in search of jobs; there exists a positive correlation between the two variables in urban areas. Despite the ostensive positive correlation, women get involved in jobs that are ultimately devalued and get less paid –“Feminists point out that this ‘feminization’ of teaching and nursing is because such work is seen as an extension of the nurturing work that women do within the home”.¹³ Menon (2012) further went on to list few work women perform which are devoid of money value yet add to the family resources like

¹³ See Nivedita Menon, *Seeing like a Feminist*.

collection of fuel, fodder, water, animal husbandry, kitchen gardening and raising poultry. Since most of the work done by women are home based and are not done in exchange for a fixed salary, it explains the invisibility of women's work. Women engaged in white collar jobs are not free from problems either- "Whether in their choice of career, or their ability to participate in politics (trade unions, elections), women learn when very young, to limit their ambitions. This self- limitation is what produces the so-called 'glass ceiling', the level above which professional women rarely rise; or the 'mommy track', the slower career track upwards, while women put aside some of the most productive years of their lives in order to look after children"(ibid, p-14). This is responsible for the sex segregation of labor where women are invariably bound in unpaid housework.

During the colonial rule in India, outsourcing labour to carry out housework became quite a trend among the newly emerging middle class. A study of the girl domestic labour in West Bengal done by Chakravarty & Chakravarty (2008) informs that 'the only area where women replaced men in Bengal towards the closing decades of colonial rule was domestic service....Young unmarried women moved from rural areas to cities to work in middle class homes. These migrants viewed domestic service as a temporary vocation, a preparatory phase for becoming future housewives themselves (Freedman, 2002)'(p-95). The categorization of the domestic sphere as 'feminine' has been augmented with the concentration of the girls in domestic service. Mechanization of the work during the late 80s and early 90s resulted in many women being pushed out of the employment in the organized sector and pushed into unorganized ones like domestic helps or prostitution. Many times women tend to vacillate between domestic help and prostitution and the former is generally seen as more 'demeaning, exhausting and ill-paid than sex work'. India provides a wondergul example of the existence of a strong caste-class nexus where the former is the independent variable and the latter a dependent one; therefore, engagement of women in domestic work is the manifestation of the age old caste system where the menial and 'polluting' works were done by the lower castes and in this case, the women. As regard to the domestic help, Menon (2012) opines-"The Indian servant knows neither the safety net of the feudal servitor nor the formal equality of the capitalist contract; at the same time he or she bears the humiliation of the feudal hierarchy and the cold exploitation of the capitalism"(p-19). Since domestics belong to the unorganized sector of the economy, concentration of the women in this sector

doesn't make any productive addition to the nation's GDP and therefore can be well treated as being equivalent to the unpaid housework done by the housewives. This fact is further corroborated by the recent researches on women employment, "the two sectors where such invisibility prevailed to a great extent were agriculture and household industry, and two decades of discussion and debate contributed to generating a greater awareness of the need to make women's work more visible in the micro data, particularly in agriculture" (Mazumdar & Neetha 2011, p-125). There were some subtle changes that took place in the nature of women's employment post the New Economic Policy, 1991. The triadic aim of globalization, liberalization and privatization hinted at the rise in the number of casual and contractual labour majority of which comprised of women. This resulted in the 'feminisation of labour activity' (Deshpande & Deshpande 1992, p-2248) especially in jobs which were believed to be the strongholds of men. The increasing unemployment of the men during the 80s was accompanied by the simultaneous rise in the concentration of women working as contractual labour or disposable/non-permanent labour without job security. Deshpande and Deshpande (1992) reported that female participation rates of all workers, main and marginal increased from 8.31 percent to 9.74 percent in the urban areas during 1981-91 while for the men it decreased from 49.06 percent to 48.95 percent during the same period. But this increase in the female work participation is not indicative of a positive change on the contrary most of the employers replaced the expensive men labour with cheap female labour as a part of the cost cutting technique. Another advantage of engaging female labour is their incapability to unionise, thus guaranteeing undisruptive work—"female labour being cheaper and more docile, proportionately fewer women than men will lose their jobs when the employers find the market for their product shrinking and proportionately more will be hired when the market expands"(ibid, p-2251).

The following table shows the work participation rate in urban India based on sex (NSSO data):

Year	Round	Males	Females
1972-73	27 th	50.1	13.4
1977-78	32 nd	50.8	15.6
1983	38 th	51.2	15.1
1987-88	43 rd	50.6	15.2

Table1: Work Participation rate by Sex in urban India Source: Deshpande & Deshpande 1992, p-2248-2249

Year	Self Employed	Regular Employees	Casual Workers
1972-73	48.5	27.8	23.7
1977-78	49.5	24.9	25.6
1983	45.8	25.8	28.4
1987-88	47.1	27.5	25.4

Table 2: Distribution of Female Workers by Employment Status in Urban India_Source: Deshpande & Deshpande, 1992, p-2248-2249.

The 68th round of the NSS survey conducted in the year 2011-12, involving 12,737 FSUs (7,469 villages and 5,268 urban blocks) revealed the present differential status of employment and unemployment conditions in the country based on gender. According to the NSS report all India sex ratio in Labour Force participation¹⁴ in the usual status (ps+ss)¹⁵ is 437 per 1000 workers in rural areas whereas the ratio stands at 253 per 1000 in the urban areas in 2011-12. The calculation based on the usual status (ps+ss) approach also reveals that the percentage of the female engaged in work in both rural and urban areas is lower than that of males- “during 2011-12, according to the usual status (ps+ss), about 55% of the rural males and 25% of the rural females were in labour force. During this period, about 56% of the urban males and 16% of the urban females were in the labour force”.¹⁶ Therefore it is established from the data that the involvement of the women as labour force is far less in comparison to men for obvious reasons, but rural women’s involvement in work is more than the urban women is the proof of the fact that economic status of the family is a crucial determinant of the entry of the women in the labour force. If compared with the rates of literacy among women in the rural and the urban area it can be seen that literacy rate is not indicative of the women getting engaged in gainful employment. The adult literacy rate among women in the rural area is 50.6% while in the urban area it is 76.9% according to 2011 census.¹⁷ Hence there exists a sizeable discrepancy between literacy rate and jobs among the women in the country. The paradox is starkly visible when it comes to rural and urban

¹⁴ Labour Force Participation rate (LFPR) is defined by the number of persons/person-days in the labour force per 1000 person/person days.

¹⁵ Usual status approach involves labour working as primary status (ps) or engaged in primary activities and subsidiary status (ss) or engaged in subsidiary activities.

¹⁶ National Sample Survey Report, 68th Round July 2011- June 2012 “Employment and Unemployment Situation in India”

¹⁷http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/reports_and_publication/statistical_publication/social_statistics/Chapter_3.pdf

women. Despite the literacy rate among the rural women being lower than the women in the urban area, the rate of involvement as the labour force is higher among the former. The reason for this the increasing absorption of rural women in jobs like beedi making and stitching that require learning of skills than any formal educational qualification and also because women in the urban areas have more social rules and customs to follow that prevent them from venturing outside in search of jobs.

The following figure depicts the LFPR on the basis of gender according to the 68th round of NSS 2011-12.

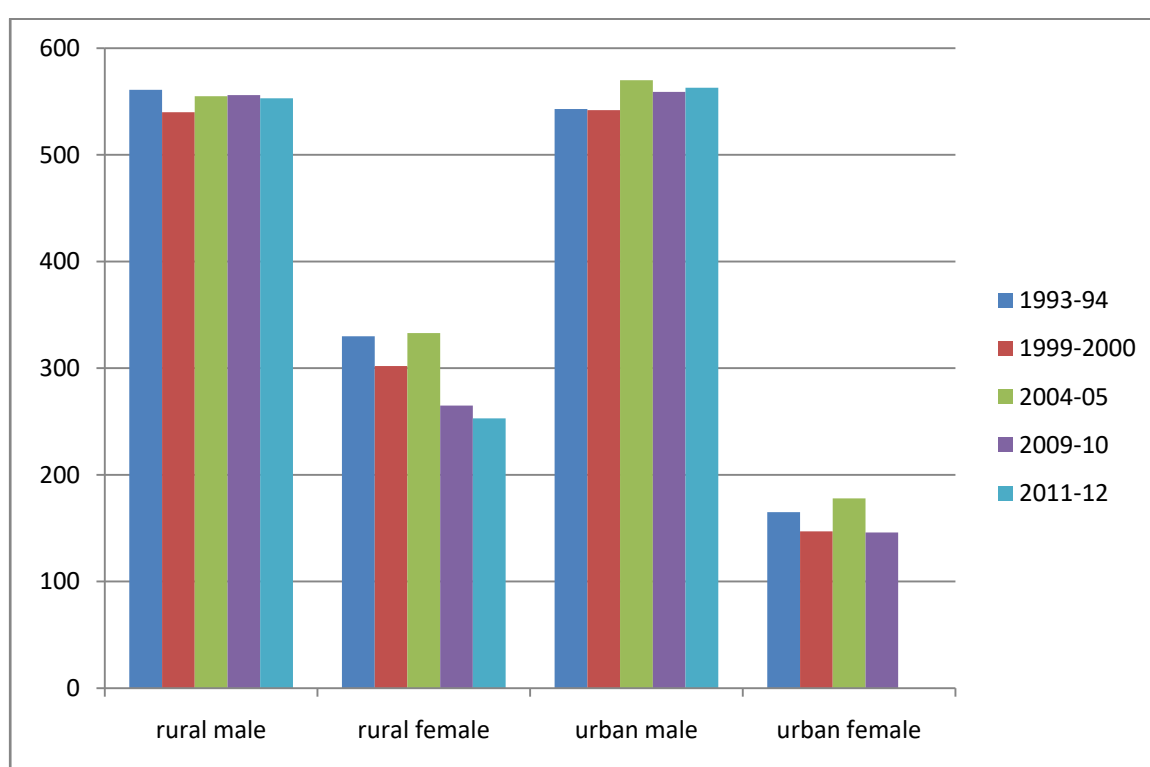


Fig 1: LFPRs in usual status (ps+ss) during 1993-94 to 2011-12, Source: NSS 68th round survey on the Employment and Unemployment conditions in India, 2011-12

The following figure shows state specific LFPR (number of persons/person-days in the labour force per 1000 persons/person-days) based on gender (15 years and above) in usual status (ps+ss) according to the 68th round of NSS 2011-12.

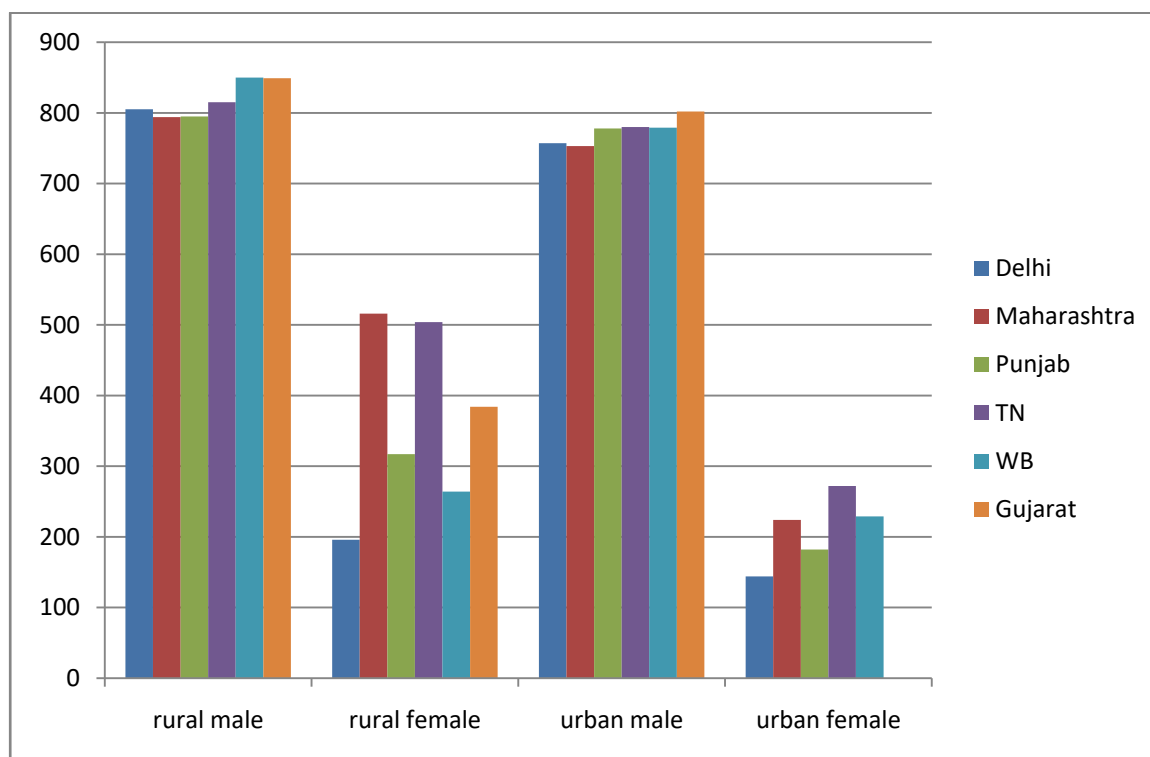


Figure 2: LFPRs in few states based on gender 2011-12, Source: Computed from NSS 68th Round report on Employment and Unemployment conditions in India 2011-12

Based on the data collected during the 68th round, NSS published a separate report “Participation of women in Specified Activities along with Domestic Duties”, 2011-12. Some of the salient features of the women engaged in domestic duties according to the report¹⁸ are;

- i. About 42% of the rural females are engaged in domestic duties, whereas the percentage is 48 in case of women in the urban areas.
- ii. Among the women of age 15-59 years, 61.6% in rural areas and 65.1% in the urban areas are engaged in domestic duties. ,
- i. There has been an increment in the number of women engaged in the domestic duties in the rural areas from 35.3% in the 61st round (2004-05) to 40.1% in the 66th round
- iii. (2009-10) to 42.2% during the 68th round (2011-12). This increase has also been noticed in the urban areas as well from 45.6% during the 61st round (2004-05) to 48.2% during the 66th round (2009-10) and remained unchanged between 66th and 68th round.

¹⁸ NSS 68th round, 2011-12, “Participation of Women in Specified Activities along with Domestic Duties”

- iv. Among the women of age 15 years and above engaged in domestic duties, about 34% in the rural areas and 28% in the urban areas are willing to accept work at their household premises.

The 68th round NSS report confirms the fact that women in rural areas are more economically active than the women in urban areas, but economic activity may not indicate that the women are gaining monetarily from the work. The following figure shows the age wise distribution of women engaged in domestic chores in the year 2011-12:

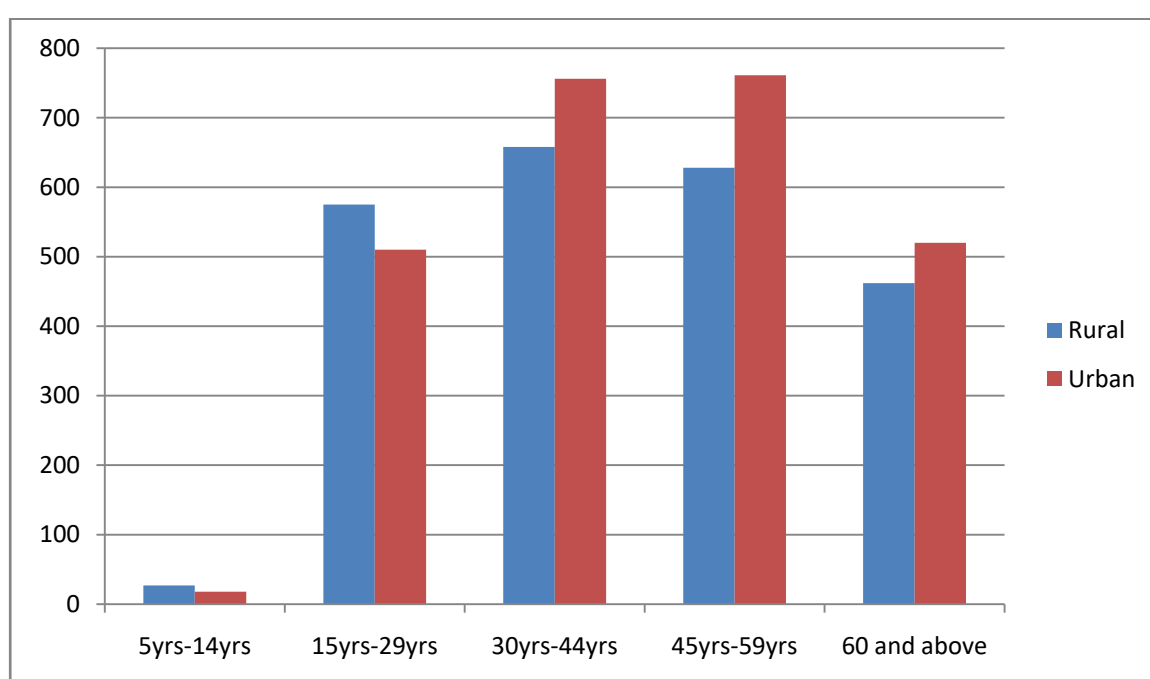


Figure 3: Number of female engaged in domestic duties in the usual principal status per 1000 females of different age groups during 2011-12. Source: Computed from NSS data, 68th round on Participation of Women in Specified Activities along with Domestic Duties, 2011-12

The figure above shows a concentration of women in domestic duties within the age group 30-59 years, thus upholding the fact domestic work is still largely considered a female domain. Despite this obvious involvement of the women in the domestic affair, a significant number of women have entered the work force both in the rural and urban areas which is bound to create repercussions in the domestic sphere leading to various modifications to accommodate this increasing absence of women in the private sphere. The following figure shows the trend in the female labour force participation in the usual primary status from 1993-2011.

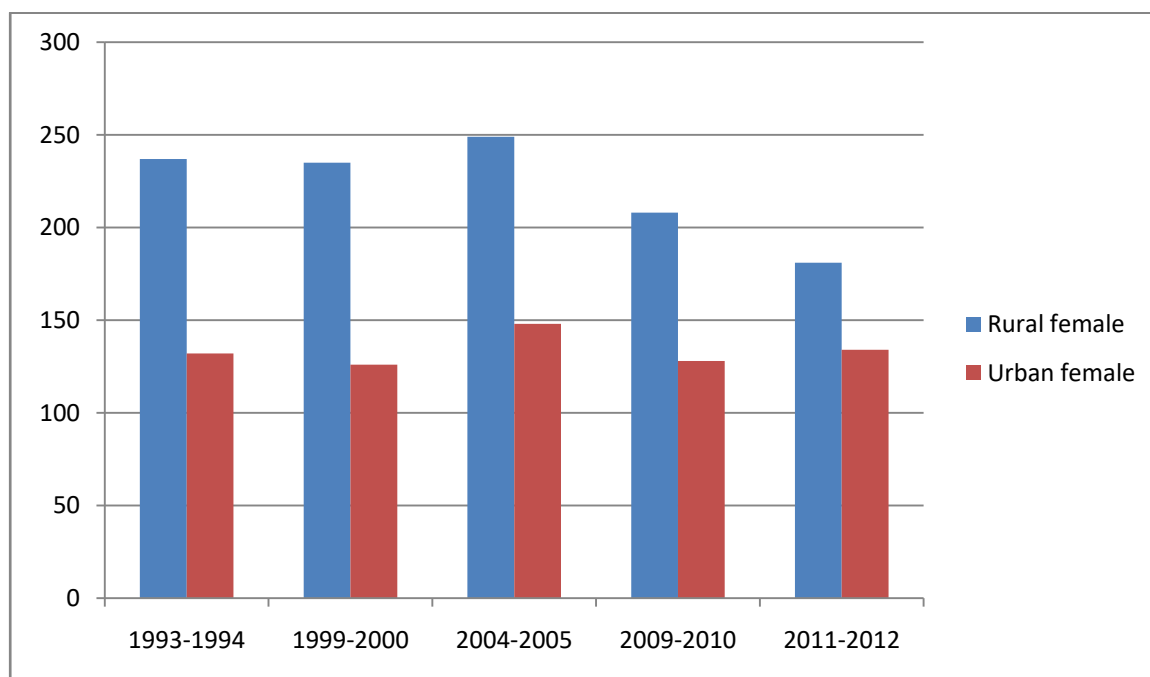


Figure 4: Female labour force participation in usual primary status for women in both rural and urban area from 1993 till 2011. Source: Computed from NSS data 68th round on Employment and Unemployment Situation in India 2011-12

The figure above shows a decline in the women force participation for women in the rural area, where as labour force participation has fluctuated a little for the women in urban area that can be attributed to the rising employment opportunities and at the same time an inflating cost of living for the people in the urban areas that has made it an imperative for women to enter the work force to supplement the family income; yet the trajectory is not as statistically significant as it is for the women in the rural areas. According to Chatterjee, Desai & Vanneman (2018), “Theory also predicts that the relationship between education and employment is governed by both an income and a substitution effect. The substitution effect implies that educated women command higher wages that would encourage them to substitute participation in the labor force for leisure or home work. The income effect, on the other hand, posits that educated women have higher incomes for the same amount of work, encouraging them to devote more time to leisure or home work. In addition, and more importantly, educated women tend to marry educated men with higher incomes, so the higher (unearned) family incomes would further discourage women’s participation in the labor market. Combined with a cultural norm that confers higher status on women at home, other family income can act as a powerful deterrent to educated women’s labor force participation” (p.856-857).

Regard to the binary division and interpenetration of the public into private sphere and vice versa, and the resultant transformation of both, Landes (1984) wrote, ‘...the discursive field of modern political theorizing, at its core a critique of the older suppositions of patriarchal politics, nevertheless was constituted by a binary structure of oppositions: between public and private, state and family, temporal and unchanging, discourse and silence, universal and particular, culture and nature, rational and irrational, order and chaos, power and morality, justice and love, knowledge and superstition, city and countryside. These terms constantly interpenetrate and transform one another’ (p- 20). Again as mentioned in the work of Rotman(2006), “An absolute separation of spheres did not exist” (p-666). The fluidity of the spheres, which is later discussed in the concluding chapters, is the result of the women moving between spaces that have stripped off the spheres of their quintessential structured characteristics. As discussed above the awareness of gender and performance of the gender roles have always created the notion of women being imbued with feelings that make their foray into the public sphere a rather difficult one, very aptly put by Cole (2003) while attempting to counter the idea of Hegel, “As Dorothy Rogers has argued, Hegel sees children as initially closer to the spiritual and feeling-oriented sensibility of women, but through education they gain a sense of objectivity and rationality and are prepared to enter the public sphere. She notes, ‘as anyone with even a hint of gender awareness can see, this leaves women conspicuously absent from public life, because as creatures ruled by feeling, they are unable to make this step from family life to civic society (Rogers 2000:6). Hegel’s was inconvertibly a modern vision but he expressed a patriarchal version of modernity” (p-774). It was Habermas’ work that revoked an interest in the public sphere and connected it with the idea of power; the rise of the bourgeois public sphere- “Habermas thus posits two forms of possible political modernity, one liberal and the other employing modern technology to replicate the medieval sense of power as spectacle” (ibid., p-777). But Habermas’ idea has been criticized for presenting an exclusionist version of the public sphere where women have been conspicuously absent. Hence the hint of the presence of a sphere separate from the one which is accessible to the mass has always been present. With the rise of the capitalism and the consumerist culture, mass media and information technology, both the spheres have been restructured to debunk the concreteness attributed to each. Women’s entry into the workforce has brought the private sphere to public scrutiny and this can be explained

with the rise of the public policies with regard to the private sphere. Even at the IT sector, organizations are making policies which penetrates the veiled presence of the private sphere e.g., building crèches within the office premise brings child rearing out of the purview of the public into a realm which can be accessed by not only men and women but also by a neutral care giver. The gendering myth of the ‘privacy’ associated with the tasks is slowly getting busted with the involvement of the organizations, unheard of before the rise of the corporate sector; though policies catering to women have always been there but most of these policies upheld the maternal characteristics over their qualities as a worker.

As discussed, the socialists feminists claim that if the money value of the work done by the women in domestic sphere is taken into consideration then it will surpass the salary of a CEO in a corporate setting. Women in the private sphere is a capitalist necessity but what they have missed out in the calculation is the part of the share of the women in the value produced by the men at work place since the capitalism dictates that the former is enabled, to some extent by the latter.

The literatures discussed above establish the fact that sex roles are constructed and maintained to not only preserve the dichotomy but structurally manifest the dichotomy in the larger society. Hence the employment of women is bound to have its impact in the maintenance of the sanctity of the private. The most striking impact of the women’s employment has been to connect it to the rise of divorce in the recent years (Spitze 1988; Vignoli, Matysiak, Styrac & Tocchioni 2018). The fear of dissolution of the private sphere also keeps many women in a state of acceptance of the existing division of labour at home despite the fact that they know that it is far from just. Most of the literatures have provided the way women’s employment affects the private sphere focusing mainly on the way maternal instincts and responsibilities are adjusted around work. But the rise of the IT sector is a recent phenomenon with limited literatures available; especially on the connection between the women’s involvement in the sector and the changes in the private sector or challenges faced by the women in a job that lacks the structured 9 to 5 work schedule. IT sector is the place where the strain the woman as labors and women as mothers is the most pronounced since this sector is characterized by precarity. Precarity refers to a societal condition characterized by the lack of predictability or job security which are every related to IT sector where individuals are associated with

project based work. According to researches (Huber & Spitze 1981; Stephens et.al 2009) income of the women, their present employment status, their designation everything have an important bearing on their conduct in the private sphere and have a direct influence in shaping the sphere in present as well in later life. Women's employment has been directly linked to the child psychological development, establishing a positive correlation between the absence of the mother and effect on the child (Hoffman & Wladis 1989) which was later modified by the work of Gottfried, Gottfried and Bathurst (1988) which claims that the effect of the two two-family on the child development is dependent on the proximal home environment that comprises of cognitive, social-emotional and physical stimulation available to children at home (p-12).

Most of the literatures have focused on the employment of the women in generic terms and as mentioned above there are few studies conducted on the rising IT sector which makes this study a valuable addition to the existing literature. My study does not attempt to negate the work already done in this field but should be treated as an addition to the field especially focusing on the growing IT sector. In this study I have tried to provide a glimpse of the everyday life of and Bathurst (1988) which claims that the effect of the two two-family on the child development is dependent on the proximal home environment that comprises of cognitive, social-emotional and physical stimulation available to children at home (p-12).the corporate women. 'Everyday life' and the women's experience are subjective concepts that hint at the 'qualitativeness' of the work undertaken, explained in the succeeding chapter on research methodology. 'Everyday life' in this context is explained by placing it within the overall framework of the life choices of women, the relationships they encounter on a daily basis and the way they navigate their way through the patriarchal structures or negotiate with it (Kandiyoti 1988).

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RISE AND RISE OF THE CORPORATE SECTOR – TRACING THE RISE AND GROWING INFLUENCE OF THE IT SECTOR IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO KOLKATA

3. INTRODUCTION:

The three sector theory divides the economy into primary (raw materials), secondary (manufactured products) and tertiary sector (services). The primary sector in India is always synonymous to agriculture, which forms the backbone of the Indian economy. Service sector has been incipient post independence but witnessed a mammoth development in the last decade- especially after the New Economic Policy, 1991 (liberalization, privatization and globalization). NEP, 1991 marked the ceasing of the autarky that characterized Indian economy, providing a fertile market for the foreign investment. NEP also contributed to the growth of the Information Technology sector that has given rise to a boundary-transcending clientele and have paved the way for the India's entry into the world market. To secure India's IT position both inside and outside India, PM Narendra Modi introduced Digital India campaign on 2nd July, 2015. The campaign aims at making internet available to all sections of the population and erasing the divide between digitally augmented urban sector and the technologically lacking rural areas. Through the Digital India campaign, the government also plans to introduce e-governance and achieve universal mobile connectivity. Digital India consists of three components:

- The creation of digital infrastructure
- Delivery of services digitally
- Digital literacy¹

The assiduous effort of the government to digitally unite the country is the manifestation of the way digitalization has enveloped even the mundane activity. The arrival of the

¹Digital India initiative was launched in the year 2005 by PM Shri Narendra Modi to ensure connectivity and to bridge the data gap between rural and urban India. Details of the initiative are available at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_India. The success of the programme is yet to be gauged but the popularity of the program has given it the requisite boost to make India digitally literate. Though according to the recent reports on 26% of the Indian population is actively using internet. India ranks 145th in the global list of internet users.

internet has replaced and digitized activities and has spelt simultaneous growth of the IT industry, thus opening India to the era of glocalization (whatever is local is global and vice versa). The rise of the IT sector has had profound impact not only in changing the economic scenario but has also affected and transformed the life of the people to a great extent.

3.1 IT Sector and Theoretical perspectives:

The accelerated growth of the information technology made it a mandate for the remodeling of the existing theoretical perspectives and at the same time prompted the introduction of many new sociologically significant concepts. As far as India is concerned, information technology industry has lead ‘to the economic transformation of the country and altered the perception of India in the global economy. India’s cost competitiveness in providing IT services, which is approximately 3-4 times cheaper than the US, continues to be the mainstay of its USP at the global sourcing market’.² The overwhelming development of the IT industry is the manifestation of the embracing of the era of globalization from which India was distinctly alienated till 1991. India’s entry in the world market and active participation in the international division of labour can be summed up from the data that India ‘accounts for 2.7% of the World Trade’ (Wikipedia report).

Globalization is a blanket term that includes within its fold the development and expansion in the fields of transport, communication and information processing. Thus IT expansion is just a part of the overall globalizing forces. But globalization is responsible for demarcation of the world into three economic zones- core, semi periphery and periphery, where the core countries subtly control the flow of the world trade and end up amassing the highest profit at the cost of the periphery and semi periphery thus organizing the world into a ‘system’ (Wallerstein, 1976, p-229-233). A world system is defined as ‘a social system, one that has boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation and coherence. Its life is made up of conflicting forces which hold it together by tension and tear it apart as each group seeks eternally to remold it to its

² India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) is a trust created by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The main objective of the trust is to create awareness about the Made India label in the international market and to create propaganda for Indian goods and services. It is a to go platform for the global investors. The details are available at <http://www.ibef.org/industry/information-technology-india.aspx>.

advantage' (ibid., p-229). This world system, as said earlier is predominantly dominated by the capitalist core countries where as the peripheral areas are ostensibly turned into raw material producing countries. Countries that served as peripheral areas in the pre colonization era are now converted into semi peripheries with defined structural position within the world system. Semi peripheries serve as a 'collection point of vital skills' (Wallerstein, 1976) and most often act like a buffer between the core and the periphery. Apart from these there exists a residual category, the external areas which categorically refrained from merging with the world economy (like Russia). The rise of the IT sector though strengthened this world system but built the boundaries with certain porosity. On one hand India's participation in the international division of labour has definitely resulted in the upward moving GNP curve but there has been simultaneous drainage of technical skills and knowledge. The multinational companies, with branches spread around the world make it an imperative for the corporate to concentrate in the country of origin- "the division of world economy involves a hierarchy of occupational tasks requiring higher levels of skill and greater capitalization are reserved for higher ranking areas" (ibid., p-229). India with its huge repertoire of technologically skilled labour force is thus compelled to unwittingly take part in this drainage of brain due to both the lack of indigenous opportunities and the pull of the economically stronger countries. The indigenous country is thus deprived of the human resources, which could have been channelized for the technological advancement (India has to be thus satisfied only with the remittances that marginally add to the GNP). Another disadvantage of participating in the global job market is to be susceptible to the global economic forces like inflation, depression and economic boom- where the first two can have catastrophic influence on the indigenous economy. Recent years have also witnessed the increasing shifting of the outmoded technology by the first world country to the third world. Drainage of brain has been accompanied by the drainage of wealth in the form of profit that accrues to the colossal MNCs that invest in India. This newer form of exploitation in the garb of economic expansion has given rise to new theoretical perspectives like neo Marxism and Neo colonialism. Neo Marxism developed as an attempt to make Marxism more applicable in the present day scenario by amalgamating critical theory, psychoanalysis and existentialism.

The rise of the Critical school or Frankfurt school in the 1930's paved the way for the remedial treatment of the orthodox Marxism as the latter has provided a somewhat

restricted idea of power, exploitation and change. Application of neo Marxism in the modern world, globalization spells the appropriation of surplus value created by the laborers and exploitation of the same in the hands of the new class of capitalists on a global scale that calls for newer forms of interpretation. Neo Marxists like Adorno and Marcuse have highlighted a trend away from the revolutionary change, so staunchly advocated by Marx in his theory. The proletarianisation, the transition from class-in-itself to class-for-itself and the final conflict between the two classes defined by the conflicting class interests no longer feature in the state redefined and remodeled by the corporate culture- ‘Presence of US hegemony, the west-centric cultural domination, masculinism, racism etc are not reducible to class dynamics within capitalism’³.

The stark absence of the trade union activity or any cooperative coalitions among the workers of the IT sector can be attributed to the perks that they receive from being employed in the private sector and most importantly in companies with head quarters situated overseas. Luxurious working condition with amenities at the disposal that highlights the contrast with the bureaucratic public offices is definitely a deviation from the abject exploitation described by the Marxists. This trend towards a comfortable lifestyle has been pointed out by the neo Marxists as a form of sedation towards any exploitation that is happening on a global scale. Although this stand by the neo Marxists is challenged by the Constructivists who interpret globalization as the manifestation of the inter-subjective interaction happening on a global space that results in the creation of shared symbols. Social world, to the constructivists is ‘constructed’ by the inhabitants and thus globalization, too is a form of a social construct sustained by the interaction and global exchanges. World polity theory, an analytical framework that borderlines the World System theory sees world system ‘as a social system with a cultural framework called world polity, which encompasses the influences the actors such as nations, international organizations and individuals under it’ (see World Polity Theory, Wikipedia).

John Meyer (1980) pointed out that the polity is a system of creating value through the collective conferral of authority i.e, it is believed that actors like state and institutions are guided by the global norms thus giving an emphasis to homogenization. Similarly, World Culture theory refers to the compression of the world, concrete global

³ <http://www.politicalsciencenotes.com/articles/8-theories-of-globalization-explained/642>.

interdependence and intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole (Robertson 1992). It is an imperative, in this regard to distinguish between ‘globality’ as a structure and ‘globalization’ as a process because ‘local cultures are not mythical leftovers of the prehistoric past, but are historical products of the larger processes’. Globality is the end result of globalization, when the process of globalization is believed to be completed, that stage is defined as globality, while globalization refers to the process that makes globality a reality. Globality is gradual institutionalization of the structural transformation while globalization is the ongoing process.

A comprehensive understanding of the effects of globalization has been presented by the Post modernists who have defined the post modern globalised world as a world based on information and technology. Unlike the modern society that have witnessed development in socio cultural sphere, post modern world is characterized by a new version of Renaissance with special thrust on the technological acceleration. According to the post modernists, the strength of the new world is the creation, maintenance and the circulation of information about an individual or group or organization facilitated by technology. Globalization and the rise of the IT sector have been seen through the same prism by the proponents of the post modernism. There exists a dialectical relationship between globalization and the rise of the post modernism where both reinforce each other- globalization that has resulted in the transition of the society from modernity to post modernity or ‘reflexive modernity’ (Ritzer, 2004, p-555) and vice versa.

The modernists like Georg Simmel have described this transition as the ‘atrophy of individual culture and the hypertrophy of objective culture’ (ibid., p-548). The concepts of time and space- so crucial to the modernists- have been redefined by the post modernists with the rise of globalization. Globalized world is characterized by not only the time-space differentiation but also by the differentiation of physical place from the virtual space where it is increasingly possible to remain physically absent but virtually accessible and it is this virtual accessibility of the organization in the cyber space on which the Information technology sector is based. Outsourcing of data and services performed by the corporate offices or MNCs also confirm Giddens’ view that ‘disembedding’ defines the radical modernity. Disembedding involves ‘the lifting out of the social relations from the local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space’(ibid., p-575) and this process is had been made possible

by 'symbolic tokens' like money and the emergence of a boundary transcending class of 'technical experts' or professionals. Trans-national corporations with branches spread around the world runs on this system of international division of labour and the resultant proficiency that comes from it. But Giddens is skeptical about referring to the era of globalization as 'postmodern', though he believed that post modern world will be characterized by 'postscarcity system, increasingly multilayered, democratization, demilitarization and humanization of technology' (ibid.,p-577) - very similar to the ingredients of the corporate culture.

Post modern society is also characterized by increasing 'risk'⁴ due to blurring of the global boundary. Exchange of services and technology between the countries can heighten this risk factor to a great extent. Post modernism differs from other epistemologies as it does not intend to provide a comprehensible explanation to the phenomenon of globalization rather it focuses on the emergence of a new form of development, quite in contrast to the existing ones, facilitated by the technological leap. Resonance of this idea has been found in the theory of trans-formationalism expounded by David Held et.al, which defines globalization as reflecting the 'increased interconnectedness in political, economic and cultural matters across the world creating a shared social space.'⁵ This shared social space hints at the spatial transformation of the social relations and transactions, brought about by the 'transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and power'.⁶

Held and McGrew (2003) in their *The Global Transformation Readers* identified three schools of thought surrounding the issue of globalization- the hyperglobalists, the sceptics and the transformationalists. The hyperglobalists envisions a world defined by blurring regional boundaries and they opined that in this borderless economy, where the global market forces is accommodated by the state due to lack of alternatives. They have witnessed a trend towards 'de-nationalization of the strategic economic activities' with

⁴ 'Risk' society is a concept described by Ulrich Beck in his *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. Modern society according to Beck is characterized by 'risks' that are not restricted to space or time. Risk is correlated to class. As wealth accumulates at the top, risks accumulate at the bottom and therefore, financially deprived class attract a lot of risks.

⁵ Globalisation as a term cannot be contained within a single discipline rather attempts have been made to provide a succinct definition of the term by the various disciplines. This is an online source site, where the theories of political sciences are explained in a lucid manner.
<http://www.politicalsciencenotes.com/articles/8-theories-of-globalization-explained/642>.

⁶ Ibid.,1

the rise of globalization and predicted a cessation of welfare state and global democracy as a result of excessive economic interdependence. This stand of hyperglobalists has been taken up by the sceptics but the latter have interpreted the rising trend towards global interdependence from a critical standpoint. As the name of the school of thought suggests, the sceptics debunked the idea of global unification through economic interdependence and suggested the emergence of various power blocs based on the amount of economic and political control wielded by each state in the global market- ‘globalization is a myth which conceals the reality of an international economy increasingly segmented into three major regional blocs in which national governments remain very powerful’ (see the 8 theories on political science). The transformationalist school of thought focuses on the effect of the globalization and the profound structural and functional changes taking place in the world around due to the rise of corporate sector. Held and Mc Grew (2003) tried to connect the three schools of thought with a single thread- ‘political globalization’ or ‘politics of globalization’ manifestation of which can be found in the differential organizational interests that has shifted the balance of power and authority. This view of Held and McGrew confirms the transformation the world is undergoing under the impact of globalization coupled with mushrooming of trans-national corporations, thus clearly revealing their inclination to the transformationalist school of thought. The operations of the multinational corporations on a global basis have integrated national and local economies into global and regional production networks, giving rise to the concept of ‘global village’. New age multinational corporations have also resulted in the strengthening of the international division of labor and redefined gains and losses for each country depending on its bargaining power in the international market. These transformations also called for reframing of international laws delimiting the power of the individual states to keep the balance of power intact.

Various theoretical frameworks have been used to interpret and reinterpret globalization and its effect on the states. Standardization and the optimum utilization of goods and services have been the major driving force behind the countries participating in the international trade and contributing in the international division of labour, giving rise to a new world order vacillating between modernity and post modernity or radicalized modernity.

3.2 Institutionalization of the Corporate Culture in India with special reference to Kolkata:

Corporate culture implies ‘the culture that obtains in a corporation’. The New Economic Policy 1991 marked the introduction of globalization and privatization in India, thus breaking the partial autarky. India was opened to foreign investments and wide spread globalization that not only affected the economy but also ushered in a new form of culture and work life pattern. According to Surinder S. Jodhka (2008), the expansion was not “merely in terms of growth rates and profits, India also experiences an important ideological shift during the 1990s” (p-185). Socialistic model of development that has been popularized by the ‘Nehruvian idea of planned development lost its charm’(Jodhka, 2008,p-185). It got replaced with the expansion of markets and middle classes, though touted by the government as a massive economic uplift but in reality deepened the chasm between the agriculture and industry that resulted in the huge spurt in farmer suicides (Jodhka, 2008, p-185). The economy prior to globalization was completely dominated by the government sector enterprises with import and export forming an insubstantial part of the GDP of the country. New Economic policy (NEP) 1991 was introduced to stabilize the economy and to bring structural changes in the existing institutions. As per the Discussion Paper on Economic Reforms brought out by the Ministry of Finance in July 1993, the objectives of the reforms were:

*“...to bring about rapid and sustained improvement in the quality of the people of India. Central to this goal is the rapid growth in the incomes and productive employment...The only durable solution to the curse of poverty is the sustained growth of incomes and employment ...such growth requires investment: in farms, in roads, in irrigation, in industry, in power development depends on continuing increases in the productivity of our capital, our land and our labour”.*⁷ (based on the speech by Shri Manmohan Singh, the then finance minister on February 1993).

⁷ A speech by Shri Manmohan Singh, the then Finance Minister of India. The tri slogan of Liberalization, privatization and Globalization marked the New Economic Policy 1991 and was introduced by Singh who wanted to bring India out of the situation of autarky. The whole speech is available at <https://www.indiabudget.gov.in/doc/bspeech/bs199394.pdf>. Also see <http://indiabefore91.in/1991-economic-reforms>. An appraisal of the Economic reforms in India from 1990 has also been presented by Montek Singh Ahluwalia, available at <http://planningcommission.nic.in/aboutus/speech/spemsa/msa018.pdf>.

In addition to the internal fiscal and monetary reforms to make the economy more sustainable by removing direct government control on the capital markets (The Securities and Exchange Board of India SEBI was formed for this purpose in 1992), steps were taken to provide stimulus to export as well as to encourage foreign investment by reducing the degree of regulation and the licensing control on foreign trade. Globalization got the further boost with the government initiative to increase the foreign investment and to achieve it following measures were suggested (based on the report published in www.indiabefore91.in.)

- i. In 1991, the government announced a specified list of high technology and high-investment priority industries wherein automatic permission was granted for foreign direct investment (FDI) up to 51 percent foreign equity. The limit was raised to 74 percent and subsequently to 100 percent for many of these industries. Moreover, many new industries have been added to the list over the years.
- ii. Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) has been set up to negotiate with international firms and approve direct foreign investment in select areas.
- iii. Steps were also taken from time to time to promote foreign institutional investment (FII) in India.

There are two major components of the Information Technology in India – IT services and business process outsourcing (BPO) that marked the creation of not only new patterns of jobs and heightened demand for the subjects like engineering and computer science, but ushered in a new culture that has colossal relevance from the sociological point of view. Culture change can be defined as the ‘influence of the culture capital on individual and community behavior. It is sometimes called repositioning of culture which means the reconstruction of the culture concept of a society’(see the Wikipedia page on Culture change). Resonating Marxist understanding of the society even a minor modification or remodeling of the economic base can have repercussions in the societal superstructure. Using the same model, it can be interpreted that the development of the IT industry has affected the way of living of the people to a great extent. The effect has not only been concentrated in the lifestyle change of the people working in the corporate sector but it has ushered in a new culture both inside and outside the office premise-

“The recent upsurge of interest in corporate culture, however, has once again pushed the non-economic factors to the foreground. A suitable corporate culture, it is now acknowledged, can help a corporation transcend its own limits and attain hitherto unanticipated levels of performance”(Panini, 1988, p-M86). In his penchant to understand the emergent corporate culture in the Indian offices, Panini made a comparative analysis of the ‘Japanese industries vis-à-vis American industries’ (p-M86) and described the former as based on the system of ‘lifelong employment, pay-scales based on seniority and an extensive system of consultation’ while the latter is very individualistic in its ethos. Panini (1998) also laments and holds the absence of a proper corporate culture to be responsible for the inability of the Indian corporations to set standards for higher performance despite having high rate of saving investment and qualified man power. During the initial phase of implementation of the NEP, the UPA government proposed the extension of the quota system for the SCs and STs to the private sector (Jodhka, 2008, p-186), to make the latter realize its goal towards overall development. The proposal was unequivocally rejected by the private enterprises citing the danger of fanning mediocrity and subsequent sacrifice of merit and skill. Such proposal is indicative of the initial hiccups associated with the institutionalization of the corporate sector and India’s thrust on the state control over all the spheres given the government’s inclination towards a socialistic society. The post modern analysis of the corporate culture has lambasted this accelerated growth by pointing out that ‘in the game of maintaining the organizational members in a seductive embrace, the postmodern corporate culture has lost its innocence and has hidden its haggard face behind a glamorous façade’ (Schultz and Risberg, 1992, p-29). Schultz and Risberg (1992) further commented that ‘in organizations, the game of power shifts from being a game for direct control and authority to become one of access to the construction of the “cultural state of the organization”’(p-29). Postmodernism has adumbrated the ‘hollowness’ of the corporate culture within the organization, believing that it is nothing but imitations of the ‘same platitudes from the “cutting edge” of management, leaving a simulated reality without the original’ (p-31).

But the meteoric growth of the IT sector in India has been planned and promoted by the Government in its penchant to not only boost the economy of the country but also to improve the socio economic standards of the people- ‘motivated by national security concerns, the industrial policy of the 1960s and 1970s tried to attain self-sufficiency in

IT and electronics’ (Husain and Dutta, 2014, p-75). To ensure the unrestrained development of the IT Sector in India, the government also founded a Department of Electronics and a new electronics commission in 1970 coupled with offering ‘incentives such as reduced import duties on software and hardware products. Software technology parks were established. Deregulation of the telecom sector was another major step’ (ibid., p-76). Modification in the fiscal policies of the government and the introduction of the Special Economic Zone Act (SEZ) in 2005 were the steps taken to encourage the growth of the IT Sector in the initial stage. India, being a labour intensive country, it becomes easier for the firms in the US and other countries to get their work done at a cheaper rates. Apart from that technical skill of the Indian labours along with their proficiency in English makes India a go to destination- ‘India was the only developing country to export software services in the early 1980s, mainly because of low cost and proficiency in English’(ibid., p-76).

The spread of the IT industry can also be discerned in many states including West Bengal. ‘As of 2001, around 0.8% of the city’s workforce was employed in the primary sector (agriculture, forestry, mining, etc), 15.49% worked in the secondary sector (industrial and manufacturing), and 83.69% worked in the tertiary sector (service industries).’⁸ Megalopolis like Kolkata has registered steady growth in IT firms that has given rise to IT hubs in areas like Salt Lake Sector v and Rajarhat, where most of the big firms have their offices and employ large number of people. Kolkata is the preferred destination of many international giants like IBM, Ericsson, Accenture, Cognizant, PwC, Capgemini and Indian software firms like Wipro, Infosys, TCS, Genpact, TIS, Aditya Birla Minacs etc, making Kolkata a contributor of 3% of the total national exports. Husain and Dutta (2014) have categorically listed the reasons for the exponential growth of the IT sector in West Bengal:

1. West Bengal possesses a sizeable talent pool given the highest per capita spending on education in comparison to other Indian states, large number of colleges per excellence imparting quality education and domain knowledge in financial services, travel/logistics.

⁸ A elaborate picture of the economy of Kolkata is available at https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Kolkata.

2. Kolkata offers low cost of operation than other metropolis where ‘salaries of the fresh graduates are about 10-15% lower than in other metros’.
3. West Bengal has high quality infrastructure with ‘580 Mbps of international satellite connectivity through Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL) and Software Technology Park of India (STPI)’. Apart from that Kolkata is well connected to other metropolitan cities, making it a repertoire of opportunities.(Husain & Dutta, 2014, p.81-82)

IT Sector in Kolkata employs large number of people irrespective of gender. Apparently, allocation of work in IT sector is gender neutral and explains the concentration of large number of women in this sector. Coupled with this there is a certain amount of glamour and status associated with the IT firms that separates it from the government offices. The enormous growth of the IT firms confirms the rise of a class of *precariat*⁹, which is interpreted as the ‘entrenchment of neo capitalism’. The short term projects offered in the firms is a major attraction to today’s youth who vehemently refuse to get stagnant in doing repetitive work. Horizontal mobility made easier in this sector is often followed by vertical mobility. Many respondents in this particular research work have acceded to have changed their job just to climb up the corporate ladder. With time bound project cushioning against monotony and ensuring higher productivity and the opportunity of working onsite, IT sector has all the right reasons to attract the youth who prefer taking risks in order to progress, thus giving rise to the theory of precarity which claims that achieving job security has been replaced with working in a condition where there is constant risk of losing job- a literal rendition of living on the edge. The monotony of working in the same department till retirement in the public sector has made many youth to venture into the IT firms where the promotion is based more on performance than on seniority and there is a greater probability of moving from one project to another that curbs monotony. Since the promotion in the IT firms is based on performance, it also guarantees an upwards moving GDP of the country as well. According to the NASSCOM (National Association of Software and Services Companies), the percentage of GDP based on the revenue generated from the IT sector has gone up from 7.1 in 2011 to 7.5 in 2012.

⁹ Precariat is a social class formed by people suffering from precarity, which is a condition of existence without predictability or security, affecting material or psychological welfare.
<https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Precariat>

NASSCOM also predicted the possibility of achieving \$225 billion by the India's IT industry in revenues by 2020 and inflate into a \$350 billion industry by 2025, "according to the projection, global spending on digital technology, which stands at 10% of the total expenditure at present, is projected to increase 10 35% by 2020 and 60% of the total spend by 2050" (report by *Livemint*, e-paper, 2015).

<i>Financial Year</i>	<i>Domestic</i>	<i>Export</i>	<i>Percentage of GDP</i>
2008	22	41	6.4
2009	22	47	6.7
2010	24	50	6.5
2011	29	50	7.1
2012	32	69	7.5

Table 1 Revenue generated by IT sector (USD billion)

As comprehensively described by Husain and Dutta (2014) there are manifold impacts of IT sector on the Indian economy like attracting foreign investment, increase R&D, contribution to local economy and rural employment generation, generate growth of technical education, develop infrastructure, increase export (Husain & Dutta, 2014, p-80). The contribution of the IT sector has not only been limited to the economic growth alone but it has played a major role in affecting the Indian way of life to a colossal extent.

3.3 Impact of the rise of the corporate sector on the material and non-material culture of India:

The rise of the IT sector is the manifestation of the digitization of work and the ineluctable grip of the technology that has not only revolutionized office work by making it cater to global needs but has also had its repercussions in modifying the lifestyle of the people of India. According to the recent report- "the corporate governance structure in India was substantially revamped with the Companies Act, 2013, introducing changes in the broad structure, managerial remuneration, mandatory independence of directors, and mandatory reporting systems, amongst others. In a bid to include stakeholder value model of corporate governance in India, Section 135 of the act was introduced making CSR (corporate social responsibility) a compulsory activity. CSR recognizes social externalities in relation to business activity and engages

stakeholders who affect and are affected by the company (Grosser and Moon, 2005)”(Anand, 2018, p-34). CSR is an attempt on the part of the corporate offices to indulge in activities that will ensure social welfare, sustainable development and all round progress of the society. The recent study done by Futurespace, in association with IIM Udaipur, three Tata Companies have ranked as the highest spender in CSR activities- Tata Chemicals Ltd, Tata Steel Ltd, Tata Power Company Ltd. According to NASSCOM 2012, “The industry has played a significant role in transforming India’s image from a slow moving bureaucratic economy to a land of innovative entrepreneurs and a global player in providing world class technology solutions and business services. The industry has helped India transform from a rural and agriculture-based economy to a knowledge based economy”. NASSOM has also reported on the amount of influence the corporate sector has exerted on the standard of living of the people. Employment of both men and women in this sector has created an upward moving socio-economic graph that has affected the day to day living and the consumption pattern in a middle class household. The change in the consumption habit began with the opening up of the Indian economy to the foreign investment.

Post liberalization and globalization, Indian markets were opened to international brands that resulted in a change, followed by an upgradation in the tastes and preferences of the people. This also hints at a trend towards higher rate of spending and reduction in the rate of saving of the per capita income that can be interpreted as a newer form of drainage of wealth from the country in the form of profits and interests on investment. But that has not deterred the consumers to shift from local products to the branded versions of them. Biggest fashion labels started making their appearance in the Indian market creating an environment of competition but at the same time inspiring the local products to upgrade the quality. The great Indian middle class suddenly found itself caught up in both bandwagon (bandwagon effect is the psychological phenomenon in which people do something primarily because other people are doing it) and Veblen effects (in an economy, the consumption of Veblen goods, goods desired for being overpriced is a function of the Veblen effect that is named after the American economist Thorstein Veblen, who first identified conspicuous consumption as a mode of status seeking in *The Theory of Leisure Class*). Globalization of the culture followed which refers to the spreading of ideas uniform in content from one region to another. If Indian history is considered, then India has never been isolated from the globalizing forces. The

advent of the Aryans in the 1500 B.C from the Central Asia has been recorded as the first instance of globalization that resulted in the introduction and the subsequent acculturation of the Dravidians. The introduction of the *varna* system and the occupational hierarchy has been believed to be the result of the assimilation of the Indo-Aryan ways of the life. Even the colonization of India by the British has created sufficient structural and functional changes in the Indian culture and can be regarded as a form of globalization. Therefore penetration of the alien concepts and its assimilation into the indigenous culture is not alien.

As discussed by Husain and Dutta (2014) ‘initially, the government tried to get IBM to share equity with local capital, when such attempts failed, companies like IBM and ICL started to refurbish old computers and sell or lease them. Indian customers preferred those cheap, refurbished computers to importing dearer, advanced computers- leading ironically to technological backwardness.’(p-76). To counter that government introduced new reforms like setting up of Santa Cruz Electronics Export Processing Zone (SEEPZ) and other incentives that guaranteed the rise of the IT sector. One of the major impacts of the sector has been the glamorization of the work culture. In this regard, it is imperative to contrast work at the IT sector with that of the work done in the public sector. While the former is defined by automation of work and excessive dependence on the information technology to cater to the companies and customers that transcend boundaries, the latter is characterized by the localization of the work done with lower involvement of the technological humdrum.

The rise of the IT sector has resulted in the waning of the undeniable reliance on the government jobs. Though security of jobs in the public sector is a bonus that attracts but it is possible to accelerate earnings in the private sector as promotion and appraisals there are not based on seniority, rather based on performance. Therefore monotony and boredom are often the major complaints of the people in the public sector (same job till 60 years), it is never an issue in the private sector where performance determines emolument. This dynamism in the work culture after the introduction of the IT sector has been a major influence in the way work has been conceptualized by the people. The terms like bureaucratic red tapism and corruption, generally associated with the public sector have not spilled over to the private work culture making the latter a lucrative career option. The difference between the private and public sector also lies in the salary

structure- while hierarchization of work characterizes both the sector but the salary at the entry level is much higher in case of graduates joining the private sector. This trend impacted the education sector as well where the curriculum and the choice of subjects are modeled on the basis of the requirements of the developing information technology sector. As mentioned above, the tangible change brought about by the IT sector is the glamourization of work including the office. Modern facilities available to the office goers spells a welcome change from the shabby and dilapidated old structures that define the public sector, thus instantly imparting a sense of worth, efficiency and importance to the former. This structural change is followed by the modification in work schedules. Since, IT sector caters to clients that transcends national boundary, work is scheduled in accordance to the need of the serviced country, thus negating the 9 to 5 work culture, characteristic of the public sector. Work in the IT sector is 24*7, which makes the sector looks dynamic. Given the dynamism of the sector, the employers are forced to change their way of living to suit the increasing demand and work pressure. According to recent reports, corporate life is responsible for depression, divorces, low rate of marriages, extra marital affairs and infertility. Stressful life, accelerating tension of meeting deadlines, junk food in the office canteen, sedentary work culture have taken a toll on the lifestyle of those working in the IT sector which is connected to macro issues.

According to the report in The Times of India (2016), “data compiled by doctors and a medical devices company point to a sharp lowering of age for cardiac ailments. The data reveals that 12% of those suffering heart attacks are now younger than 40. While the majority of these cardiac patients are based in cities, more than 60% have stressful jobs”. Stress has been the major source of ailments- both physical and mental- for the employees of the IT sector as pointed out by another Times of India report that claims “as much as 80% of working professionals complain that they suffer from stress and their organizations do not have any programs to help them manage stress at work”. The report also claims that ‘workplace stress’ or ‘occupational stress’ is identified as a medical hazard that can affect physical and psychic wellbeing, ‘around 35% employees have developed insomnia, 30% feel tired and fatigued all the time, loss of appetite is a major physical impact for 25% employees and 10% say they have persistent body aches. On the psychological front 40% employees report depression as the main consequence of workplace stress, increased irritability has occurred to 25% employees, another 25%

complained of increased incidences of anger and 10% have developed anxiety issues”. Therefore the rise of the IT sector has redefined illness and in the process urbanized the same in such a way that more than physical ailments, the psychological wellbeing of the employees is being compromised a great extent. The IT sector has also redefined life post marriage incase both the husband and wife are working in this sector. The possibility of working onsite has created new challenges for the post modern couples and had made long distance relationship a reality. Over indulgence and dependence on technology like video calling and skype are discernable to maintain the relationship. Thus real life has slowly acceded to the co existence of the active virtual life with the rise of IT sector.

The rise of the IT sector has also affected the very institutions that define Indian society like family structure. The transition of the traditional joint family, characteristic of the Indian society to the nuclear family had started many years ago but the sprawling IT sector has given rise to modified version of the nuclear family where the couple is engaged in corporate work and the possibility of working onsite is creating challenges for them to stay together physically. Neo local residences are on the rise as the IT hubs are generally situated on the outskirts of the city. Outsourcing regular services like cooking, cleaning, house husbandry- believed to be the tradition tasks of the ‘housewives’ is on the rise as women are entering the corporate world more than ever before. Gender neutral job opportunities have been the major contribution of the IT sector, discussed in details in the next chapters.

3.4 Conclusion:

The rise and rise of the corporate sector has affected every sphere of life, be it economic or social. The unprecedented entry of the women in the corporate sector has gone a long way to ensure an upward movement of the standard of living and has hinted at the emergence of a new form of family. The total modification of the work culture in India can be credited to the rise of this sector. The prevalence of night shifts, women working late, and drop at home facilities given to the late night workers were infrequent in the pre globalization era, including the possibility of working onsite and catering to the global consumers. Corporate culture has instilled the zeal of meeting deadlines in order to get promoted to higher ranks, thus creating a situation of perfect competition among the employees. Most importantly, the rise of the corporate sector has made it easy for

the women to find jobs and this has brought about major changes in the way women empowerment is conceptualized and defined. Are the unprecedented financial independence of the women and the possibility of earning as much as their male counterparts, getting reflected in the decision making power in the domestic sphere as well? Is the public men- private women dichotomy is turning into a sham with the overwhelming presence of women in the areas which were believed to be the stronghold of men? Is the work at the corporate sector modifying and redefining the domestic sphere? The following chapters are an attempt to find satisfactory answers to these questions.

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4. Introduction:

The crux of the social research lies in the conceptualization of a problem and operationalization of the same to bring it to empirical level and this connection between the conceptual level and the empirical level is made plausible with the use of the suitable methodology and research methods that compliment the study. Methodology refers to the philosophical stance of the researcher and methods are the tools that help in operationalising the concept, thus turning it into a measureable and interpretive variable. It is needless to reiterate that the success of the research depends on perfecting methodology and using the correct method to extract information from a sample which is representative of the population so that the findings can be generalized to the larger universe. Methodology commences with the selection of the research topic itself and the rigorous procedure of situating it within a theoretical framework so that the chosen social phenomenon can be dissected into indicators leading to the proper hypothesis or research question. The preceding chapter, where the relevant literature has been reviewed, paves the way for the choice of methodology and research design. This chapter is thematized into four sections- i. the overall methodological framework guiding the research that includes the justification of using the chosen methodology, process of sampling and theoretical leanings ii. process of data collection, experience of fieldwork, roadblocks faced while data collection iii. organization of data and analysis and iv. validity and reliability of the data and research ethics.

4.1 Methodological Paradigm:

Methodology is the blanket terms used to envelop the processes of determining the source of data, sampling, data collection and analysis of data. The major part of the research design including the successful completion of the research depends on methodology. In the discipline of social science methodology can be broadly classified in to quantitative research and qualitative research; with mixed methods being introduced as a recent development in the field of social research to assist in the comprehensive analysis and understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Methodological debate has always formed the part of the social science discipline from its very inception. Auguste Comte's penchant of developing sociology along the lines of the natural sciences with experimentation, observation and comparison as methodological tools gave rise to positivistic interpretation of the social phenomenon, challenged later by the methodological debate called the *Methodenstreit* led by the German-Austrian scholars including Max Weber (Coser 1971; Ritzer 2011). The debate veered towards the appropriate methodology for studying social sciences where Weber championed the cause of using *Verstehen* and interpretive understanding to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. Sociology, to Weber, is the science whose object is to interpret the meaning of social action to provide a causal explanation of the way in which action proceeds and effects which it produces. An action is social when the acting individual takes into account the behavior of the others and oriented in its course (Morrison 2006).

The quantitative-qualitative debate has always been raged within the discipline of social science; with both the schools claiming its superiority over the others. Both the framework has its own set of pros and cons. While quantitative methods in social sciences help in quantifying social phenomenon and thus reduces vagueness but incorporating the traditional opinions it can be said that quantifying social phenomenon reduces it to mere numbers and thus strips the phenomenon of the element 'social' which involves emoting individuals. As pointed out by Burgess (1945), "statistical techniques were at first applied to behavior in which communication was of little or no importance, as in demographic and other population studies" (p-476). While qualitative studies are an improvement over the tendency of averaging the behavior of the individuals in a community or group, but it has been accused of sometimes being tainted with researcher's biases in analyzing and presenting the data. Biases strip of the data of its objectivity and ethical neutrality- two most important qualities of a social scientist. Burgess (1945) provides further input in this tussle between the two methods-

"In recent years the nature of Sociology as a science and its research procedures have been critically appraised from two widely different methodological standpoints- those of operational sociology and of the sociology of knowledge. Operational Sociology takes as its spring-board the thesis that Sociology, to be scientific, should pattern itself upon

the physical or biological sciences. It tends to discount the role of concepts and would reduce them to operational definitions and to symbolic expressions in quantitative symbols. The Sociology of knowledge rests upon an assumption directly opposite to that of the operational sociology. The former questions the validity of all our knowledge and especially knowledge in social science, because of its social origins and cultural conditioning and the social equation of the investigator.” (p-481)

The introduction of the mixed methods in the social science research thus became an answer to the two absolute stances regarding the social science methodology. Mixed method, from the name itself suggests the combination of the quantitative and qualitative research methods to study the social phenomenon. It generally involves the qualitative analysis nestled within the quantitative framework. In other words, mixed methods involve an amalgamation of the statistical data and the personal narratives to derive a multifaceted understanding. It's very difficult to pin point the starting of mixed method in the social research because of the varied name used to define it like 'integrated method' or 'hybrid method'. The effort to define mixed methods dates back to the year 1989 when the first definition of Mixed methods was provided by Greene, Caracelli and Graham followed by Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998; 2010). Creswell and Plano Clark (2011a) provided step by step procedures to be followed for the successful utilization of the missed methods. According to them, in mixed methods “the researcher:

- Collects and analyzes persuasively and rigorously both qualitative and quantitative data (based on the research questions);
- Mixes (or integrates or links) the two forms of data concurrently by combining them (or merging them), sequentially by having one build on the other, or embedding one within the other;
- Gives priority to one or both forms of data (in terms of what the research emphasizes);
- Uses these procedures in a single study or in multiple phases of a program of study;

- Frames these procedures into philosophical world views and theoretical lenses; and
- Combines the procedures into specific research designs that direct the plan for conducting the study.” (Creswell and Plano Clark 2011a; p-5).

The combination of these methods can be sought to have a proper understanding when one data source is insufficient or the study calls for backing up one method with another. Social phenomena should be dealt with varied angles and focusing on one form of data narrows down the opportunity to a great extent.

In this study, the mixed method has been religiously used and the decision to use the mixed method stemmed from varied reasons. Firstly, quantitative data when unsupported by the qualitative analysis oftentimes erode the personal experiences and club the individuals together; to prevent the voices of the corporate women from getting muted mixed method has been used to understand their problems or lack of it. Secondly, the study calls for the use of mixed method as it focuses on the private sphere and the public/private dichotomy which the corporate women are trying to transcend, thus data has been organized keeping this objective in mind. Thirdly, personal narratives of the corporate women steered the course of the study towards using mixed methods. Fourthly, there are some variables and responses within the study that could be quantified like age, salary, rating scales but they also called for a qualitative analysis of the data thus quantified. Lastly, it is an emergent mixed method design where the need to collect qualitative data emerged to for proper analysis of the quantitative data. The study is modeled on the *data validation variant* (fig 1) of the *convergent design* of the mixed method explained by Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011a) in their work. According to them, “the data validation variant is used when the researcher includes both open and closed ended questions on a questionnaire and the results from the open-ended questions are used to confirm or validate the results from closed ended questions. Because the qualitative items are an add-on to a quantitative instrument, the items generally do not result in a complete context based qualitative data set. However, they provide the researcher with emergent themes and interesting quotes that can be used to validate and embellish the quantitative survey findings.” (p- 81).

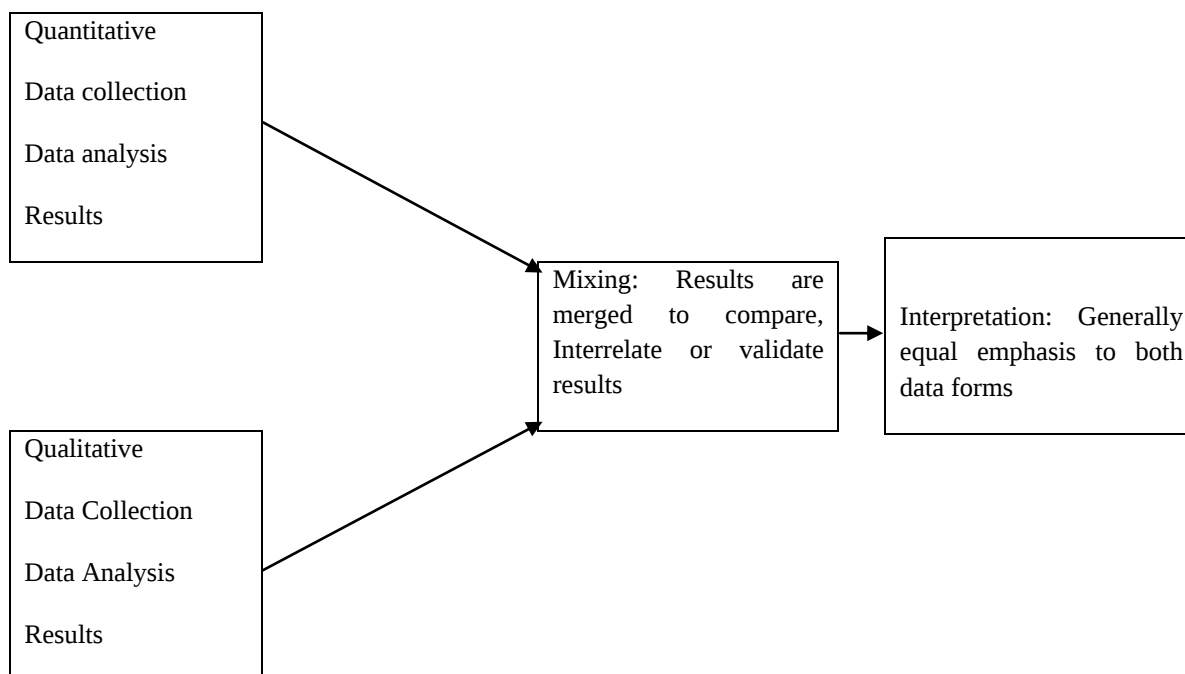


Fig 1: Based on the study of Creswell and Plano-Clark (2007), developed by Plano-Clark et.al (2008).

The study has been designed based on the fig 1. The procedure is discussed in details in the later part of the chapter.

4.1.1 Method of Sampling:

Sampling is the process of selecting a subset from the population (Baker 1988) for the purpose of conducting a research within a stipulated time frame. In a social research it is a hackneyed saying that it is not possible to study the population and that differentiates census study from the sample research. There are two most important characteristics of the sample that has to be kept in mind while selecting the sample- i. must meet the need of the study and ii. must be representative of the population. The success of the research depends on the precision with which sampling is done. Based on the presence or absence of a sampling frame (the enumeration of the population in the form of a list) and the possibility of being chosen as a sample for study, sampling can be of two types- probability and non-probability sampling; the former is characterized by the presence of the sampling frame while the latter by the lack of it. In probability sampling all the units in the population have the equal chance of being selected, while the non-probability sampling depends on the judgment of the researcher to choose units who meet the need of the study.

The respondents for the study on the married corporate women working at the IT hub of urban Kolkata have been chosen using a combination of the Judgmental, quota and snowball sampling of the non-probability variant of the sampling procedure. The main reason for using non-probability sampling in this study is the lack of a comprehensive and accessible employers' list that could have formed the sampling frame, an elementary prerequisite for the probability sampling procedure. Another reason for using non-probability sampling is the ease with which it can be applied within the stipulated period of time. The study involves limited number of respondents for both quantitative and qualitative analysis for which drawing up a sampling frame would have been time consuming. The representativeness of the sample thus chosen has been guaranteed by the fact that they have been approached on the field. The IT hub in Kolkata is a zone that has created a conglomeration of a number of corporate offices; hence the respondents were approached either in their office or any public place they frequented near their office (like tea stall and cafeterias).

The first variant of the non probability sampling used in this study is the judgmental sampling which refers to the form of sampling where the researcher frequent a place, using his/her judgment where he/she is sure to get representative sample. In this study, IT hub in Kolkata that includes the whole sector five of the Salt lake city and Rajarhat area of Kolkata has been frequented because those areas are known for housing the corporate giants thus the respondents approached automatically became the representative of the population under study. The use of Quota variant of the non probability sampling is justified as out of the population of women working at the IT hub, only married women working as an IT analyst has been considered with the exclusion of those who are working as call centre employees. Quota sampling refers to the non probability variant of the Stratified sampling which involves the formation of homogenous groups; the size of the group is specified, characteristics are defined and then the respondents are selected to fill in the group (Baker 1988). Two most important characteristics of the respondents in this study are that they are *married* and working at a corporate office minimum as an IT analyst. After the collection of data and during analysis the possibility of a third angle presented itself and they were further subdivided into women with children and women without children for better understanding. Age, religion and salary have been kept flexible to allow a representative sample. The third mode of sampling used is the snowball sampling variant where each respondent has

been used as a source for potential respondents. Since corporate houses are protective about their employees, getting direct access to them via their organization could not be navigated. Therefore this unofficial cordial relationship has been established with the respondents who then became a source to the other respondents if they felt convinced that the information about their life would not be tampered with, neither their identity or place of work would be disclosed.

To get a complete understanding of their private sphere and their work life balance a total of 162 respondents were chosen, out of which only 155 respondents have been retained. There are manifold reasons for not considering the seven respondents and the most important was ambiguous answer and their refusal to be re-interviewed for the sake of clarification. The sample thus selected have all the qualities of being characterized as a representative sample because they have been approached directly on the field, the sample is easily accessible so much so that they have been re-contacted during the course of study for further clarification whenever needed, they are of a feasible size and they have never been coaxed for any information. Though it is more like an exercise in induction but the generalizability of the result is more or less guaranteed.

4.1.2 Theoretical leanings:

In this socio-economic study of the private sphere of the women, the enveloping theoretical premise is feminism in general and radical variant of the feminist movement in particular. The thematic variegation of the study also suggests the incorporation of the Giddens' Structuration theory; especially the dialectical relation between 'agents' and 'structures', how one influences and alters the other and vice versa. The study amalgamates there two theoretical standpoints of feminism and structuration to understand the notion of women as 'agents' making their life choices and how these life choices are in turn affecting the structures in which they are embedded.

The awareness of the public/private dichotomy and the patriarchal politics of keeping women confined in the latter has been the major hallmark of the second wave feminism. The failure of the political emancipation given to women in the form of right to vote and the right to access the public sphere to bring about holistic development was evident in due course. This led the second wave feminists to anticipate a gradual erosion of the

public/private divide and the movement of the women between spaces. It is this demand for the fluidity of spheres that separates the liberal and radical brands of feminism; for the former the private sphere should never be politicized which was later countered by the slogan of 'personal is political' by the latter.

The compartmentalization of the society into public and private has been challenged by the entry of the women into the primary labour market that calls for the restructuring and reevaluation of both the spheres. The patriarchal politics of exclusion of women from the jobs to uphold the 'bread winner' image of the men gave way to the inclusive methods in which the women are incorporated into the corporate structures that in turn has brought about major modifications in both the public and the private spheres. Gendering of the spaces has never been conducive to the entry of the women into the public world of works- 'women's status is a result of a variety of cultural, religious and socioeconomic factors, the physical separation of women and men also contributes to and perpetuates gender stratification by reducing women's access to socially valued knowledge. In fact "gendered spaces" in homes, schools and workplaces reinforce and reproduce prevailing status distinctions that are taken for granted' (Spain 1993,p-137). Women's access to the public sphere is also projected as having a negative effect on the maintenance of the sanctity of the private and also negatively affects the propensity of the women to earn higher wages (Berk 1985). Till recently the public sphere was not architecturally women-friendly either with the lack of public restrooms coupled with the physical segregation of the women in the office. In a country like India, majority girls avoid schools due to absence of restrooms for girls, an acute lacunae still existing in some parts of the country. Gender segregation in its structured spatial form could be noticed in the presence of a tangible '*andarmahal*' or *Zenana*- a designated space for the women, sequestered and apparently inaccessible to men. The *zenana* has been responsible for producing knowledge that are feminine and should be kept away from men who controlled the other spaces in the house, of which *zenana* was a part. This gender specific spatial segregation has got some similarity with Goffman's (2002) idea of the front and the back stage where the former represents the formal acting arena and the latter resembles the staging area. The support of the back stage is needed to sustain

the front which is closely connected with the idea of ‘impression management’¹. Applying the dramaturgical method in understanding the spatial segregation of gender and the resultant gender hierarchy brings to the forefront the creation of the back stage region exclusive to women but unlike Goffman, the backstage, from the gender perspective, has been feminized and hierarchised to give men in the supposed ‘front region’ a higher status. This physical separation of the gender into concrete and structured public/private spheres could be seen even in the education system. Like Spain (1993) described in case of United States, in India education was andro-centric until the reformers deemed it necessary to make it more gender inclusive. Even then, there were designated schools for girls imparting ‘feminised’ knowledge that reproduced gendered behavior. The education system became the microcosmic reflection of the gender based spatial segregation in the labour market where some occupations were tagged as ‘care giving’ hence feminized like nursing and teaching. Mechanization of jobs have proved to be a disadvantage for furthering the salability of the women in the labour market and their subsequent ghettoisation in jobs that resemble their role in the private sphere, “Clerks and factory girls worked with men; domestic servants and teachers worked with other women (and children). The more contact between women and men, the more controversial the occupation”(Spain 1993, p- 145).

This restricted contact between genders and the resultant ghettoisation of the women began to change with globalization and the rise of the corporate sector. The stereotyping women as ‘secretaries’ in big firms slowly getting replaced with women earning cubicles or their gender neutral places to work on within the firms as IT analysts or team leads. The study is based on the fluidity that defines the spheres now; where the concretization is getting gradually eroded with women (and men) moving between spaces. The ‘space’ in this study not only refers to the structured tangible or marked place but also refers to the relationships the individuals engage in when they occupy a particular place. The entry of the women in the apparently ‘non-feminised’ jobs changed both the structure and the function of the private and public spheres. Though the women’s entry into the market of industrial labour dated back to colonial period but

¹ Erving Goffman in his famous work on Dramaturgy and *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* defined ‘impression management’ as something engaged by the actors to maintain the reality of the everyday life; a work that was later elaborated by Harold Garfinkel . Through impression management the actors present their self and create certain image about themselves in the mind of the others.

they were always considered ‘special’ because they were women. In the words of Samita Sen (2008):

“And they (women) were special in three ways: first, they also had to perform their reproductive roles as wives and mothers; second, their physical weakness limited the kind of work suitable for them; and third, they were unable to uphold their own interests and thus needed ‘protection’ of the state. Even those who opposed protective legislations usually agreed that women workers had ‘special’ characteristics.....Men workers, however, were considered not only as not having the same ‘needs’ as women but also as free agents able to negotiate mutually beneficial working conditions with employers” (p- 78).

The ‘nationalist construction of womanhood’ upended the image of the working women instead promoted the concern for the role of women as mothers and wives. The period post independence also witnessed a sharp decline in the number of women workers as the factory work became more organized and labour turned more unionized. What distinguishes corporate work from the factory labour is not only that the former is more mental labour than physical but also the lack of political intervention due to the lack of trade unions. This apparent breaking of the initial glass door (glass ceiling came much later) that forbade women from working in big firm did bring about certain structural changes in the private and the public sphere alike.

As has been pointed out in Structuration theory by Anthony Giddens in his *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (1986), that there exists a dialectical relationship between agents and structures where the former has the capability to create, alter or modify the latter and vice versa. Structuration theory amalgamates ‘a sophisticated version of functionalism and a naturalistic conception of sociology’ (p-xiv). As explained by Turner (1987), “For Giddens, structure can be conceptualized as the “rules” and “resources” that actors use in “interaction contexts” that extend across “space” and over “time”. In so using these rules and resources, actors sustain or reproduce structures in space and time” (p-461). Thus structures can be created and altered as they are intrinsically linked to the interactive patterns of the actors or ‘agents’ who, in the course of mobilizing resources in a particular context generate power and in turn knowledge. It is this creation, utilization of knowledge (pragmatism) and the way it affects the structures in which an agent is embedded has guided the study.

Though Giddens has been criticized for being evasive in providing a solution to the epistemological problem inherent in empirical testing of his theory, yet the base of the structuration theory deals with the dialectic of control and duality of structure, i.e, structures and agents cannot be studied in isolation from one another. Structures with its rules and resources are both enabling and mediating in a particular context as ‘rules and resources are attached to interaction’. According to Giddens’ structuration, actors through their interaction and mobilization of resources in a particular context are able to create a stock of knowledge that becomes a guiding source for the subsequent interaction scenario. Applying the same principle, I have tried to understand that how women in the corporate jobs are locating their job in their private sphere, the stock of knowledge they are creating in the process and the modifications that have altered both the private and public sphere. The study also focuses on the agency function of the women and tries to deal with the changing gender roles (if any) in the context of corporate work and family. In other words, how job situation are shaping the identity of the women and its effect on the private sphere; a sphere that is always feminized. The juxtaposition of two forms of knowledge that are generated from both the private and the public spheres, of which women are the considered to be to both agents and recipients, is playing a crucial role in giving rise to newer forms of family and alternatives to motherhood. The interplay of both the discursive consciousness (ability to rationalize actions) and practical consciousness (stock of knowledge already internalized by the actors by which they interpret the behavior of the others, in this case socialization) help the agents, in this case women, to bring about a change in that very structure in which they are already embedded; and by structure, here, I include not only the rules and resources, tangible physical existence but also the relationships and interaction patterns that gets affected and modified as women are breaking free from the old molds.

To understand the work-life balance of the women working at the corporate sector from a socio-economic perspective, and influenced by the work of Husain and Dutta (2014), I have also incorporated the game theory perspective but from a critical point of view. Game theory popularized by John Von Neumann, deals with strategies when two players are involved in a competitive game situation. According to game theorists in any situation involving two players, any rational player will always try to maximize his/her pay off. Same principle if applied in understanding the sharing of chores in the private

sphere between husband and wife, then each player will try to evade the chores to maximize their leisure. Hence, according to Husain and Dutta (2014), the women working at the corporate sector, with no fixed time schedule are satisficers instead of being maximizers; where they make peace with 'good enough'. Though this satisficing tendency is not exclusive to women working at the corporate sector but a byproduct of socialization process where women are taught about the existence of glass ceiling but seldom trained to the ways to transcend the ceiling, hence satisficing is sometimes more a compulsion than choice. This study also harps on the difference between agency and empowerment and shows how financial independence does not always spell power in decision making within the domestic sphere, though it is definitely a means to attain power or atleast a 'feeling' of being in control. Understanding the power dynamics within the private sphere is not an unilinear process rather there exists interplay of varied factors and the overwhelming grip of social conditioning and social structures, which have been dealt with in this study.

4.2 Field survey and Collection of Data:

Field survey is the art of collecting detailed information from a number of respondents, frequenting a certain geographical location with the help of a questionnaire or interview schedule or both. The difference between a questionnaire and an interview schedule lies in the fact that the former is administered to an educated crowd while the interviews are steered by the interviewers. Since this study is based on a mixed method approach, the structured questionnaire has been backed by an unstructured interview with the same respondents to gather more data which could not be fitted within the questionnaire. Infact, the questionnaire too contained few open ended question following the mixed method procedure where both qualitative and quantitative data are taken into consideration for a holistic analysis.

4.2.1 The Field Surveyed:

The field in this study covers the whole of the Information Technology (IT) hub of Kolkata. IT hub refers to a physical space, a part of the city that houses the technology start-up companies. In India, Bangalore city has emerged as the largest IT hub, popularly referred to as the Silicon Valley of India. In Kolkata, Salt lake Sector V has emerged as the IT hub with Rajarhat, New town and a part of Bantala as proposed plots for the

further extensions (see Map1 and Map 2). As the chosen locale of my study I have frequented all the said places in Kolkata. Sector V is the largest and the most developed IT hub that nestles uncounted firms and start-ups in its vicinity. The emergence of Rajarhat and New town is a recent phenomenon and the glorious example of urban conurbation. New Town has also turned into an entertainment zone with EcoPark and Biswa Bangla Gate catering to people belonging to all age groups. Hence, referring to the famous concentric ring theory of societal development, popularized by the Chicago School, it can be said that IT sector has resulted in the overall development of the metropolis, boosting business, entertainment and real estate.

4.2.2 Process of Data Collection:

As discussed above this study has amalgamated three variants of non-probability sampling, thus the data collection began with visit to the field itself. The field of the study is popularly called the Information Technology hub or the IT hub of Kolkata situated at the Sector 5 area of the Salt Lake City and the corporate expansion can be noticed with the extension of the IT hub to the Rajarhat area which is at a distance of 20 minutes from the Salt Lake. The data have been collected over a period of three years, starting from 2015 to 2018 with the pilot survey conducted in 2014. A working interview schedule with open ended questions was used for the pilot survey. The overwhelming responses from the respondents ascertained that the area of work has been found interesting by the corporate women and after some minor modifications and additions the interview schedule was turned into a structured questionnaire with both closed ended questions and open ended questions.

The area of research is largely qualitative, since it basically deals with understanding the private sphere of the married corporate women, the public/private dichotomy and the way women are transcending it and the modifications that are introduced within the private sphere because of the involvement of the women a job that defies any general 9 to 5 working schedule. Hence, care has been taken to construct a questionnaire that touches these areas under study. The pilot survey and the subsequent surveys revealed that given an opportunity the respondents were likely to open up thus making it clear that a structured questionnaire had to be followed with face to face interaction. The procedure of getting respondents was the daunting task as the corporate houses approached blatantly refused to give access to any employees within the campus as it

was against their corporate policies, barring two offices where enormous assistance was provided to the data collection given the personal contact I had with the managing director and the HR. In other cases, the respondents were approached directly on the street or the public places they frequented near their offices, followed by the process of snowballing described above.

After explaining the respondent about the nature of work and the kind of data sought to carry out the research, a verbal consent was acquired before administering the questionnaire. It should be highlighted that no respondents were coerced or threatened or manipulated to get the data. They voluntarily agreed to fill in the questionnaire first and then sit for a personal face to face interaction whenever suited them. I consider myself really lucky that most of the respondents approached readily accepted to sit for the interview when they were convinced that the nature of the data sought is what they face every day and had nothing to do with the corporate projects they were associated with. Refusal from some respondents came because of few reasons, namely when they were unable to fathom the importance of study and their role in it, when they were approached inside their office premise and they were still wearing lanyards, when they were busy with new projects or towards the completion of the old one and some other reasons of personal nature. After their informed consent questionnaire was given to them to be filled up at their convenience and then returned after a week. To ensure that questionnaire was filled within the stipulated time, respondents were given regular calls as follow-ups. On the day of the return of the questionnaire, an appointment was sought with respondents for the detailed interview and for their feedback regarding the survey. The data received from the interview were noted in the field diary and became an important part of the whole narrative.

Over the course of 3 years, 162 women working at the corporate sector have been surveyed out of which 155 have been retained for the final analysis. Vagueness in the answer has been the main reason for considering some while some respondents could fill the questionnaire but did not get the time to sit for the interview for clarification. Given their busy schedule, they were mostly approached when they came out for brunch or tea breaks near their office cafeterias. There was another psychological advantage of approaching them during their break as it increases the probability of them consenting to be surveyed when they are away from their structured hierarchical work setting. The

interview mostly took place in the nearby cafeterias but on some occasions I was invited to their homes, less in my capacity as a researcher but more as a confidante. Visiting their home opened a larger avenue for me to explore as I could witness their activities and non-verbal gestures in a setting where they could be themselves. In fact many of them go comfortable enough to talk about office politics and problems of maintaining a work-life balance despite their initial reluctance. It became imperative for me to combine the narratives along with the quantitative data to understand all the facets of the work-life culture of the married corporate women. The richness of the data that comes from the face to face interaction reminded me of the truth inherent in what Weber called 'Verstehen', a form of study exclusive to social sciences as we deal with human beings characterized by empathy and equipped with linguistic capability to verbalize their feelings.

4.2.3 Personal Reflections on the fieldwork and the roadblocks faced:

Though objectivity and ethical neutrality are the two hall marks of a good researcher but fieldwork or physical presence of the researcher in the field is bound to create certain impressions about the field and the subjects under scrutiny. The first thing that strikes an amateur visitor at the IT hub of Kolkata is the overall robust architectural organization that immediately separates it from the other areas. The state-of-the art offices fitted with sensors and an unparalleled security system that makes any informal entry impossible. Upon investigation I was told that places like Unitech and DLF in Rajarhat, TCS in Geetanjali Park and Wipro at Salt lake sector 5 are SEZs (Special Economic Zones receiving special tax concessions and other benefits from the government). Tightening of the security has got to do with the nature of the work that goes on inside the building and any security threat will create both a national and global repercussion. This was another reason why interviews could not be conducted inside the office premise.

What separates IT offices from any other office is the structure of the building that imparts a cosmopolitan aura to the whole area. The offices are fitted with cctv cameras, doors with sensors that can only read the chip fitted inside the employee lanyards, cafeteria, lounge and even a gym and indoor games. The office premises are the growing reflection of the enveloping process of globalization that imparts a certain uniformity to the architecture as well the work that goes on inside those offices. Salt lake sector 5 is a recent development dating back to the 1990s when the West Bengal

started to reap the benefits of the New Economic Policies (NEP) of liberalization, privatization and globalization. The transformation from the satellite city to the throbbing IT hub has been orchestrated with utmost attention given to the comfort and need of the corporates. The lavish offices are equally cushioned with lines of eateries, bars and pubs which remain filled till midnight and beyond. That corporate works go uninterrupted even on weekends can be witnessed from the crowd thronging the area. The strategic placement of the entertainment and eateries is to make the place as habitable and enjoyable as possible both during and post-work. Corporate discounts are also available in these joints to encourage the insemination of the 'pub culture' synonymous with the globalised world.

As pointed out by Hochschild (1997) in her study of the American company AMERCO, MNCs have made it a mandate to provide all the comfort to the employees to increase their productivity and to erase the fine line that separates home from office. Employee health has become a major concern for the MNCs and therefore they have come up with all the possible medical health plans to keep the production uninterrupted. The major complaint of the corporate women, gender irrespective is the stress that comes from too much work load and cut throat competition; hence the offices have come up with the policy of work from home and have a psychologist or counselor on call to ensure the psychic wellbeing of the workers. Transportation or reaching the office on time is another issue that is ensured by the company pool cars or buses. Since Rajarhat or sector 5 are a few kilometers away from the city centre, many of the employees eventually end up buying property nearby or rent a place to save them the time lost from traveling to and fro. To estimate the time taken by the employees to reach Rajarhat from South Kolkata, I personally took permission to travel in a company provided bus that picked me up from a stop near my residence and dropped me in front of the office and the time taken to travel one way was a staggering 2 hours.

As a part of the field research I am in a position to categorize the corporate women into three categories- Those who work to make both ends meet, those who work because they have gotten used to the monetary independence and also the outlet that a job provides that helps in breaking the monotony of the household and the third category who are actually ambitious and enjoy working in a corporate setting. Majority of the women studied belonged to the second category. Corporate job is characterized by the

lack of security of tenure, but that didn't seem to bother the women studied much, on the contrary, they think about voluntary retirement much before they are replaced by the younger generation who are better equipped to deal with the newer technologies. Many women, when asked the reason for choosing corporate over government seem to be possessed with an indomitable belief that monotony sets in the latter where there is no new projects to work on after every two or three years also the increment in the corporate jobs is based on merit rather than seniority.

The first roadblock faced while doing the survey is to convince the organizations that the information sought had nothing to do with the nuances of their corporate work. Almost three to four organizations were approached but all the responses turned out to be negative. Therefore to carry out the work I had to rely on the non probability sampling that involved approaching the respondents directly. After solving the issue of access to the respondents, the next roadblock was to get the verbal consent from them to be interviewed. It has oftentimes happened that some respondents took the questionnaire but never received my follow up phone call post that. Sometimes they told me to mail the questionnaire but never returned the filled in questionnaire. Getting the appointment for interview also proved a bit time consuming as corporate schedules are erratic and they could be called for meeting even in the middle of the interview. But the field work exposed a new unexplored world to me which was very different from the bureaucratic government structure. I am grateful to have met few extraordinarily strong women who are balancing their personal and professional life and was not deterred even by the maternal sabbatical. They have their own plans are sorted about what they want from life even it means changing their jobs or leaving it altogether. That's what we call Agency.

4.3 Organization and Analysis of data:

The study is based on the mixed method, therefore equal weightage is given to both the quantitative and qualitative data for the purpose of understanding the issue from all possible facets. As explained above a structured questionnaire was administered to get information about non-threatening, not so sensitive issues and also to prep them for what to expect from the face to face interview. A questionnaire was prepared keeping all the rules in mind. It was simple to understand, devoid of major jargons and comprehensible with easy questions in the beginning and the questions that required

critical engagement at the end. To ensure the affectivity of the questionnaire, it was shown to the professors of non-social science background to check for the comprehensibility of the questions. When approved it was administered to the respondents following the procedure explained above. The pilot survey was done to test the affectivity again with over 10 respondents. Initially it was decided that the study would lean a lot on quantitative analysis given the presence of a structured questionnaire but the pilot survey with the respondents opened the possibility and the requirement of having a simultaneous qualitative analysis as they spoke more than they wrote.

The main survey started with approaching the respondents near their office premise. The questionnaires were handed to the willing respondents and their contact details noted for interview. At the end of this process, the data thus gathered were tabulated. To avoid any identification, the names of the respondents and their place of work were coded. Their responses to the structured questionnaire with closed ended questions were first arranged in a tabular form to understand the trend and analyze the existence of any correlation between variables. It should be noted that the use of hard core statistics is very limited in this study because the whole population was not studied, rather it is an exercise in induction and respondents with repertoire of information could not be reduced to numbers. Tabulation of data indicated the basic trend and the average strategy adopted by these women to navigate everyday life. The questionnaire has been constructed keeping in mind the overall objectives of the research (see chapter 2). The response given by the majority of the respondents to each and every question has been tabulated and then interpreted. The interpretation of the overall data is clubbed in two different chapters of the thesis (Chapter 4 and 5), along with the subjective narratives to substantiate the data thus gathered.

The advantage of juxtaposing quantitative and qualitative data is to prevent the dehumanization of the respondents thus studied. In a subjective study like this it is highly probable that some questions are answered to follow the trend of what is desirable in the society, thus making the study biased and pointless. Qualitative data has been collected to control that fallacy and also to act as a reliability check on the respondents. The schedule for the qualitative data has been unstructured and based on the way the respondents had answered the questionnaire. The key was to let them verbalize without any external stimuli to get the data in the unadulterated form (though there is nothing as

an unadulterated data, because social conditions work on the individuals to produce certain responses to situations). But unstructured meeting brought forth many facets which otherwise would have remained unexplored. Most of the interview commenced with clarification of few questions already answered by the respondents in the questionnaire and then it veered towards the additional facts with many questions. The ambiguity between the answered registered and the interview was promptly pointed out and greater clarification sought (which could not be done in case of few respondents hence they were left out in the final analysis). Tabulated data was substantiated with the qualitative responses to give authenticity to the whole data collection method. Both quantitative data and the qualitative substantiation are presented in the two chapters, followed by an effort to further explain the social phenomenon.

Since the study focuses on the private sphere, a sphere generally left out as a zone of non-encroachment, a chapter has been added to stress the importance of focusing on the private sphere. The chapter is based on the comparative analysis of the crime rates in the private and public sphere, based on the NCRB data 2016. Reported crimes are categorized on the basis of the spheres- public and private- in where they are committed to the exclusion of few crimes which couldn't be categorized. Given them two comparable samples, a t-test was run to show that the crimes committed at the private sphere are higher and statistically more significant than the crimes committed at the public sphere. The projection of the private sphere as a protective cocoon could be easily busted with the calculation based on the reported crimes, though the unreported crimes are higher in the country and hushed up because they are mainly concentrated in the private sphere.

Collection and organization of the data have been modeled on the objective to show the changes brought in the private sphere due to the entry of women in the public sphere and how patriarchy through its varied reasoning have always tried to keep the women away from the possibility of being financially independent and challenge the male dominance- the constructed myth against women's entry in public sphere increases the probability of women being harassed is one of them (statistically proven wrong). Analysis of data has followed a descriptive pattern, an attempt to explain 'what is' the existing situation. The impact of few variables, like religion, which has remained constant in this study since all the respondents turned out to be belonging to one

religion, can be studied if this study can be replicated with larger sample size. The analysis of data has focused on understanding the private sphere and the changes within the sphere with the rise of the women working at the corporate sector. It has also dealt with the work-life balance of these women as the work in this sector does not follow a schedule. It has provided a holistic understanding of how these first generation corporate women are navigating their day to day life.

4.4 Validity, Reliability and Ethics of Research:

The three crucial corollary of doing social research is to ensure that the research is valid has produced reliable results and has been conducted keeping the ethics intact. Validity of research methods refers to the fact that the tool in question is measuring the concepts that the researcher wants to measure and not any other concept, i.e, the questions in the questionnaire are interpreted to mean the same things to the respondents as to the researcher. If this criterion is met we can judge the questionnaire as having a face validity. In this case, the main focus of the study is to understand the private sphere of the corporate women, the questionnaire has been constructed keeping in mind the characteristics of the women. Since graduation is the average level of education of these women, questionnaire has been constructed in a language which can be well understood by them. To test the face validity of the questionnaire, it was administered to the professor of non-social science background to garner their opinion. Upon affirmative validation, the questionnaire was taken to the field. The face validity was further assured by asking the respondents to glimpse through the questionnaire and to report any disjunction especially during the pilot survey. The respondents reported no such issues while answering the questions and thus it is safe to claim that the questionnaire has a face validity as the questions included are based on the lived experience of the corporate women and revolve around the issues they face in their penchant to strike the perfect work-life balance. The construct validity of the tool refers to the suitability of the tool and it is ensured by using a measure already used by the previous researchers and have been proven useful or by seeking help from the experts in the field. In this study the questionnaire is constructed by following the National Family Health Survey (NFHS). NFHS 'is a large scale multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India'(NFHS website). The questionnaire used in these surveys

provides great deal of information to the researchers to construct research tools in such a way so that it elicits maximum responses from the respondents.

Validity of the qualitative research depends “on the ‘appropriateness’ of the tools, processes and data” (Leung 2015). The issue of validity is closely linked to the ontology and the epistemology of the research. To ensure a valid data it is crucial to circumvent any epistemological problems that can invalidate the knowledge thus produced through research. As discussed above, epistemology refers to the validity of the knowledge produced i.e, how we know what we know. There is no denying the fact that qualitative research can encounter certain epistemological problems as it is thoroughly subjective. Knowledge, thus produced is heavily dependent on the lived experience of the subjects involved in the research. This study is based on constructivism nestled within the pragmatism- the former asserts an understanding of the phenomenon where there is an interplay between the agents and the structure i.e, each influences the other; while the latter combines the quantitative and qualitative aspects to provide an holistic understanding. Pragmatism amalgamates the scientific approach and ideas and believes that knowledge should be put to practical use. Hence pragmatism qualifies as the umbrella philosophy of the mixed method approach that unites the quantitative research with the qualitative analysis. The pragmatist approach rejects the idea of dualistic epistemology and stresses on the fact that human beings are not passive observers rather knowledge arises out of the survival adaptation they make in this world that results in active transformation of the surrounding (Dewey’s Pragmatism is modeled on this idea). Any knowledge is the product of interaction that agents have with the structures they are embedded in and that very knowledge becomes ‘instrumental’ in guiding the future interactions and relationships. In the study with the corporate women, it is notable that that they are first generation IT workers with no prior examples or repertoire of knowledge to draw from. Hence the way they experience the everyday life, the interactions with people and the structures in which they find themselves, the way they navigate the crises have the potential of producing a body of knowledge and adaptive functions that will help the future IT workers in balancing their private and public spheres successfully. Drawing from classical Pragmatism and their logical thrust on fallibility, it can be said that the knowledge thus produced through this work is valid within a particular socio-economic context because according to the classical pragmatists “behavior can be changed, and the behavioral change can be expressed in

both individual and institutional habits” (Hickman, 2007; p-53). But the stress has to be given on ‘experience’ of the IT women as their lived reality which aligns with Dewey’s ‘denotative-empirical method’ as explained by Alexander (2004) while quoting Dewey, “the very meaning and the purport of empirical method is that things are to be studied on their own account, so as to find out what is revealed when they are experienced” (p-250). As mentioned above, the women working at the corporate sector not only have very similar educational background but they belong to similar economic strata. The production of knowledge is based on the interpretive capability which in turn is contingent upon social conditioning, the level of education, the social structure the agents find themselves embedded. The epistemological problem inherent in the qualitative research can be best dealt with by engaging in an exercise in induction where interview with each respondent can be used as an increasing proof of the existence of a particular phenomenon or creation of a particular body of knowledge. The knowledge thus created can be claimed to be valid as the measuring instruments- in this case the structured questionnaire and the unstructured interview- elicit comparable information from the majority respondents, indicating their experiences being bound by a single societal thread.

Reliability of a measuring instrument refers to the consistency in result produced by the instrument when administered on the respondents at different points in time. It actually refers to the degree of consistency of the measure and the measure is said to be reliable if it produces same result when repeated. In case of qualitative measure, there is a certain problem in measuring the consistency of responses, though precautions were taken to ensure both the external and internal reliability. The usage of the mixed method ensured that the loopholes in the qualitative research will be taken care of by the structured questionnaire used to collect the data that was finally tabulated. The paucity of time made it difficult to test consistency over a period of time, but the questionnaire was framed in such a way that few questions were posed as a reliability check, which was further substantiated during the unstructured interview. Reliability, also known as the dependability of the research thrives on its capability to create results that are consistent and most importantly that can be replicated by the future researchers. While doing social research it should be kept in mind that a particular social setting is ever changing, producing new avenues as well as challenges for the researchers to cover every aspect of it. Hence regular visit to the field, even after the cessation of the data

collection is imperative to keep a tab of the changing scenarios. The study has been modeled to take into consideration the issue of reliability by focusing on mixed method, where the qualitative data from the unstructured interview has been used to substantiate the quantitative part of it. The narratives included in the study ensures against the dehumanization of the respondents in search of quantification. The inclusion of mixed method acts like a form of parallel-forms reliability where two tests are consciously developed, independent of each other and are treated as providing data that are comparable to establish the fact that the study is reliable. To ensure further reliability, a pilot survey has been conducted and the narratives were compared to the ones that have been collected during actual field work to check for the repetition of certain words and phrases. Since narratives are colossally subjective, therefore to understand the subjective interpretation of any experience exclusive to the women associated with the corporate world, and also to judge whether my interpretation as a researcher has been free from any form of biases and personal prejudices, the synopsis of the study has been presented to few respondents who volunteered to rate the study. Upon positive review, the results have been formally presented in this thesis work. Hence, the study can be said to be internally reliable.

Since qualitative interpretation of data comes with the danger of its objectivity being usurped by the researcher's personal beliefs and other factors, four factors have been kept in mind while conducting the research to impart the necessary objectivity to the otherwise qualitative work. The research thus conducting corresponds with the factors like credibility (trustworthiness of the findings), transferability (generalizability), dependability (reliability) and confirmability (how far the findings are substantiated by the data). To ensure the trustworthiness of the research, the findings were presented to some willing respondents to go through and report any misrepresentation of the data divulged by them. Upon positive response the study has been treated as being trustworthy or credible. Similarly dependability and confirmability can be determined by the replication studies, which I am sure, will yield more or less the same result. As far as transferability is concerned, the findings of the study can be extensively applied to a work place culture with a corporate set-up, but to understand the dynamics of female labour and labour relations a wide spread study bridging the rural and urban distinction is recommended.

Ethical issues involved in the research borders the question of the degree to which the anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents have been maintained. To ensure that the research has been done in keeping with the ethical concerns in mind, the respondents were approached and asked for the verbal consent. They were informed firsthand about my designation, the purpose of the study and were sufficiently enquired about their willingness to both fill in the questionnaire as well as expend time for an in-depth interview. Based on their verbal consent questionnaires were administered to them. No respondents were compelled to participate in the study or to answer questions when they were visibly uncomfortable. To further ensure the anonymity of the respondents the questionnaire has been framed in such a way so that it upholds the discretion of the respondents to document their names. The respondents, who decided to keep their names anonymous where never cajoled for such information. The study involves a minor encroachment into the private sphere and the success of the study rests heavily on the altruism of the respondents in revealing the power dynamics inside the sphere that is expected to remain sequestered. Hence the questionnaire has been modeled in such a way so as to look as non-threatening as possible and the reliance was automatically more on the possibility of gaining information during the unstructured interview. There was no use of audio-visual instruments to document the interview apart from vigorous note taking as the respondents were not comfortable with the idea of being videotaped within the office premises. The interviews were conducted as per the convenience of the respondents; every attempt was made to avoid using tactics that made the respondents uncomfortable or they were not privy to. The classified information gained during the interview or the information that respondents shared 'off record' have been categorically avoided from being coded or used during analysis. No monetary allure or similar incentives were used to get the respondents to share information; this study is solely based on the respondents' consented co-operation and altruism.

This study is, thus, a socio-economic understanding of the married women working at the IT hub- their everyday experiences, the way they strike the work-life balance and the resultant modifications in both the structures in which they are situated, home and work.

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DATA ANALYSIS

SITUATING WORK WITHIN THE PRIVATE SPHERE:

Abstract:

This chapter is a descriptive study of the domestic sphere of the married women working at the corporate sector in urban Kolkata. Based on the survey of 155 married women working in various companies in the I.T hub in Kolkata, the study tries to understand the structural and functional organization of the private sphere as these women are moving between spaces, the way work-life balance is struck by the married women and how the maintenance of this balance has shaped the identity and agency of these women. The study is an amalgamation of the quantitative and qualitative methods, thus striving to understand the phenomenon from both objective and subjective perspectives.

Keywords: Public sphere, private sphere, corporate jobs, family, I.T sector, globalization, married women.

5. Introduction:

Inclusion of women in the labour force is an imperative to achieve the holistic development of the country. But the sexual differences have always been cited as the reason and justification for the sexual division of labour that women have found difficult to negotiate. As explained by Beauvoir (1949), menstruation and pregnancy have been responsible for the exclusion of women from military expeditions; since society confers more status to the species that kill and not to the one that give birth this exclusion in turn has relegated women to the domestic domain with little or no access to the public sphere. The societal approval of the link between child bearing and rearing has been further responsible for binding women to the private sphere. Women's entry into the workforce initially has been to supplement the income of the family- a patriarchal need rather than a matter of choice. Due to this inevitability of marriage and expected child birth, women have, from time to time, faced with what has been described as 'mommy tracks', a situation where women put aside some of the most productive years of their lives in order to look after children (Menon, 2012) and 'glass ceiling', an upper ceiling which many women are unable to transcend in their corporate career when it comes to rising up the corporate ladder and the very rampant 'leaking talent pipeline', where

women after spending 5 to 8 years in the company decide to take a break to focus on their family. These terms have made an entry into the industrial lexicon to define the specific roadblocks women face to make progress in the corporate field.

India maintained a situation of autarky for a long time. It was the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1991 with its triple objectives of liberalization, privatization and globalization, opened Indian economy to foreign investments and marked the formal entry of multinational corporations. The major change has been the apparent reduction in gender bias in employment. The metropolis in India witnessed a surge in corporate offices and springing of IT hubs. Changes were also witnessed in Kolkata due to relaxation in FDI that resulted in the modification of the places like Salt lake Sector 5 and Rajarhat as they became synonymous with the IT hubs; directly or indirectly contributing to urban conurbation. According to the recent NASSCOM report, India's IT-BPM has registered a growth of 7.8% in the financial year (FY) 2016 and is projected to reach 8% in the FY2017 to USD 154 billion¹. Various factors have worked in favour of development of IT industry in India like availability of skilled labour, reasonable infrastructural expenditure and knowledge of English that help the IT professionals cater to different countries. The coming of the stable government in India in 2014 marked the interest of the foreign companies to invest in India. According to the report by Deloitte India titled "Competitiveness: Catching the Next Wave" (Nov 2014), 'both China and Japan are eager to invest in infrastructure, a key priority for the Indian government. With respect to United States, India has sought greater cooperation in technology, infrastructure, education, health and sanitation'.² Deloitte also reports that India has the strategic advantage of having labour intensive technology consisting of relatively young and growing population where '60% of the population belongs to the age group of 15-59 years'.

Along with the meteoric rise of the IT sector in the Indian financial scene, recent reports are also hinting at the upsurge in the employment of women in this sector. Women have always been concentrated in certain jobs like teaching and nursing resulting in the 'feminisation' of these jobs (Menon, 2012). The myth of lack of synchronization

¹ The information is gathered from the official website of the NASSCOM that brings out the annual report. The full report can be accessed at <http://www.nasscom.in/knowledge-center/publications/it-bpm-industry-india-2017>.

² Deloitte India: Competitiveness: Catching the Next Wave, November, 2014, p-4

between women and technology is coming under strain as more and more women are opting for jobs that call for constant upgradation of technical skill. According to the report by McKinsey Global Institute women contribute about 17% of India's GDP (Dugal 2017). Employment of the women in the IT has gone up to 34% in 2017 from 28% in the FY2016, if recent report³ is to be believed. Similarly, the rate of drop out remains equally alarming. The strain of maintaining work-life balance sometimes forces the women to choose family over job. The objective of this chapter is to understand how these married women are balancing their family and job, the kind of challenges they face and the solutions they come up with as a part of their lived experience. The chapter is divided into three sections that cover the general profile of the respondents, a glimpse of their routinized life, an insight into their family as they experience it every day which includes the way they experience relationships with children, in-laws and others. This chapter is an attempt to understand the concept of agency, how this agency is augmented both in the public as well as private sphere with the financial autonomy of the women and the imperative to connect the well being aspect with agency aspect (Sen 1999).

The analysis is based on the empirical study of 155 married women working at the various IT offices spread across the length and breadth of Urban Kolkata. According to the recent reports, Kolkata has the lowest attrition rate among the other outsourcing destinations like Bangalore, Delhi and Mumbai.⁴ WEBEL (West Bengal Electronics Industry Development Corporation) has been set up to support the IT investors to ensure the ease of outsourcing operations in Kolkata which has boosted the investment by the companies in Kolkata.

According to the NASSCOM Diversity and Inclusion Summit, 2017 with its focus on the 'Nurturing Women Leaders in the Workplace' steps are being taken by some companies to remedy certain pathological situations women face in their workplace like tapping the above mentioned 'leaked talent pipeline' by introducing various leaderships programs that married women can join post their maternity leave. Programs like these not only act as motivation to the women to join in the work force but also ensure the

³ The report on the drop out rate was published by the bureau. The full article can be accessed at <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/info-tech/more-women-join-up-it-firms-but-many-drop-out-too/article9562362.ece>.

⁴ Outsource2India is a online outsource service provider that gives valuable information to those countries illing to outsource to India. Their official webpage is <https://www.outsource2india.com/india/outourcing-to-kolkata.asp>.

possibility of working women to break the ‘glass ceiling’. Despite the notable efforts by the employers, the rate of dropouts remains high in the corporate sector. To understand the domestic life of the married corporate women, a standard questionnaire has been used for the selected respondents followed by a personal interview to gain in depth idea about their domestic life. The respondents were selected using a combination of non probability judgemental or purposive, quota and snowball sampling methods. The analysis is based on the data collected over a period of 5 years from the IT hub of urban Kolkata.

5.1 Profile of the Respondents:

For the purpose of understanding the domestic sphere of the married women working at the corporate sector, 155 respondents had been administered questionnaires, followed by a round of personal interviews. The following tables give a clear picture of the profile of the women engaged in corporate work.

Educational Qualification	Age of Respondents		
	21-30	31-40	41-50
Higher Secondary	00	00	00
Graduate	48	31	19
Post Graduate	16	34	07
Doctorate	00	00	00
Total	155		

Table 1: General profile

Income slabs of the Respondents (Per Annum in lakhs)	No. of Respondents
1. 1- 5	62
2. 6- 10	79
3. 11- 20	14
4. Above 20	00
Total	155

Table No.2: Annual Income of the Respondents

The data above is the clear indication of the preponderance of young women in the work force which confirms the study by Deloitte that India has the strategic advantage of having youth labour. Since the study is to understand the domestic sphere of the married women, the call center employees have been kept out of the sampling procedure. There are two main reasons for not considering call center employees - majority of them are college pass outs with no prior job experience and unmarried and many women join call centers as a trial for easy money with no intention to continue working. In the data

collected, there is a preponderance of women working as IT analysts (37.4%), followed by senior managers (12.9%), assistant consultants (10.32%). Only 5.81% women are working as team leaders or project heads. While the gender disparity in the earning is not noticeable but some respondents reported subtle discrimination still exists in hiring employees. Intra-family disparity in earning exists as 98.71% women reported that their income is less than their husbands. Religion and caste have been kept out of the analysis as all the respondents are Hindus and belong to the 'general'⁵ caste.

5.2 Married Life and Corporate Work: A Juxtaposition:

With the rising cost of living and the decreasing disposable income in the hands of the people, financial engagement of the women or two-job couples (Hochschild and Machung 1989) has become an imperative. Unlike the public sector, where recruitment depends on cracking entrance examinations, on-campus recruitment makes it easier for graduates and post graduates to enter the corporate sector. Ostensibly lower rate of gender disparity in recruitment also explains the reason why women are opting for jobs in the corporate sector despite the job being strenuous, and even more so for married women, thus demanding a successful juggling of both the spheres.

5.2.1 Marriage, family and Corporate women:

Of 155 women interviewed, majority of them have been married for 1-5 years (52.90%), followed by those who have been married for more than 10 years (28.39%); only 18.71% married for 6-10 years. This trend can be explained if the age of the respondents is taken into consideration. With the lower average age of employment (mean⁶ age of the respondents is 32.73, i.e, around 33) and with the growing trend of women marrying late, most of the respondents have been married for 5 years or less. This can be regarded as another feature of the corporate sector that it is inseminated with workers who are relatively young because of the ever developing technology, it becomes an imperative for the companies to hire people who can deal with the changing nature of work, thus separating corporate sector from the public sector enterprises where seniority is given preeminence.

Another interesting trend which can be highlighted is the lower percentage of women who are married for 6-10 years than percentage of women who are married for more

⁵ Wikipedia defines 'general caste' or 'forward caste' as consisting of groups of people who do not qualify for any affirmative action schemes operated by the government of India.

⁶ Mean is calculated from the grouped data by using the formula $\text{mean} = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$, where fx is the multiplication of the midpoint of the class interval with the frequency of the class and N is the no. of cases.

than 10 years. This can be explained with the leaking talent pipeline where women voluntarily dropout or take a long sabbatical during child birth and devote their time to child rearing. Seldom women return to the job, thus creating a void of women who are in the crucial phase of marriage, which can be considered a 'child bearing' phase where women slow down and shift their focus from their career to family building, either out of choice or out of compulsion. But once this crucial stage is passed successfully, women workers again start focusing on their career, but the lag remains which slim their chances of getting promoted to higher posts. To understand the exclusivity of the leaking talent pipeline in the context of women working in the IT sector, I took the liberty to peek into the drop-out rates in the 'feminized jobs'. After collecting information from four leading university campuses in Kolkata- University of Calcutta, Jadavpur University, Rabindra Bharati University and West Bengal State University, Barasat, I found the result to align with the general idea that women professors in these universities have rarely 'left' jobs or teaching post child birth. They may have voluntarily taken transfers or opted for better opportunities but I am yet to come across anyone who has totally quit teaching; the result is based on a very limited survey, though.

When questioned about their family composition 47.09% of the respondents reported staying with their husband, in-laws and children in the same house, 21.29% reported sharing the house with husband and in-laws only with no children (fig 1). The preponderance of the age old set up of living in a patrilocal residence is very evident in the data. On further inquiry, many of the respondents, who reported not living with their in-laws in the same house, revealed that their in-laws live in a different apartment in the same building or residential complex or they live in the same locality. Hence, it can be construed that despite the rise of the corporate work that do not conform to the traditional bureaucratic jobs, the basic structure of the family has undergone minor modifications but the major change has taken place in the way the family functions, explained in greater details in the following sections.

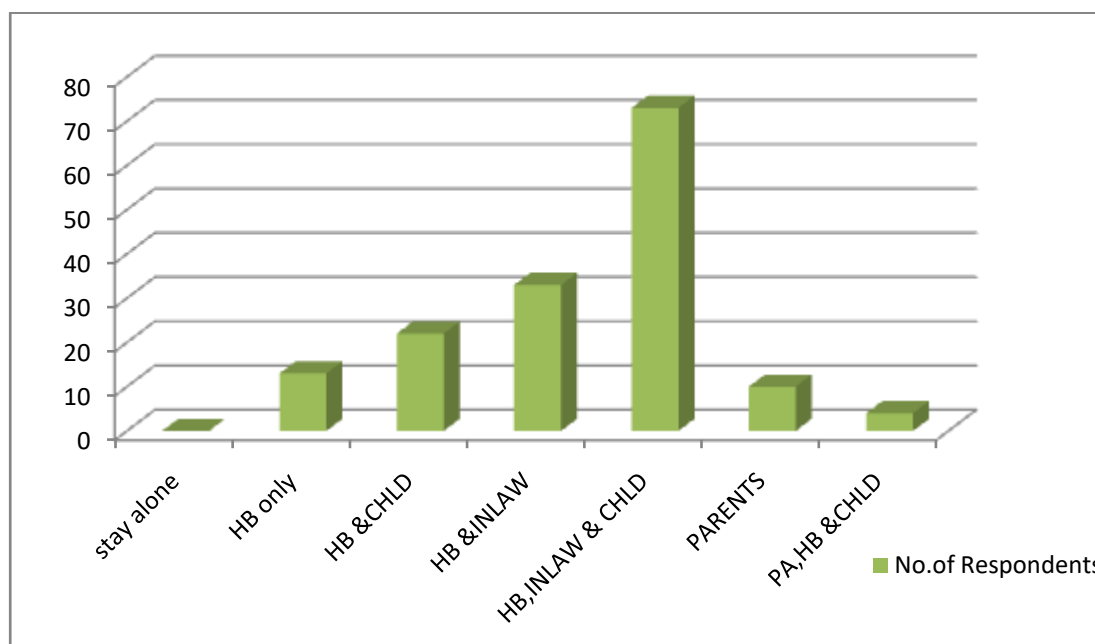


Figure 1: Composition of the Family of the married corporate women

*Note: HB, CHLD, PA stand for husband, child(ren), own parents respectively.

Matrimonial alliances among workers, working at the same company is not uncommon in this sector. According to the data gathered, 22.58% of the respondents have met their spouse in the same office while 43.22% have met their spouse elsewhere. These alliances have reportedly never created any hindrance to women's work, neither did they assist in improving the position of women within the organization; hence the effect of alliance within the same office can be taken as null.

When asked to rate the influence of their husband's working at the same sector on the respondents' job on a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 signifies very low influence and 5 denotes a strong influence), most of the respondents reported a moderate influence of their husband on their job and this is because majority of the women (82.58%) started their career before marriage. 72.90% of the women reported being engaged in a full time job in the corporate sector before they got married. Hence, the employment of the women is independent of the employment of their husbands. Some of the respondents reported joining jobs post marriage (17.42%) which hints at opening up of the society to the requirement of the women to work even after marriage and the eagerness on the part of the women to make the successful utilization of their degrees.

When it comes to expenditure it is generally seen that the majority of the income of the women is used to finance the education of the kids, but coupled with that the respondents have also reported spending money on online shopping, and sponsoring weekend trips to eateries and shopping malls. Few respondents also reported paying EMIs on bank loans and investing in gold. Income is also pooled in for joint spending with husbands (fig 2). It has been noticed that some of the respondents come from a family where they have been the single child i.e., they don't have siblings to take care of their own parents financially, in such a juncture, few respondents also reported remitting a part of their income to their own parents.

As seen in fig 2, a portion of the respondents also reported not contributing to the household expenditure and when inquired further, the answers became highly individualized. According to some, they don't pool income because they shoulder the whole expenditure themselves with little help from the husband (statistically insignificant as only 4 respondents reported bearing the expenses without any financial assistance from their husbands, when enquired about the reason they opted not to divulge much information about this), while the others reported that they are not asked to contribute in the family as it is run by their fathers-in-law and husbands; thus hinting to the fact that employment of the women may help in enhancing status of the women and giving them a taste of being empowered but their income is not considered as making any productive addition to the family (almost treated as an extra money, thus a subtle refusal to add any extra importance to women's work has been noticed). This set up is mostly seen in case of newly married couples, post childbirth joint spending becomes a necessity. A respondent joked: 'I was asked by my in-laws to stop working many times because they always say what extra will I earn, what my husband earns in enough to take care of my needs. The idea of financial autonomy and the feeling of empowerment are alien to them'.

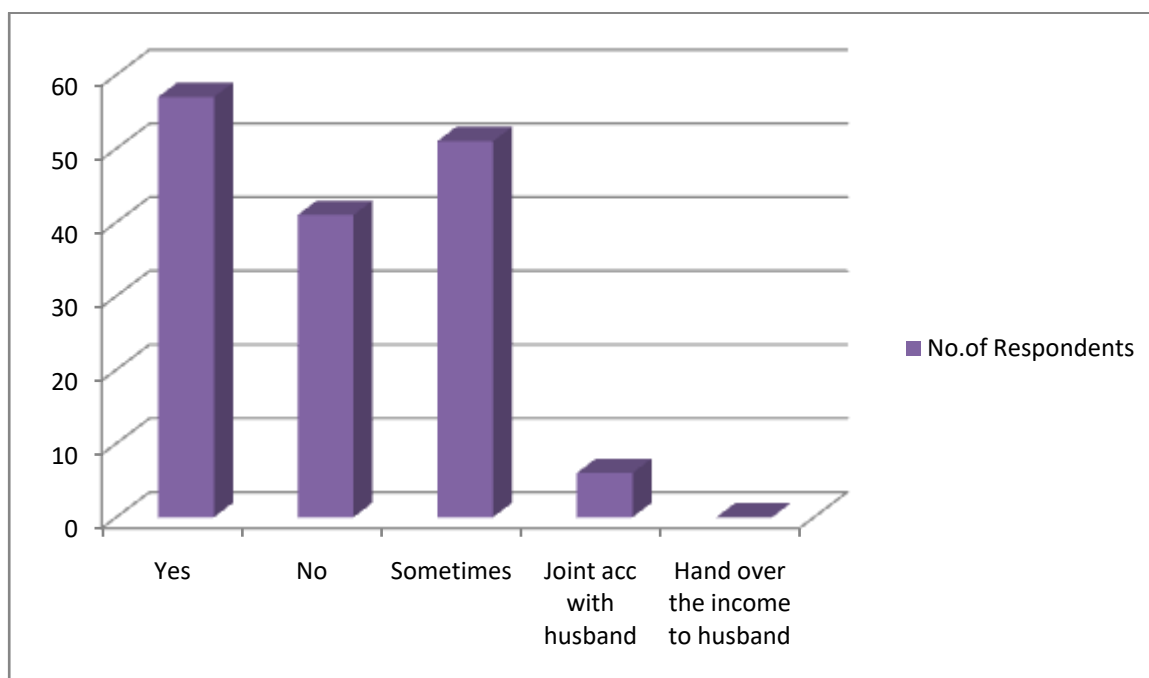


Figure 2: Whether the respondents pool in income with the husbands for joint spending

5.2.2 Work and Home:

The successful juxtaposition of the corporate and married life can be reinforced successfully by the female friendly policies of many corporate offices. The majority of the respondents are allowed to work morning shifts so that they can return home by the evening. Corporate car pools are a very common sight at the IT hubs including transportation provided by the office to the workers who work late. On the basis of the data gathered, 54.19% of the respondents work morning shifts and 42.58% of them reach home within 9.00p.m. Despite this suitable timing that apparently allow the women to strike a work-home balance, 29.03% of the respondents informed having no fixed work schedule and 38.71% failed to provide any specific timing of returning home from the office.

A notable feature of the corporate work is the change in work schedule with the change in projects. Each corporate project has a team consisting of 5-10 members with a leader/manager to supervise the progress of the work. Any project can continue for 2 years or more during which the team members have to perform in group and abide by the schedule laid down by the team leaders; schedules are also susceptible to the timing of the country the project is catering to.

When inquired about the time their husbands come home, 50.32% respondents informed that their husbands reach home within 10.00pm; while 26.45% reported a flexible working schedule or no fixed timing of their husband's return. Therefore, the onus of doing the majority housework still falls on the women - 54.84% of the respondents agreed doing household chores. When juxtaposed with the activities their husbands indulge in after returning from office, the gender dichotomy of labour within the households becomes more clear (Fig 3). Sometimes help is outsourced in the form of full time maids, but supervising these subordinates still remains the job of the women.

Majority of the respondents still cook their domestic meal, some do it out of passion for cooking while others do it under compulsion and yet many reported lack of faith on the outsourced cook when it comes to preparing hygienic meals especially for children. The faint glimpse of the emergence of symmetrical family⁷ could be discerned among the newly married couple but the division becomes stark with the birth of the first child. It can be seen (fig 3) that the majority of respondents with children are responsible for taking care of the child(ren) and homework. Men, in many of the cases are reported spending an hour or two with their kids post work. "Taking care of the child is totally my responsibility as he is busy with his office and has no expertise in handling a kid"- lamented a respondent.

Braun et al.,(2008) suggested three approaches to study the household division of chores- time availability (time available to two jobs couple after work), resource dependency (how much the respondents are financially dependent on their husbands) and gender ideology (whether values and beliefs internalized at birth support traditional gender stereotype). Since, in our study, husband's time of return more or less coincided with the respondents', time availability or the lack of it can be ruled out for the husbands not helping with regular household chores. Though the majority of the respondents informed earning less than their spouse, but they are not totally dependent on them financially; thus the factor that still puts the onus of housework on women is the ineluctable grip of the traditional gender stereotype.

⁷ Symmetrical family is a family form identified by Peter Willmott and Michael Young during their research conducted in 1973 to find out the share of the husbands in the domestic chores and they concluded that men do participate in performing domestic duties thus giving rise to a new type of family which is more egalitarian than the traditional ones.

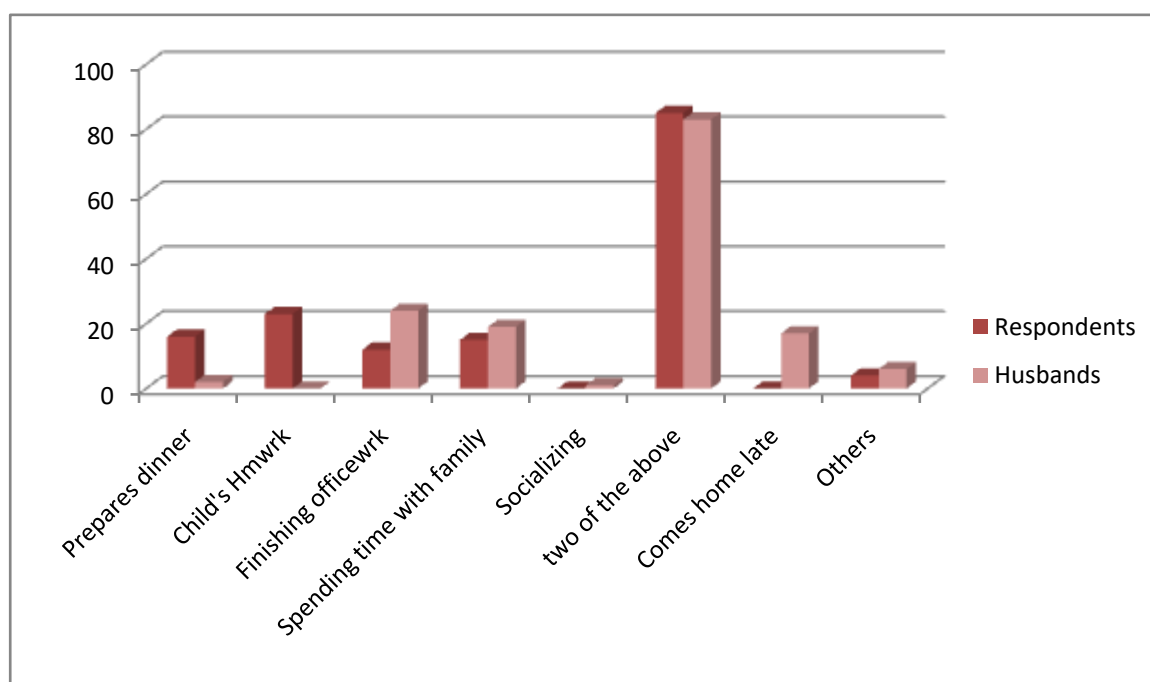


Figure 3: Household activities engaged in by the respondents and their husbands after returning from work

*Note: The information on what the husband does after returning from office could be collected from 152 respondents as 3 of them reported their husbands being out of station for the time being.

A closer look at the data above gives a picture of two-job couples in urban Kolkata that is caught in transition. There exists a strong traditional hangover juxtaposed with the newer form of family and domestic organization. 54.84% of the respondents reported staying in a family composed of more than 3 members that include their in-laws and children; at the same time the rise of the neolocal residences is also observed with 36.77% staying in a family with only 3 members and 8.39% staying with their husbands only. The influx of the IT culture has made minor modifications within the private sphere, keeping the structure more or less intact; though the rise of the functional joint family⁸ cannot be ignored.

5.2.3 Towards Understanding the balancing act:

To strike a perfect work-life balance, the most important extraneous factor is the co-operation from the respective organization and the empathetic attitude of the co-workers

⁸ Functional joint family is a concept explained by I.P Desai as a form of family which may not share the same household but they fulfill obligations towards each other.

coupled with the same attitude of the in-laws and family members. But many researches claim that this transition of women from home to work life is far from smooth as organizations fail to understand the changing demands of the women, that has lead this situation to be termed as a ‘stalled revolution’ (Hochschild and Machung, 1989). If thread is drawn between the Marxism and feminism (Mary E. John, 2017) then the reason for this stalled revolution can be assigned to the ‘false consciousness’ made and preserved by men in order to keep women in a permanent state of subjugation even in the public world of work like in industries and agriculture. This theorization treats women as a class ‘whose interests place them in a conflicted relationship with men as the dominant “class”’ (Mary E. John, 2017).

But a reinterpretation of the existing situation calls for a modification of this theorization. Women working in the corporate world refuse to actively see themselves as being the victim of a system that subjugates them; on the contrary they stress their ‘agency’ in taking decisions both at the work place and home. But this supposed agency of the women can be a result of a ‘stalled revolution’ where men and women are not giving up on marriage but rather finding out ways to make it work by introducing necessary arrangements, explained in details in chapter 8 (Hochschild and Machung 1989).

Husain and Dutta (2014), have called this set up a way of satisficing that women are consciously engaging in- “Satisficing is an alternative to optimization for cases where there are multiple and competitive objectives and in which one gives up the idea of obtaining the ‘best’ solution (Simon 1955). In this approach, the actor sets lower bounds for the various objectives that, if attained, will be satisfactory, or ‘good enough’, and then seeks a solution that will exceed these bounds” (Husain and Dutta 2014, p-65). The whole set up has been explained with the help of Nash equilibrium and the Game of Chicken⁹ (Hussain and Dutta, 2014), similar to explaining the structural-functional societal set up with instrumental roles (roles for men involving no emotional attachment

⁹ Game of chicken, as described by Wikipedia is a game theory set up that typically describes two players heading towards each other. If they continue to be on the same path then it will inevitably lead to them crashing into each other and if one ‘swerves’ and the other doesn’t then the former loses and is called a ‘chicken’. The solution is called Nash Equilibrium, where ‘each agent chooses the strategy that maximizes her pay-off’ (Husain and Dutta 2014). With social norm of adhering to the stereotype is added to this equation then Nash equilibrium in a patriarchal society settles at wife balancing the private and public spheres.

and to provide for the family) and expressive roles (roles for women that involves emotional orientation and directed towards comforting family) described by Talcott Parsons (Turner 1998). As a concept, ‘agency’ has been defined by Giddens (1979) as ‘a stream of actual or contemplated causal interventions of corporeal beings in the ongoing process of events-in-the world. The dialectic of control between the structure and the agents has been (Giddens 1984; Hays 1994) in the context of ‘duality of structure.

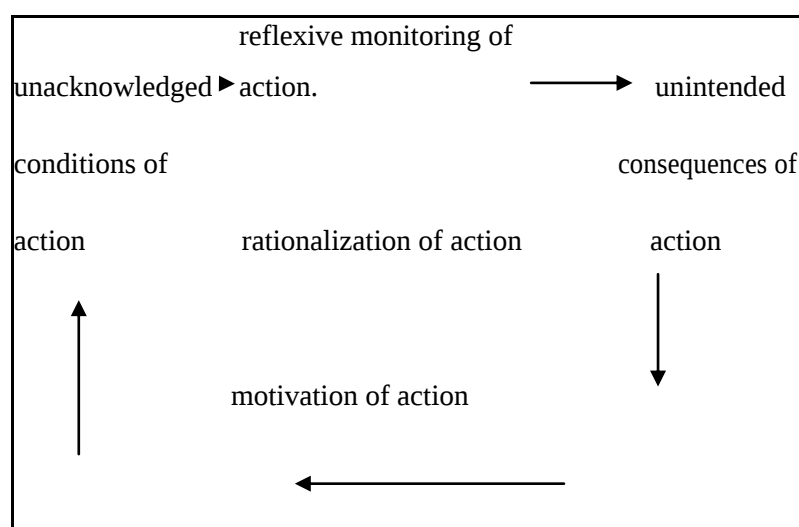


Fig 4 : Anthony Giddens: *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (1984). The Agent, Agency, p-5

The same model of structuration can be used to explain the interaction between the public and the private worlds of women thus shaping them as individuals. Engagement of women in the public world of works can play an important role in shaping women as agents of change but the exercise of the agency is directly or indirectly influenced by the placing of women in a particular social structure, in this case the family.

‘Agency’ as described by Sen (1999) is the ability to personally choose based on values and this choice may not correlate with personal well being. But Sen (1999) further pointed out, ‘the active agency of the women cannot, in any serious way, ignore the urgency of rectifying many inequalities that blight the well being of women and subject them to unequal treatment; thus the agency role must be concerned with women’s well-being also. Similarly, coming from the other end, any practical attempt at enhancing the well-being of women cannot but draw on the agency of women themselves in bringing about such a change. So the *well-being aspect* and the *agency aspect* of women’s

movements inevitably have substantial intersection' (p-190). The embedding of women in a strictly patriarchal structure, where they are constantly burdened with expectations and sense of duty, the 'agency' of women to determine their course of action and to be the active agents of change get influenced by such extraneous factors to a great extent.

The equilibrium gets highly disturbed after the birth of the first child, where women remain the sole care givers, rarely substituted with an outside source of help but seldom with their husbands. The 'mommy track' sadly remains a reality among the corporate women in urban Kolkata and that explains why many women are opting to marry late, especially after achieving their desired goal.

From the above data, the involvement, though minor, of the men in sharing household chores cannot be ignored. But the involvement has remained confined to those areas within the private sphere that do not meddle with the notion of masculinity. Some of the respondents reported that their husbands cook but it should be noted that these chores are reserved for the weekends and are treated more as a recreation for men than done with the intention of sharing the burden of day to day household chores.

The composition of the family of the married corporate women gives clear hint to the underlying patriarchal structure of the family. The symmetry in the intra family division of labour can be witnessed among the newly married two-job couples sharing a neo-local residence, but the power dynamics within the family still follows the traditional path when the couple is sharing space in a virilocal residence with children- 'sometimes the (deprived) women cannot even assess the extent of her relative deprivation' (Sen 1990). The sense of duty in such residences intersects with the aspirations of the women to rise up the corporate ladder, which in itself is stressful. Therefore, unable to cope up with the stress, majority of the women prefer to work till a certain age and then opt for voluntary retirement to focus full time on the family. As reasoned by one of the respondents, 36, senior manager, Cognizant, Kolkata, living with her daughter and husband in a virilocal residence and expects to retire by 40- "in the corporate, life is stressful as we encounter a new technology each day and therefore younger generation is bound to take over the older ones in the due course. But this is not the case when a person is a doctor or teacher, as in those fields knowledge increment is constant and grows more with age coupled with wisdom; therefore we always enjoy being taught by a

professor Emeritus. But in corporate, older we get, more we are seen as becoming obsolete day by day and finally replaced by newer ones”.

5.3 Corporate Women, Child Care and Other Domestic Relationships:

If psychological study of the female brain is to be believed then “most mothers, on some level, feel torn between the pleasures, responsibilities, and pressures of children and their own need for financial or emotional resources. We know that the female brain responds to this conflict with increased stress, increased anxiety, and reduced brainpower for mother’s work and her children”(Louann Brizendine, 2007). The way corporate women experience motherhood and other relationships in their day to day life, will give sufficient information about the ways these women navigate the daily pressure of meeting deadlines and fulfilling domestic obligations.

5.3.1 Corporate Women and Child Care:

Among the 155 respondents, 63.23% of the respondents have children. Given the fact that women are marrying late (33 years is the average age of marriage of the women working at the corporate sector in Urban Kolkata while the national average age of marriage is 22.2 years for the urban women) coupled with the ever rising cost of living in the urban areas, one child family is more common. The average age of the first child of 98 respondents (as 98 out of 155 respondents have children) is 6.11 years, that hints at a greater effort involved on the part of the respondents to balance work and family as 6.11 signifies beginning of school going years.

Most of the corporate office allows maternity leave upto 6 months with pay and up to 1 year without pay. India is the first country to allow longer maternity leaves in comparison to other countries.¹⁰ Paternity leave is unheard off though, while some respondents informed that their husbands did take a week off to assist them during the last trimester. 85.71% of the respondents agreed to have taken maternity leave. When probed about the reason for not taking maternity leave they informed leaving their previous job when they conceived and joining the present job post childbirth.

¹⁰ Maternity Benefit Amendment Act has increased paid leave time upto 6 months for women working at companies with nearly 10 women. The law also puts an onus on the companies to set-up crèches for the toddlers and to introduce a decent appraisal system with work of home facilities available to women workers. <https://www.cnn.com/2017/03/30/india-maternity-leave-increase.html>.

When questioned about the care takers after the respondents resumed work post sabbatical, major answers were nanny/governess (64.29%) and in-laws (26.53%) and own mother (9.18%). Outsourcing services is one of the hallmarks of the emerging families; surveillance of such services is done with the help of modern technology like home fitted cctv cameras as reported by few respondents. One of the respondents shared the story of being alone on an on-site duty with her 3 months old daughter- “I was in UK for almost a year on a project. I used to go to office exactly at 9.00a.m and on my way I used to drop my child at a crèche. I was thoroughly satisfied with the kind of surveillance used by the crèche. The crèche was fitted with cctvs everywhere and I was given a password to their website where I could log in and monitor my child anytime I wanted. It was like having her next door. Satisfied, I could concentrate on my work. On my way back I used to pick my daughter up and the administration used to hand me over a cctv recording of the whole day. It was very heartening.” Unfortunately, facilities like these are yet to be introduced in our country.

Some innovative measures on the part of the mothers to juggle kids’ school and their own work have been noticed. Though 55.81% of the mothers reportedly still rely on the pool cars to take the kids to school, 16.28% drops the kids to school themselves, 2 of the respondents can be credited with coming up with an innovate idea of *mommy pool car*, a setup where working mothers take turns to drop all the kids living nearby to school. Reports of the pool car accidents and child molestation by the car drivers forced these mothers to come up with a solution that allows them to situate their work quite successfully within the purview of child care. There cannot be any denial of the fact that proper child care and concentrated effort to excel in job reinforce each other. Child care remains primarily a woman’s job is further proven by the fact that 65.12% of the respondents take active role in helping child with the homework in comparison to 21.29% of the respondents reporting that their husbands help only when he gets time (Fig 4a and 4b).

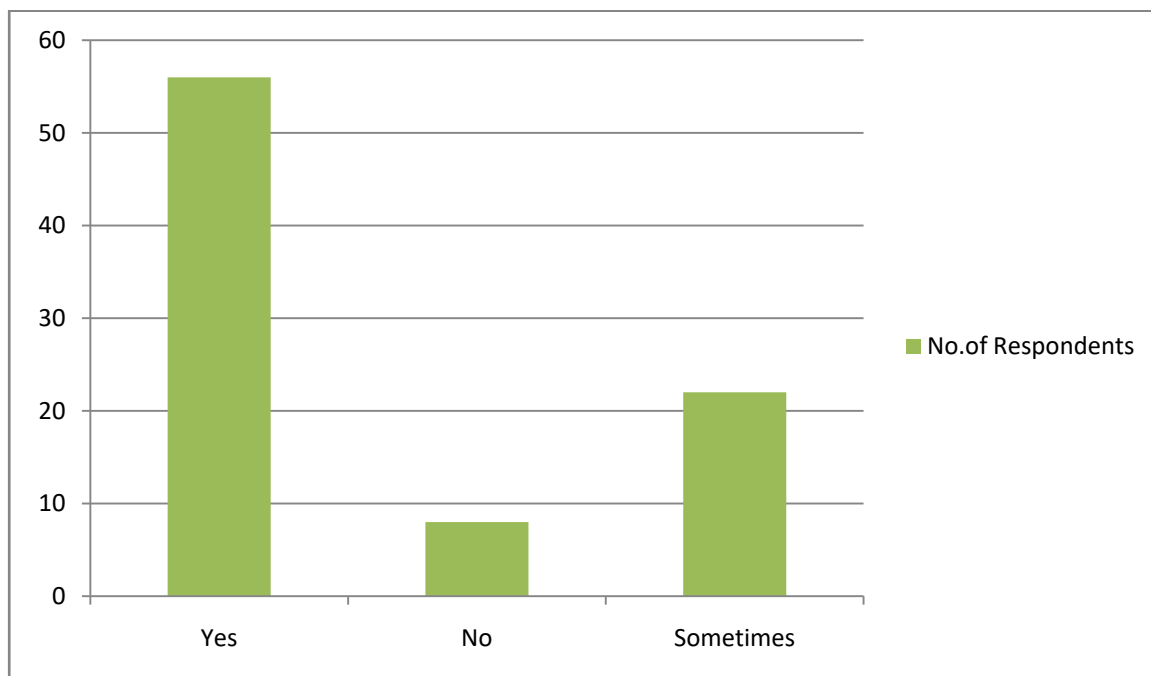


Fig 4(a): Respondents helping with the child's homework

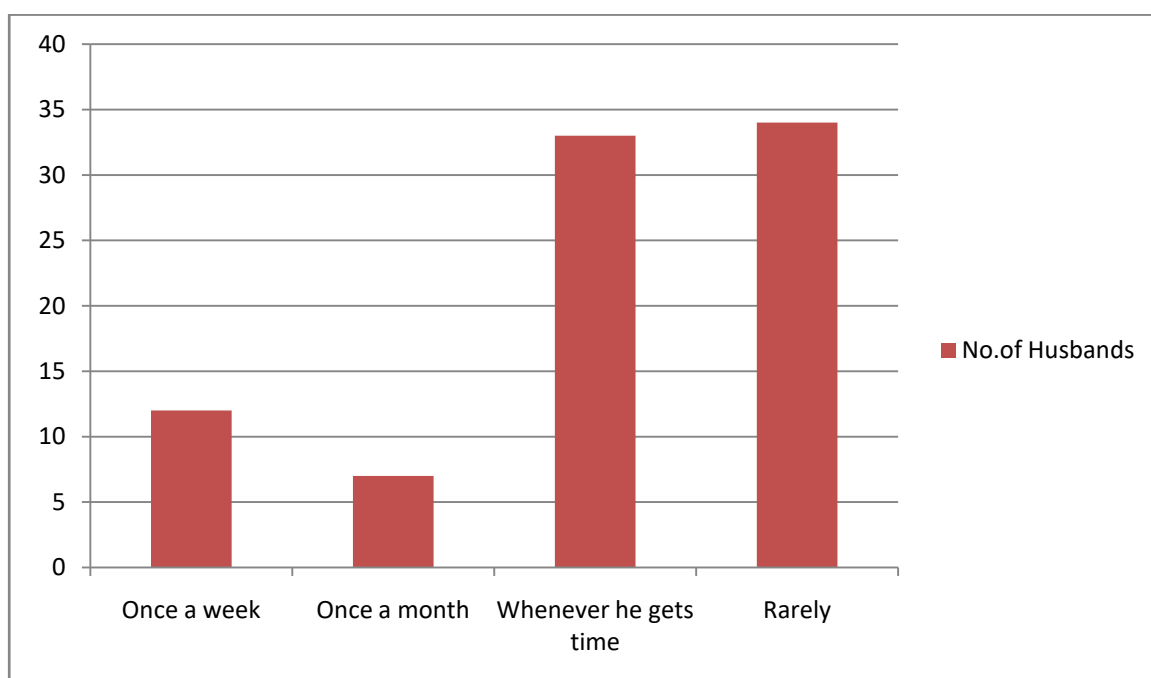


Fig 4(b): Frequency at which husband helps with child's homework

Reliance on private tutors is also noticed when the respondents are unable to coach their kids themselves due to lack of time. Involvement of the husbands have been noticed in attending parents-teachers meeting in school where 44.19% reportedly attend the

meetings together; though the percentage of women attending the meeting alone is still higher (48.84%).

5.3.2 The Reality called Mommy Track:

The overwhelming existence of the ‘mommy track’ was felt when the respondents were asked to ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ to the statement- having kids affect career advancement (Fig 5).

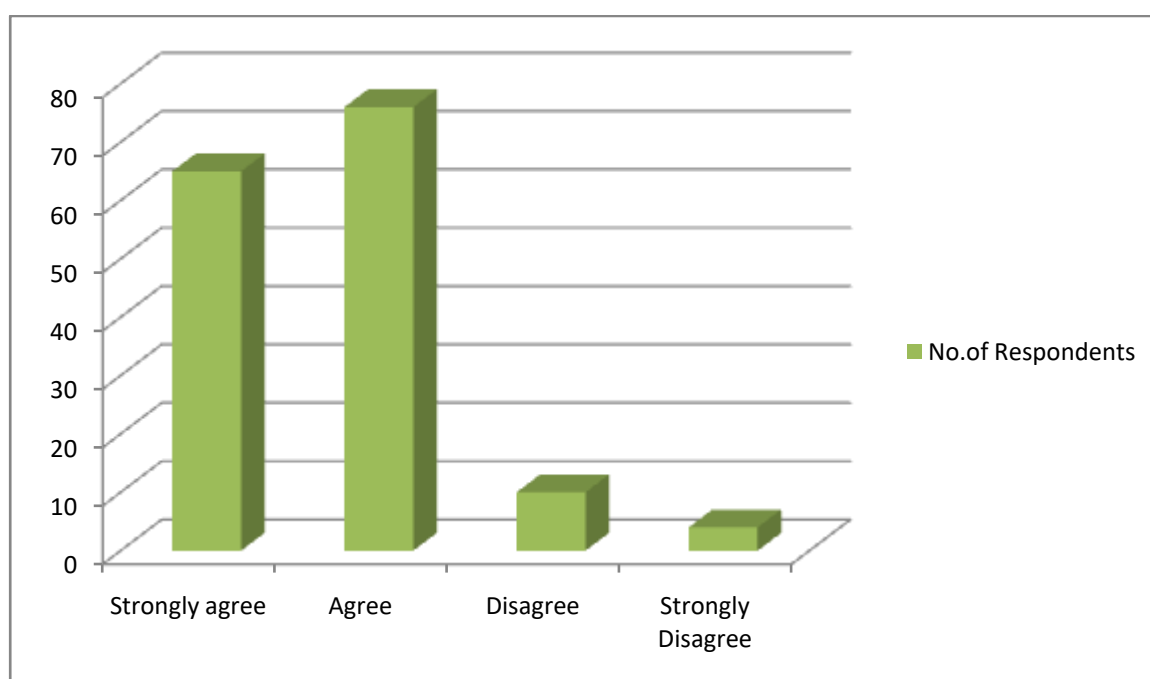


Fig 5: Opinions of the respondents on the statement ‘Having kids affect career advancement’

The staggering 49.03% have strongly agreed and 41.94% have agreed to the statement that career flow is a bit jeopardized after the birth of the kid. The societal thread of connecting child bearing and child rearing has made it difficult for women to transcend the ‘mommy track’ with ease. Mommy track has been introduced by Jennifer A. Kingson (1988) in her article at *The New York Times*, later expanded by Schwartz (1989). In her article Schwartz (1989) claimed that ‘the cost of employing women in management is greater than the cost of employing men’, the reason being the lack of understanding by the employers of the way women experience motherhood. Two categories of women workers have been created by Schwartz- ‘career primary’ and ‘career and family primary’- the first category women focus solely on their career path and the second category women anticipates a balance between their career and family.

This dichotomization of the working women into two categories created a ‘furor’ amongst a section of the American women who viewed this stand as limiting i.e, women have to *choose* either job or career (Lewin 1989).

This capability to make informed choice has been described by some researchers (Moser and Clark, 2001; Husain and Dutta, 2014) as exercising ‘agency’. Agency and well being may not intersect (Sen 1999) but former has been defined as the capability of the agents to take informed decision- the decision to either toe the line or become proactive agents of change given an opportunity. According to, Husain and Dutta (2014)-‘women with poor endowments, for instance, may choose to follow a patriarchal norm so as not to disturb her marital life and affect her long run well-being. Nevertheless, such women have at least progressed further on the road to empowerment than women who blindly internalize such norms. The difference between the two is that, given windows of opportunity, the former may attempt to adopt strategies that help her to be less marginalized and more empowered. One such window is employment’. Norms are dichotomized into those which are ‘imposed upon by outside and internalized, or derived (chosen) from within through a conscious process of choice’ (p. 10). It is generally seen that the decisions taken or agency exercised by the women (regardless of mode of internalization- imposed or derived) to navigate the patriarchal pitfalls, in turn, sometimes reinforce the same structure that they try to subvert or negotiate with. Even if it is acknowledged that actors are rational and are making informed decisions, but it is difficult to draw the line where societal norms stop dictating from within the individual and where individuals are active agents acting on their own without any external factors and one such cause of this is *gender socialization*, which prepares for the women for such balancing acts.

Bell Hooks (1981) in the context of black women, nevertheless relevant in this regard, emphasized, “when feminists acknowledge in one breath that black women are victimized and in the same breath emphasize their strength, they imply that though black women are oppressed they manage to circumvent the damaging impact of oppression by being strong- and that is simply not the case. They ignore the reality that *to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be confused with transformation*”(p-6). Agency aspect, thus can never be subtracted from the well being aspect if the holistic empowerment of women is envisioned. There

is no doubt that education and employment are the two sources that enable a woman to comprehend a social situation in which she is embedded and make proactive changes within it; financial independence will lose its desired impact if the women ‘choose’ to ‘value’ what they are *taught* to value.

Both men and women follow a gender strategy which refers to the ‘plan of action through which a person tries to solve problems at hand, given the cultural notion of gender at play’ (Hochschild and Machung 1989) i.e, men draws on the belief about masculinity and women from the norms internalized at birth. The way the women experience and navigate motherhood can be adduced in this regard. Many will probably rejoice at the extended maternity leave that India has introduced, citing it as an example of growing understanding towards women, but when noticed carefully extended maternity leave again puts the onus back on the mothers to rear the child with no subsequent involvement of the fathers. Importance of the paternity leave has been stressed in many cases before as it ensures a healthy relationship and bonding between father and child and at the same time establishes child rearing as a dual responsibility (Lal 2016). But none of the organization in Kolkata has introduced the benefit of paternity leave without pay cut which invariably makes it difficult for men to participate in childcare even if they intend to.

Even in our study 68.37% of the respondents have confirmed their husbands not taking any leave or to put it another way the organization has no such paternity benefit scheme. Remaining 18.37% informed that their husbands took few days’ leave while the rest 13.27% have never heard of paternity leave. Thus, even when given an opportunity such women, bounded by age old practice, prefer to come to terms with the existing situation rather than negotiating with the organization for more involvement of the husbands in the form of paternity leaves.

Empowerment is not a unilateral concept that entails only financial independence; it involves attitudes, dispositions, values inculcated at birth and social circumstances in which the women are situated. Allyn (2009) in an article in the *Forbes* shared an estimate where she claimed that demands for the flexible work arrangements still come from women as they are increasingly worried about balancing work and family. As a solution she doled out ‘tour of duty’ or horizontal mobility of the women within the organization from one department to the another one where the working hours are more

flexible and after a certain period of time they can return to the more demanding positions they held before the maternity leave.

If child care is taken out of equation then 36.77% of the respondents reported their husbands helping them in the household chores while 27.74% said they get assistance from their husbands whenever the latter is asked to help or they get time out of their schedule (Fig 6a). When inquired about the kinds of household chores done by the men in the family, the reply varied from cooking (5.16%), cleaning (4.12%), grocery shopping (3.23%) and 34.84% reported doing most of the mentioned chores in moderation (fig 6b).

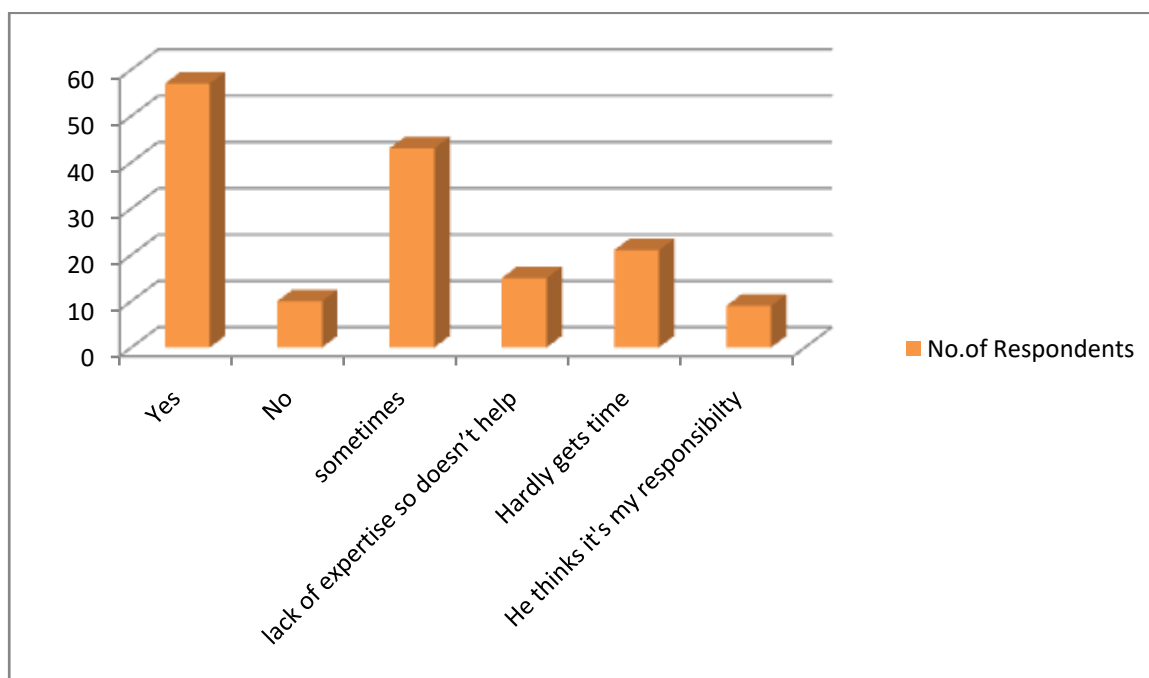


Figure 6a: Husbands and House Husbandry (Frequency of doing Chores)

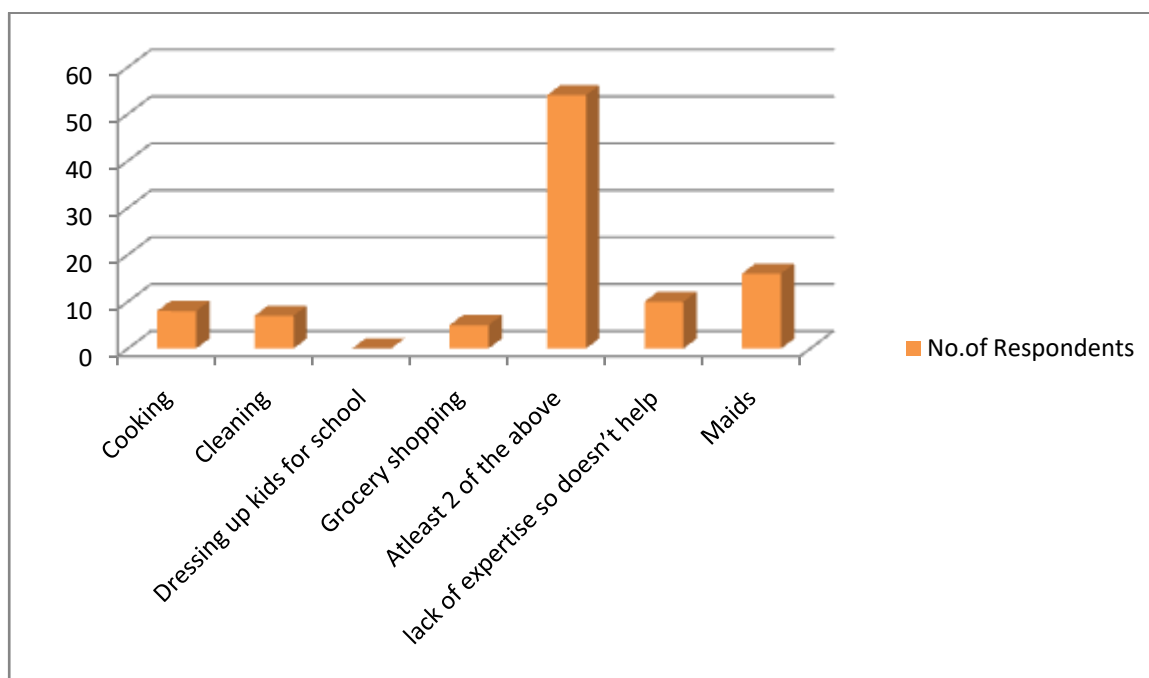


Figure 6b: Husbands and Household chores (Types of Chores)

5.3.3 Corporate Women and In-laws:

The heartening development in the private sphere of the married women in the recent decade has been the relationship with their in-laws. The ‘patriarchal bargain’ (Kandiyoti 1988, p-275) has been struck with some success when it comes situating work within the relational threshold especially with the in-laws. Kandiyoti (1988) has branded India as a land characterized by ‘classic patriarchy’ where, ‘girls are given away in marriage at a very young age into households headed by their husband’s father. There, they are subordinate not only to all men but also to the more senior women, especially their mother-in-law” (p-278). This dual interpretation of patriarchy- older men ruling over younger men and men in general ruling over women has been stressed before (Millet 1970).

Another dimension that can be added to this level of abstraction is the transformation of the older women into the repertoire of patriarchal values, thus turning family into a sphere of power struggle between two women where one takes over from the other in the due course of time (Kandiyoti 1988; Menon 2012). The reason for this regular face off can be explained by the fact that in a private sphere the acceleration in the status of the women is an *achieved status* unlike in men where the status is *ascribed* from birth by the rule of patrimony. Thus it becomes difficult for older women to accept their

successors without putting them through the same impediments or stumbling blocks that they had to overcome.

Situating work within this structure calls for effort on the part of the respondents. In many families they are the first generation IT workers, making daily negotiation with the patriarchal structure even more difficult. But the disintegration of the classic patriarchy and the gradual percolation of the globalised culture have been able to change the dynamics within the family, even if the change is nascent. When inquired about the corporate job and the opinion of the in-laws 56.77% of the respondents readily accepted their in-laws being overtly supportive about their job while 23.87% reported that their in-laws were initially against but gradually came around.

Kolkata, as a city has a reputation of being one of the promoters of traditional culture and family structure which in colloquial term known as '*bonedi bari*'¹¹ and there is an unmistakable preponderance of joint family. Joint family in India can be defined extensively on the basis of composition, number of members, fulfilling obligation towards each other, distribution of property and complexity of relationships within the household (Karve 1968; Desai 1965; Srinivas 1952; Shah 1998).

According to the study majority of the respondents reside in three generation family with their in-laws sharing the same space within the private sphere (62.58%). A relation classified by superordination and subordination is gradually giving way to a more egalitarian one or one based on mutual respect can be seen. But 23.87% of the respondents informed the existence of the well known cold war with the in-laws that prevent them from getting too close to them. Interestingly, the reason for the rise of the relationship based on mutual understanding as well as for the existing 'cold' one remains the same- employment of the women post marriage.

When asked to rate the relationship (on scale of 1-5, where 1 signifies antagonistic relationship and 5 signifies very cordial one) with their in-laws almost 41.94% rated the relationship at 3 (Fig 7). The thawing of the stereotypical image of the in-laws with which a bride used to step into their family of procreation is manifested when 56.77% of

¹¹ Bonedi bari is the colloquial term to describe opulent joint families in Kolkata, remnants of the zamindars during the British period. One of the examples of the Bonedi Bari is the house of the Tagores of Jorashanko. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/variety/Re-visiting-the-rich-legacy-of-Bonedi-Bari/article20512933.ece>.

the respondents agreed to the statement that ‘it is the duty of the married women to take care of the in-laws’ (Fig 8). ‘Agency’ as stated above can be stressed when it comes to analyzing the changing dynamics of the relation of the respondents with in-laws and how successfully they are able to situate work within the family with the growing co-operation from the members. Instead to viewing the preceding generation as an impediment to work, women are choosing to engage in creative dialogue with in-laws; similarly the increasing engagement of the women in public world of work has ensured the percolation of an alternate ideology into the otherwise insulated private sphere that has brought about the change in the mindset.

As analyzed above, the existence of in-laws has proved to be functional for the respondents especially after child birth. In-laws are perceived as a source of security by the working women that has ensured this peaceful coexistence.

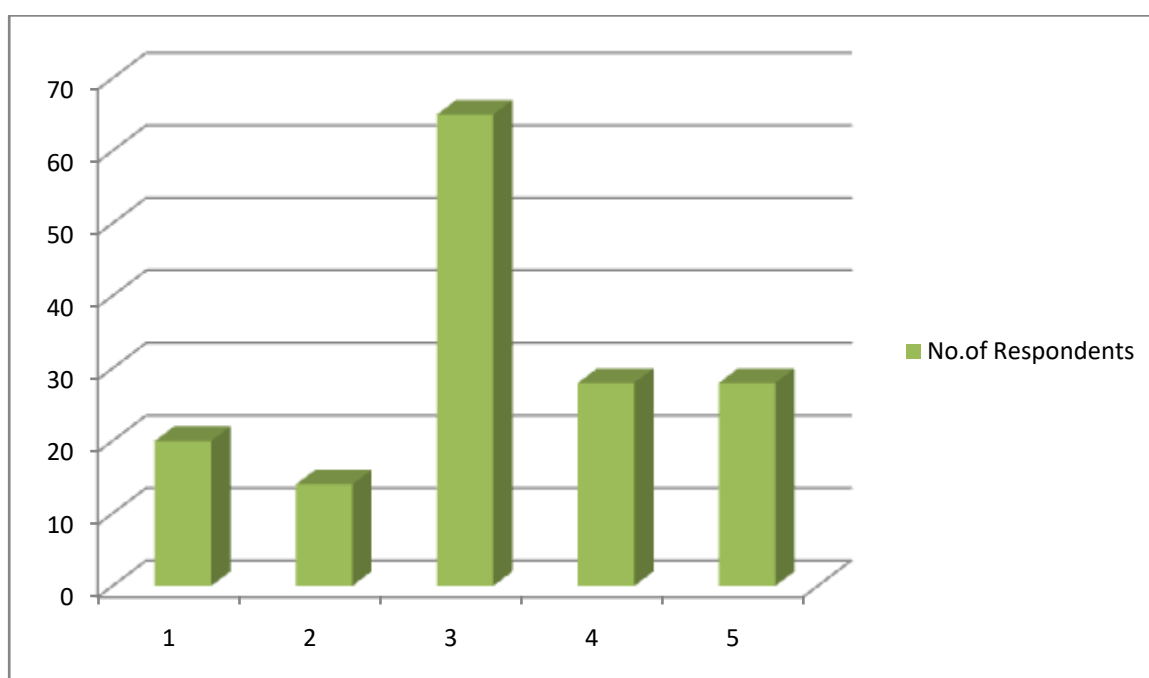


Figure 7: Rating of the relationship with the In-laws

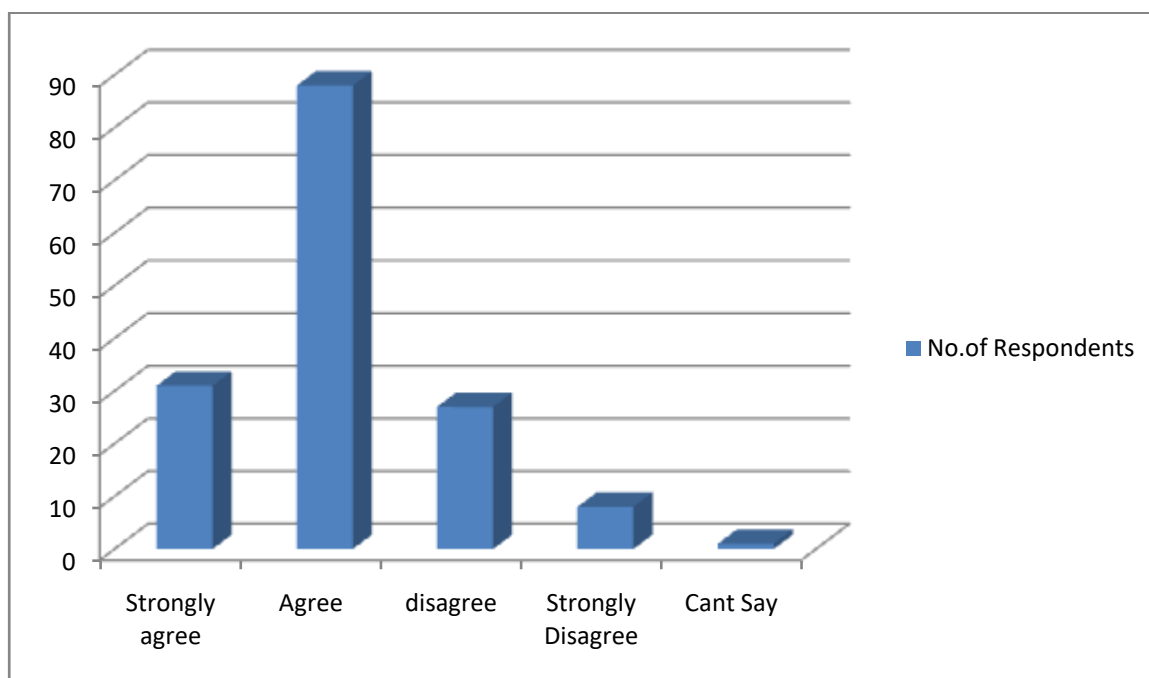


Figure 8: Opinions to the statement 'It is the duty of the married women to take care of the in-laws'

The spatial transcendence of women and situating work within the relationships thus pulls at the fragile string of balance of power within the private sphere. It has been observed many times that women suffer from a 'perceived sense of equality' and forcing the husband to participate in household chores hampers that 'certain balance of power that felt culturally right', that explains why their work within the private sphere remains under reported (Braun et al., 2008; Hochschild, 1989; Klumb, Hoppmann and Staats, 2006; Ruppenar et al., 2017). Braun et al.(2008) has categorically pointed out that in comparison to time availability and resource dependence, 'gender ideology turns out to be the most important legitimizing principle. These results contribute to the explanation of why perceptions of inequity are relatively infrequent in spite of dramatic inequalities in the household division of labour'.

The success with which women are able to situate work within the relationships can be categorized into two phases- pre- childbirth and post-childbirth. The traditional gender ideology stands in the way of egalitarian distribution of labour, so much so that many of the respondents are convinced that men are incapable of doing chores- One respondent jokingly remarked, 'I have to redo everything after my husband does, so its better I do the work myself'. Though many couples aspire an equal division of labour at home but

that equality is hard to achieve post childbirth (Bittman and Wajcman, 2000; Klumb et al., 2006).

There are certain factors that tilt the balance of power in favour of men in the private sphere in a place like Kolkata. First is the patrilocality of the residences marked by the strong presence of in-laws guarantees that even if there is division of household chores, the husband's share of chores are basically carried out by the respondent's mother-in-law. Secondly, the transition to motherhood ensures a certain re-socialization for women so much so that even if they have had championed the cause of equality within the household pre-childbirth, they try to plug off work post childbirth without much complain. Therefore, even if those women not subscribing to the traditional gender ideology, develop a certain 'mommy brain' that socializes them to give precedence to housework, especially work related to kids, even they perceive that the existing situation is far from being just. But the experience of motherhood can cease to contradict with career path with the equal participation from the husbands for which paternity leave is an imperative as well as cooperation on the part of the organization in the form of crèches and not considering maternity leave as a negative factor at the time of appraisals.

Self-appraisal of the respondents is an interesting highlight. The respondents were asked to rate themselves as a homemaker and as a corporate executive on a scale of 1 -10 (fig 9). Majority of the respondents marked them higher as a corporate worker than as a home maker, despite the fact that their maternity leave and leaves related to kids are appraised negatively by the organization. When inquired about the reason for this discriminatory self rating, the respondents sometimes came up with individualized answers. But two highly contradictory explanations can be given in this regard. Firstly, it is heartening to see women seeing corporate work as their master status and deriving their sense of identity from such productive involvement. But on the other hand, these women may have used the 'looking glass self' method of Cooley (Wallace and Wolf 1999) to see themselves as society sees them. According to them the mounting expectations of the family post childbirth coupled with the demands of the occupation make the women feel that they are falling short of meeting familial deadlines and expectations even if they are doing everything to balance the two successfully.

Another explanation for this can be the Parsonian value orientation of these women that affect the pattern of their everyday interactions and decision they make (Turner 1974). Since they have been socialized to place more value to the family therefore thwarting the expectation of the members can affect them more deeply than not meeting the deadline at the office. As pointed out by Chodorow (1999) women define themselves in terms of relationships, though the engagement of the women in the corporate world have positively affected this definition of self, but guilt factor that works surreptitiously can hardly be ignored which is manifested in the poor self rating as homemakers. Whether rating is indicative of the level of satisfaction is ambiguous, but higher rating as the corporate worker is indicative of the confidence that work has instilled into them, giving them a chance to arrive at a definition of self which is somewhat subtracted from the relational connotations.

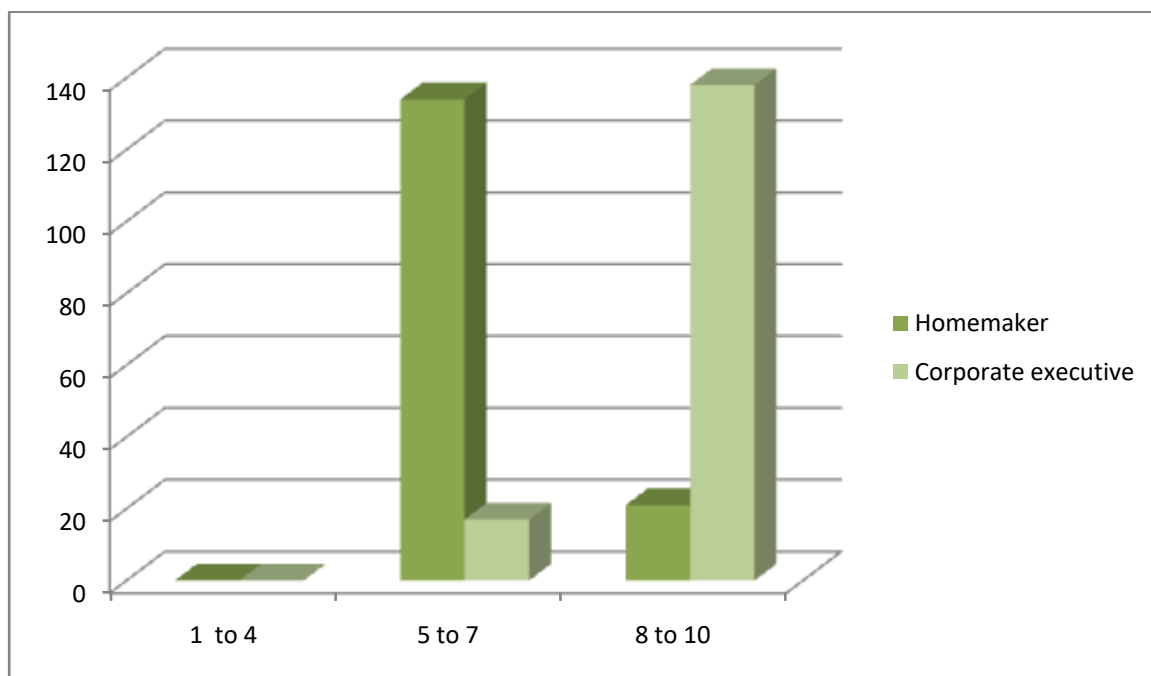


Fig 9: Respondents rating themselves as homemaker and corporate executive

5.4 Concluding Discussion:

The unprecedented entry of the women in the corporate sector has impacted their life like never before- both in the private and the public sphere. Financial independence has definitely given these women a chance to bargain with patriarchy and arrive at a point

where they can maximize their satisfaction (Husain and Dutta 2014). The clear dichotomization of the married women and how their capacity to bargain with patriarchy vacillates in the pre-child birth and post-child birth phases are clear from the data above which calls for a reiteration that child rearing is still treated as a natural corollary of the child bearing. In depth interviews revealed the existence of subtle discrimination within the organization when it comes to appraisals and delegating onsite duties. Some of the respondents also reported being the victim of harassment within the office premises and in some extreme cases they had to report the perpetrators to the human resources which got the latter either expelled or shifted to another project.

Thus the spatial transition of women is not smooth and the road is even bumpier for women with children. But there is no denying the fact that employment gives the women a chance to savour the taste of empowerment and this empowerment can be made more tangible when child birth and maternity leave will cease to be treated as a road blocks in the career on the contrary will be supported with facilities to strike the perfect balance. For that to be achieved balancing work and life should not be treated only as a feminine issue but has to be interpreted within the context of workforce management along with the productive involvement of men, especially in child care.

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Corporate Women and Public/Private Dichotomy: Problems, Solutions and the Modifications

Abstract:

‘Women’s strategies are always played out in the context of identifiable patriarchal bargains that act as implicit scripts that define, limit and inflect their market and domestic options’ (Kandiyoti 1988, p-285). Two words that stand out in the above line are ‘women strategies’ and ‘patriarchal bargains’ where one influences the other or are interchangeable. The capability to strategize (Sen 1985) depends on the various factors and one such factor is employment. Financial independence plays a major role in shaping the identity of the women today by situating work within the private sphere and normalizing the spatial transcendence of the working women. The influx of women into the primary labour market with the rise of the IT sector in India in general, Kolkata in particular have modified the structured relationships within the family and society at large. Employment is believed to render certain independence to the women to define their situation as well as the way they perceive themselves; as financial independence of women challenges the stereotypical image of the men as the bread earner. Employment has helped women to transcend the confines of the private sphere and engage in public body of work thus boosting their agency function to a great extent. But it is the same employment that has prompted women to take resort to certain measures and tactics to deal with the temporary vacuum that is created in the private sphere due to their absence. This chapter deals with the problems within the public and private spheres faced by the married women engaged in the IT hub of Kolkata, the extent to which women engaged in the corporate sector exercise their agency in solving the problems they face within the family and work, the structural-functional changes that has taken place within the family because of women’s employment, the way they steer their career, their future aspirations and the way they perceive themselves amidst the daily vacillation between the public and private spheres. The study is based on the empirical survey done on the 155 married women working at the IT sector in Urban Kolkata. Data has been gathered using a structured questionnaire followed by a personal interview thus resorting to an amalgamation of both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Keywords: private sphere, public sphere, corporate women, IT hub, family, corporate job, agency

6. **Introduction:**

As reported by PwC in their report published in 2011, “West Bengal has been one of the fastest growing states with regard to the IT sector. Around 500 ITs and ITeS companies are operating in the state and they employ more than 60,000 professionals”.¹ The number of professionals employed at the IT sector has definitely accelerated in the recent years, irrespective of gender. NASSCOM reports, “with 170,000 jobs added in the FY17, the Indian IT-BPM industry remains a major net hirer; FY17 alone saw the gross hiring of over 50,00 by the top five companies”.² According to the Vice President of the NASSCOM, “India’s IT-BPM industry currently employs nearly 3.9 million people, of which over 34% are women (1.3 million)”(NASSCOM report 2017). Thus IT sector has emerged as one of the major sectors that believe and practice gender inclusion in the form of no discrepancy in hiring and wage structure and modified maternity leave benefits to ensure the return of the women workers post maternity sabbatical.

The major difference between the public sector enterprises and the IT firms is the absence of a fixed time schedule as the latter cater to the overseas clients; making it a task for the women, especially married women, to balance out the public and private sphere. The empirical study involving 155 married women reveals the structural changes that have taken place in the family pre and post child birth and how successfully they have situated their career and aspirations that have modified the structures. The dichotomization of the public men and private women has come under strain with the movement of the women between spaces; thus altering the rigid character of both the spheres. Employment and financial autonomy are believed to have increased the decision making power of the working women which in turn has enhanced their agency function. This chapter is based on the problems faced by the corporate women in both the private and public spheres and how they negotiate them on a daily basis, the

¹ *Rising Bengal: The land of Opportunities*, report by PwC, published in 2011
<https://www.pwc.in/assets/pdfs/industries/rising-bengal-151211.pdf>.

² NASSCOM NewsLline is a newsletter published by nasscom that jots down the details of the IT industries. Published almost every month, the reports are available at the official website, the data that I have added in this chapter is curated from the following site:
http://www.nasscom.in/sites/default/files/newsline_pdf/NASSCOM_NEWSLINE_May_2017.pdf.

‘definition of situation’³ engaged in by the married women and how they act on the basis of that definition or interpretation.

According to the Thomas Theorem, interpretation and the meaning attached to a particular situation help men act on the basis of that interpretation, similar application of this theory can reveal how women interpret their daily life rather than being defined from a man’s perspective as the universal ‘other’ (Beauvoir 1949). Agency function perceive women as active agents of change rather than as the passive recipients of welfare measures (Sen 1990). Thus women as active agents have brought about certain changes that have affected both the private and public spheres. The paper is divided into two parts, corporate women in the private sphere and corporate women in the public sphere – the pitfalls and how they navigate them to ensure a holistic living. The chapter engages with the sociological interpretation of the private sphere of the women and their engagement in the public world of work- how both the spheres have been modified with the movement of the women between spheres.

6.1 Corporate Women and Private Sphere:

In the words of Kannabiran (2006), “the family is a ‘foundational’ institution in societies-an institution which is a site of identity, emotion, cultural expression, care, despair, reproductive labour, systemic and systematic violence, repression and domination in ways that other institutions are not” (p-4427). The private sphere has been allotted a central location in all major discourses. Hence the effect of corporate work on the structure and function of the private sphere will assist in understanding the dialectical relationship between home and work as one sphere influences the other to a great extent.

6.1.1 Corporate work and structural functional modifications of the private sphere:

Family has been described as a ‘set of mutually contingent careers’ (Farber 1961), where the ‘temporal interdependencies of the family members and their involvement in other social spheres’ affects families (Aldous 1990) thus bringing about researchable changes within the private sphere. Shift in the biographies of the women working at the

³ Definition of situation was first developed by William I Thomas which was referred to as the Thomas Theorem that states that ‘if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences’.

corporate sector is expected to have its repercussions in their private sphere and these changes, sometimes subtle, may be understood if attention is broadly focused on three areas- household chores, relationship with in-laws and child rearing. Majority of women in the corporate sector are the first generation corporate workers, deviating from the ‘feminized occupations’ (Menon 2012) like teaching and nursing. The factor that differentiates corporate sector from the public sector enterprises is the marked absence of a specific time schedule making it even more difficult for the women to navigate the day to day affairs.

According to the study, there is a preponderance of family with more than 3 members and composed of respondent’s husband, in-laws and children (47.09%) that hints at the existence of a joint family, closely followed by families with husbands and in-laws without kids (21.29%). If joint family is defined as a consanguine family unit that includes two or more generations and follows either paternal or maternal descent (Ahuja 1993) then majority of the family of the women working in the corporate sector and living in the urban Kolkata, is joint in structure but with certain modifications (table 1).

Composition of the family	I stay alone	Composition of the Family						Total
		I stay with my husband only	I stay with my husband and child/children	I stay with my husband and in-laws	I stay with my husband, in-laws and children	I stay at my paternal home	I stay with my parents, husband and children	
No. of Respondents	00 (0)	13 (8.39%)	22 (14.19%)	33 (21.29%)	73 (47.09%)	10 (6.45%)	04 (2.58%)	155 (100%)

Table 1: Composition of the family of 155 married corporate women

The modern joint family greatly differs from the traditional joint family in terms of dwindling authoritarian structure and number of members. Jointness in India has been defined in terms of the overarching presence of a patriarchal head of the family (generally the oldest male member), common household, sharing of property, common kitchen and mutual fulfillment of obligations towards each other (Karve 1953). But the survey involving 155 women working at the corporate sector in Urban Kolkata revealed that though the structure of the family has but slightly modified, there is a growing trend of living in a nuclear family with in-laws staying separately near the couple. If the two response categories ‘I stay with my husband only’ and ‘I stay with my husband and child/children’ are combined then 22.58% of the respondents are living in a family that

can be called nuclear or functionally and substantially joint i.e, joint in terms of sharing property (Desai 1965). In his study of the families in Mahuva, Desai (1965) categorized family on the basis of 'generation depth' and 'degree of jointness', where the former is determined by 'counting the number of generations back from the present co-residents to their common lineal ancestors' (Kolenda 1966) and the latter deals with the level of involvement with the distant kin. Taking these two criteria as the base to define the structural- functional characteristics of the private sphere of the women working at the corporate sector, a two-job corporate family (Hochschild and Machung 1989) scores low both in generation depth and degree of jointness i.e., number of generations residing together is restricted to 3 and the conspicuous absence of the distant kin- both in terms of residentiality and sharing common property gives clear indication of the growing nuclearity of the corporate families. This growing tendency of living in the neo local residences, close to the place of work is noticed in two cases- one where the couple is relatively young or newly married or when both of them are working in the same sector.

The rise of the corporate sector has acted as a catalyst in this ongoing transition from the traditional jointness to modern joint family to nuclear family. The major factor that resulted in the rise of the neo local residence is the distance between home and the place of employment. The IT hub in urban Kolkata includes a large area of Salt lake (famously known as the Sector 5) and the upcoming, still under construction Rajarhat area, which can safely be marked as falling in the outskirts of the city (Maps 1 and 2). Majority of the respondents (37.42%) have reported staying in the eastern part of the city, especially near Salt lake, to easily access the office without going through the pain of commuting long distances on a daily basis, followed by respondents (25.81%) who choose to stay in the northern part either because they have been the original settlers or because of the ease of communication. But the respondents residing in the southern part of the city vehemently highlighted the problems faced and the time taken while commuting daily. Most of the respondents commute either by their self owned vehicles or take resort to office pool cars for safety and timely travel. Though it is difficult to infer whether the form of family changes with the change in the location as far as Kolkata is concerned based on a sample size of 155- joint and nuclear families are more or less evenly distributed across the length and breadth of the city- but it has been seen that respondents living only with husbands and with husband and children are higher in case of those residing near New Town and Rajarhat.

Another modification that has taken place as far as the private sphere of the corporate women is concerned is the rise of the functional and substantial joint families. A.M Shah (1998) in his research has categorically concluded the ascendance of the joint system of family in India, thus negating the popular opinion that supports its dwindling influence in the Indian society. The survey of 155 married women working at the corporate sector also hinted at the prevalence of the joint family in Urban Kolkata; but certain modifications have seeped in like the in-laws living separately but close to the home shared by the respondents and their husbands.

A personal visit to the few houses of the corporate women revealed the mechanics of this system of family. In such a set up the in-laws share the same building, residential campus or locality (*'para'* in colloquial bangla) and thus stay in close physical proximity. Though they may not share the same household, but sometimes kitchen is jointly accessed i.e, regular meals being cooked in the in-laws' house and delivered to the house of the respondents and vice versa has also been observed. Thus the prevalent definitions of joint family that stress on the common residence and common kitchen as the defining features that determines jointness may not to be applied in this case. In another scenario, the couples choose to stay in a neo local residence during weekdays, spends the weekends in their patrilocal residence. This variant of emergent two-job families can be identified as family characterized by substantial and functional jointness, where members are joint in terms of property and fulfilling mutual obligation towards each other that confirms the observation made by Beteille (1992), 'there is evidence that new types of family arrangements are emerging in India that differ from those characteristic of both the traditional joint family and the modern western nuclear family'(p-13). Beteille(1992) further observed that, 'the normative basis of the family remains very strong, despite such changes as may have come about in its morphological forms'(p-14).

The modifications that have taken place within the internal structure of the two-job family are actually morphological rather than normative as the families are still tied by the obligations and this can be proved by taking a close look at the relationship between the respondents and their in-laws. 56.77% of the respondents 'agreeing' and 20% of the respondents 'strongly agreeing' to the statement 'it is the duty of the married women to take care of the in-laws extends to the proof to the existence of the unaltered normative

structure where marriage is synonymous to responsibilities towards the kin. The gradual change in the mindset of the older generation is also reflected in the enormous amount of support the respondents receive from their in-laws (Fig 1).

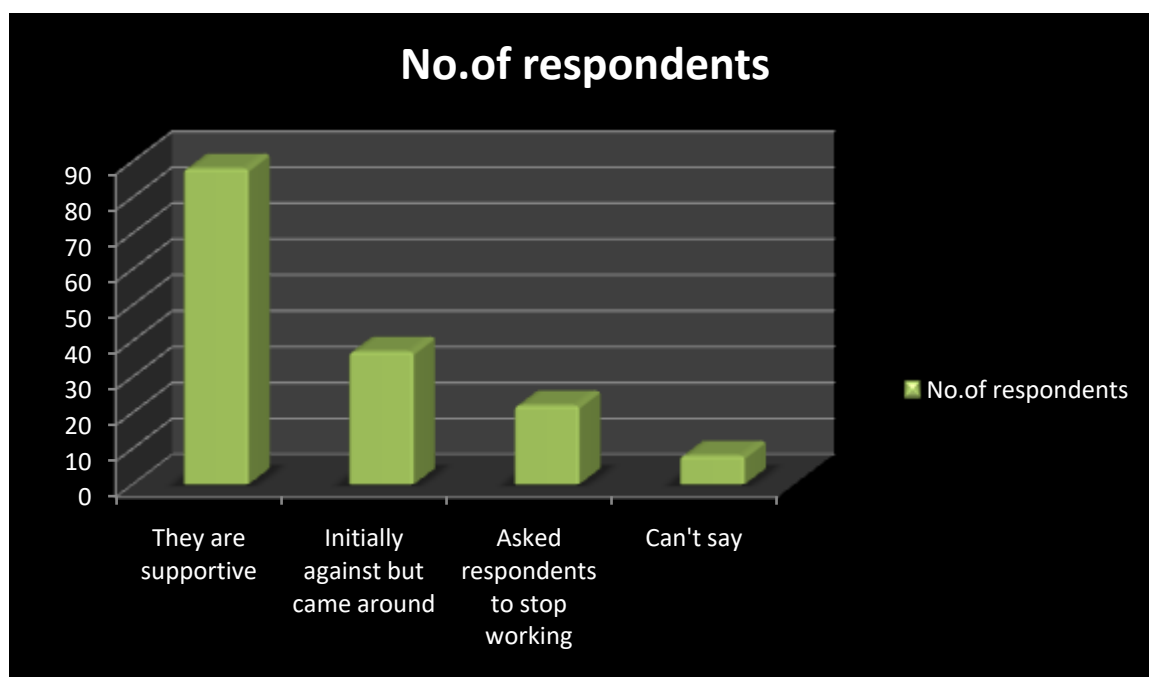


Figure1: Opinions of the in-laws regarding the jobs of the respondents

One of the major reasons that has prevented the complete disappearance of the joint family system or has debarred the completion of the transition from joint to nuclear family is the indispensability of the in-laws when it comes to assisting the respondents in child rearing. 98 out of 155 respondents (63.23%) reported having children almost everyone falling in the school going group. The life of the married corporate women can easily be dichotomized into two phases- pre-child birth and post childbirth, where the problems got amplified at the latter phase. As remarked by one of the respondents without kids- “These questions will make more sense after 3 or 4 years when I will become a mother”. The immediate problem faced by the young working corporate mothers is to look after the kid after rejoining office post maternity sabbatical. Indicated in Fig 2, though majority of the mothers rely on outsourced help in matters of looking after the kids, the supervision of the nannies at home are done by the in-laws, especially mother-in-laws. Barring few cases, where the respondents reported not sharing a harmonious relationship with the mother-in-laws or the respondents stay with their own mothers, in-laws have turned into ad hoc guardians, reliable care takers and a source of support for the corporate workers.

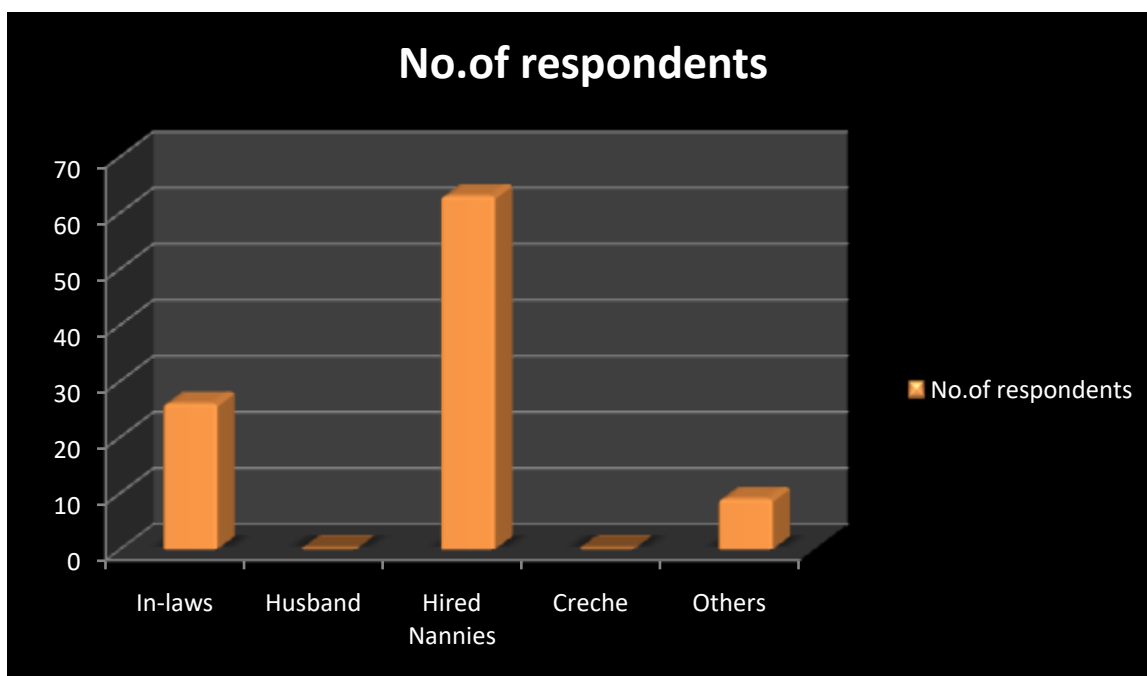


Figure 2: people taking care of the child after the respondents joined office post child birth (data based on 98 women having children).

The corporate houses reported maximum drop out during the pregnancy and post childbirth phases when it comes to women. A recorded conversation with the Executive Director of Catalyst India, Shachi Irde reported, “nearly 50% of the Indian women drop out of the corporate employment pipeline between junior and mid-levels, compared to 29% across Asia. Further to this, our recent research shows that women at executive levels leave at a higher rate than those at other levels” (Business Today, 2016). The said report cited three reasons for this loss of talent- gender based stereotypes, exclusion from informal networks and lack of role models, explained in details in the next section. The in-depth interview with the respondents (98 of them having one or 2 children) cited motherhood to be a major reason for the leak in the talent pipeline. Despite the inevitable pressure of balancing the private/public spheres, these 98 women have been strong enough to subvert the idea of leaking talent pipeline that has so engulfed the corporate sector.

Though it was difficult, given the time constraint to gather personal information from those former corporate women who have chosen home over job post child birth, but the grapevine reported that some women sometimes chose to place their child’s needs over their career, either out of choice or family compulsion thus confirming the research result of Gornick and Meyers (2003) who studied family and work among the American women. In their conversations with the American Women, Gornick and Meyers (2003)

found out that in their penchant to maintain the responsibilities at the private sphere and their engagement at the public world of works, American women are finding it hard as these ‘competing responsibilities leave them penalized in the workplace and overburdened and exhausted at home. Although the research is not exclusively focused on the problems of women- men too complain about the lack of time with their families- it is mothers who are viewed as most burdened and conflicted by multiple roles’ (p-2). They further went on to point out that with the rise of the corporate structure of work, ‘the most pressing conflicts of interest arise not between men and women, nor between parents and children, but between the needs of the contemporary families and current divisions of labour, work place practices and social policies’ (p-4). The burden of child care falls largely on the women as the mothers are still regarded as the primary care givers and in the process they produce a future workers in the form of socialized children which the economist have defined as ‘public goods’ (Mitchell 1966, Folbre 1994). Thus women contribute to the globalised economy either by directly assuming economic roles or by ensuring that the production continues unhindered.

6.1.2 Private sphere of the corporate as the Prisoner’s dilemma:

Prisoner’s dilemma can be described as, ‘the tale of two prisoners charged with the same crime, each held incommunicado. If both confess, both can be convicted. If neither confesses, neither can be convicted. But if one confess and the second one does not. The first goes free and is rewarded; second is more seriously punished than if both confessed. Should a rational prisoner confess? The exercise adapted from the tale is a game of strategy for two teams. Each team is to choose between increasing its own gain or the total gain of both teams’ (Glass 1978). Prisoner’s dilemma can thus be used to understand the congruence and conflict between husband and wife within the domestic setting where they work as a team, hence expected to make decisions that will maximize the pay-offs. Following the prisoner’s dilemma, husband and wife are faced with four alternatives to choose from regarding sharing the household chores-

- Both of them agree to share the chores and work second shift at home (Hochschild and Machung 2012).
- Husband refuses to cooperate (due to work pressure, late working hours, night shift, belief in traditional gender roles) and thus wife is penalized as she is left with the option of completing the chores herself or refusal to do them.
- Wife refuses to share chores and thus the burden falls on the husband to complete them (a rare scenario)

- Both refuses to share chores and thus hampering the smooth functioning of the private sphere (an absolute refusal to do chores is unheard of).

A tabular representation of this will reveal that the payoff⁴ is equal when both husband and wife share equal household chores. Husband will get the maximum pay off when he is relieved of the household tasks and vice versa in case of wife. But age old belief in traditional gender roles and the grip of the gender socialization have made it impossible for the women to shrug off the household duties which is amplified after the birth of the first child. Hence it is difficult to ignore the social benefit or societal reward associated with fulfillment of the household obligations- a reward more pronounced for the women for successfully balancing private sphere and public world of works. Even if the theory of rationality (Max Weber) utilitarianism (Mill, Bentham) and game theory believe that each individual makes rational decisions but this assumption has limited application in the private sphere, a sphere generally dominated by emotions and fulfillment of obligation towards each other- “it has been widely noticed that in many real-life situations in which the goals of different members take the form needed for the Prisoner’s dilemma to hold, actual behavior may deviate from pure self-interest and may be more deviated towards mutual advantage, code of conduct aimed at joint benefits seem to influence individual behavior, even in the absence of formal contracts and enforcement” (Sen 1999). Sen (1999) has further defined the private sphere as a sphere of ‘cooperative conflict’ (p-192-93), i.e, ‘the relations are marked by some degree of conflict and competition as well as a degree of mutual cooperation’ (Hicks 2002, p- 145)

		Husband	
		Does household chores	Takes Rest
Wife	Does household chores	2 2	1 3
	Takes Rest	3 1	0 0

Table 2(a): Tabular representation of the payoff matrix of the two rational players in the prisoner’s dilemma, in a domestic setting the players are husband and wife.

⁴ Pay off matrix is a visual representation of the possible outcomes of a strategic decision. A pay off matrix includes data for opponents, strategies and outcome. A pay off matrix can be used to calculate the aggregate outcome and to predict a strategy. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/payoff-matrix-in-economics-theory-examples.html>.

In the table above it is evident that the Nash equilibrium⁵ is formed in the northwest cell where the payoff is equal for both husband and wife sharing household chores. In an ideal symmetrical family this equilibrium should prevail. But as mentioned above, the real life situation vary greatly from the ideal type thus equal sharing of labour between husband and wife is rarely seen i.e, wife shares a greater part of the chore most of the time due to the incentive added to living up to the gender stereotype. It can be noticed that payoff is also equal when the husband and wife both refuse to share chores and decide to take rest post work. But in that case both have to put up with hunger and a messy home which is irrational in the real world situation, therefore the southeast cell can't be treated as forming a Nash because the payoff for the husband will maximize if he moves vertically up and choose to take rest and similarly for the wife to maximize her payoff she should move left of the table i.e, take rest while her husband takes care of the chores. If both the players are rational then they will try to maximize their payoff thus giving rise to a situation of conflict within the household. The whole domestic setting will cease to run; family will turn dysfunctional. Thus to take care of the conflict situation and to ensure congruence between husband and wife, value system has been introduced and societal incentives in the form of appreciation has been added to make women abide by them.

Sociologically, the significant values that are instrumental for making decisions are the direct products of the patriarchy. To explain it further Husain and Dutta (2014) have used another variant of the Game theory- the Game of Chicken to explain the derivation of the Nash equilibrium in the domestic domain (fig 2b).

Wife \ Husband	Does household tasks	Take Rest
Does household tasks	$(2+\Theta, 2)$	$(1+\Theta, 3)$
Take rest	$(3-\Theta, 1)$	$(-\Theta, 0)$

Table 2(b): Tabular representation of the game of chicken, Husain and Dutta (2014, p-37)

The table above bears a resemblance with the table depicting the prisoner's dilemma, the only addition is the Θ that represents the values and positive sanction attached to living up to the gender stereotype. If this Θ is converted into a numerical value or

⁵ Nash Equilibrium can be defined as a solution to a game used specifically in the game theory involving two players. Named after its inventor John Nash, an American mathematician, Nash equilibrium 'is the solution to the game where two or more players have a strategy, and with each participant considering an opponent's choice he has no initiative, nothing to gain, by switching his strategy. Every player wins because everyone gets the outcome they desire' <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/n/nash-equilibrium.asp>.

otherwise it is not difficult to understand that the Nash equilibrium is formed at the north-east corner of the table where the wife does the household tasks and the husband takes rest (Husain and Dutta 2014). In the absence of the societal provocation and values attached to performing gender roles both the husband and wife would have either shared the household chores (which would not have maximized payoffs for them but would have equalized the situation leading to the possibility of multiple Nash equilibria) or taken rest.

Despite the shift in the balance post child birth, the rise of the symmetrical family⁶, though nascent cannot be ignored. The symmetry is observed when the respondents were questioned regarding their involvement in decision making within the family (fig 3).

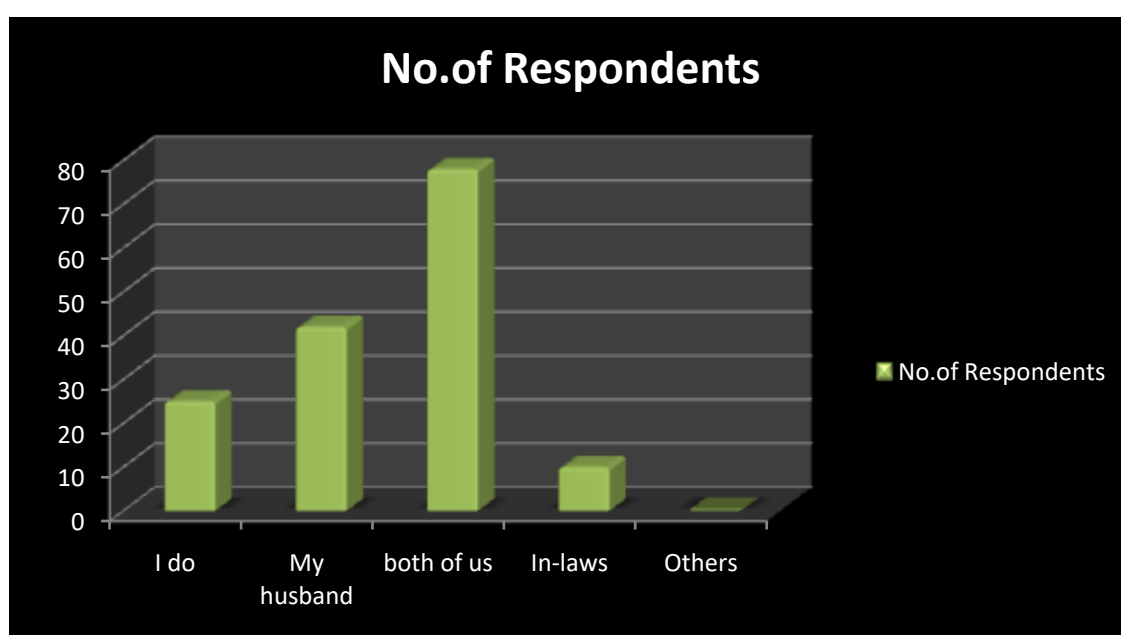


Figure 3: Respondents take on decision maker within the family.

As seen in the figure, the majority of the respondents agreed taking proactive roles in making decisions within the family and this involvement becomes manifold when it comes taking decisions regarding children and their needs. The traditional patriarchal setup often ensured that the rein of the family remained with the oldest patriarch- patriarchy is often defined as the rule of men on women as well as the rule of the older men over younger men (Millett 1970). Often the involvement of women in the

⁶ Symmetrical family as described by Willmott and Young is a kind of family where there exists equal division of labour within the family or in other words the division of labour is less marked and both the partners have equal say in the family.

feminized occupations did little to perturb the set up. But this first generation IT workers are not only challenging the set up but also modifying it to their advantage. This capability to making informed decisions have been described by many feminists and economic theorists as ‘agency’ (Sen 1990). According to Sen (1990), women as rational individuals and backed by the economic power accorded to them by the employment, are capable of making informed choices, which may not spell their well being. In other words, well being of the individual, in this case the women, has no connection with the choices they make in their day to day life. Chaudhuri (2012) clarified that, agency function of the women is embedded within a system of values that is patriarchal and work as constant constraint. But employment of the women magnifies this decision making power and this is substantiated by the fact that 85.16% of the respondents vehemently agreed to the statement ‘financial independence of the women leads to more autonomy in decision making. Financial independence of the women has a strong positive correlation with their agency function, though the decisions taken do not always enhance their well being.

This discrepancy between the agency and well being can be best described with the help of the example where the respondents had to let go of their onsite opportunities in order to take care of their family, especially their children. Situating agency in a woman’s experience presents an ineluctable dilemma. Bordering on the territory of subjectivity, decision making power of the women can be considered as agency function enhanced by the financial autonomy, but it is generally noticed that the decision taken is influenced by various extraneous factors. The women interviewed, who did let go of their opportunity to be onsite cited family as their priority as well as the reason for rejecting the offer. Agency thus gets subtracted from well being when these same women lament letting of the opportunity. Some of the respondents even reported that onsite opportunities are rarely delegated to women with small kids as it is a given assumption that the latter would turn them down.

The fragility of the link between agency and financial autonomy is further illustrated with the help of the question where the respondents were asked about their modus

operandi in dealing with disagreements within the family. A surprising 34.84% women chose the option 'I generally give in to maintain peace within the family' and 21.93% chose 'my husband is more logical than I am (therefore his opinion prevails)'. It should also be mentioned that in this respect 29.03% women asserted that they are more reasonable than their husbands; hence their words prevail. This dichotomy in behavior witnessed in women who are working at the same sector and sharing the same financial background has hinted to the possibility that jobs have created two categories of women who exercise their agency function differently. Financial autonomy to one group of women is nothing but a source of income necessary to make both ends meet in a metropolis; while for another group the same job is a source of identity and independence both in the private and public spheres. The way the engagement in the public world of works is viewed by women depends on their capability to capitalize on the autonomy which in turn is dependent on the social situation in which a woman finds herself.

Inquired about income, spending and saving, the responses became highly individualized- from 'I pool in income with my husband and the monthly expenditure is shared' to 'I spend my income on myself and sometimes on joint activities like watching movies or holidays'. But it has been noticed that the tendency to share expenditure increases with the birth of the child for obvious reasons.

Obstacles faced by married women to strike the perfect work-life balance are manifold and are magnified for women with children. This explains why many corporate houses have reported the phenomenon of 'leaking talent pipeline', a situation where women drop out after the birth of the child or in the middle of their career to concentrate on family. This coupled with 'mommy track' which refers to the decelerated vertical mobility of women within the corporate house as a set aside few years for child rearing have been impediments which can't be downplayed. But what can be highlighted is the constant effort taken by these women to live up to the reputation of being the first generation IT workers. Despite the time constraint and the constant stress of dealing with changing technologies and the demands of the clients, these women are finding it

worthwhile than being home bound and dealing with what Freidan (1963) has described as ‘a problem with no name’.

6.2 Corporate women and Public world of work:

According to a recent report by the Catalyst⁷, ‘the labour force participation rate for women (India) in 2017 was 28.5% (compared to 82% for men)’. Women’s involvement in the IT sector has gone up during the last decade. Various factors have been responsible for this- apparently gender neutral hiring process, women taking up technical subjects, corporate policies to hire more women and creation of women friendly work environment. Despite such boosts from the organization to check the leaking talent pipeline, women in general and married women with children in particular do face certain obstacles within the organization as well as outside.

6.2.1 Dealing with the corporate world:

Corporate women striving to strike a perfect work-family balance requires in-depth research which is currently lacking in India due to ‘gender inequalities culture and low status accorded to women and women’s issues in the country’ (Rajadhyaksha and Smita 2004, p-1674). According to the report by ILO (2017) there has been a decline in the GDP from 8.0% in 2015-16 to 7.1% in 2016-17. ILO further reported that, ‘India has amongst the lowest women’s labour force participation (LFPR) in the world. Not only women’s participation rates are low, but have been showing a declining trend since 2004-05. Women’s LFPR dropped from 42.7% in 2004-05 to 31.2% in 2011-12. Participation rates are even lower in urban areas and among educated women, and when women work they tend to end up in marginal jobs, often in home-based work (as contributing family worker/unpaid worker) and the domestic work sector” (p-2). This discouraging report on the work force participation among the urban women calls for research on the missing link between women education and job and that link turns out to be the leaking talent pipeline.

⁷ Women in the Workforce: India, a report by Catalyst. <https://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-workforce-india>. The latest report is all available on the website that came out in November 2019. It reported that the Gender pay Gap is shrinking in India where women get 65% of what their male colleague earn.

In the report titled ‘The Power of Parity: Advancing Women’s Equality in India’ (2015), McKinsey developed a new measure- India Female Empowerment Index (Femdex), according to which, Mizoram, Kerala, Meghalaya, Goa and Sikkim have scored the highest in the gender parity at work while Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh score the lowest. MGI⁸ also charted out five areas where women lack in the job market- labour-force participation rate, professional and technical jobs, unpaid care work, wage gap and leadership positions. Femdex (calculated by MGI using the sum of square method with equal weighting across indicators) in West Bengal has been estimated at 0.54 in comparison to 0.70 in Mizoram; while gender equality at work is 0.32 comparable to the all India score of 0.32 on the basis of female population in 2012. Hence West Bengal stands somewhere in the middle when it comes to female labour force participation.

In the study, out of the five areas mentioned by MGI, unpaid care work and lack of women in the leadership position came to the forefront as two distinctive features of the corporate women that remain under discussed. Dropping out of the women mid career- due to childbirth and excessive stress in the technical jobs that require constant upgrading have compelled many women to choose between job and family where they end up choosing the latter. That explains the limited presence of women as executive board members. As succinctly explained by one of the respondents that it is easier for men to rise up the corporate hierarchy as they can devote more time than women with kids, it becomes imperative for the latter to go home as soon as the shift ends, the physical presence of the men even after the designated office hours put them in good books with the appraiser as hard worker. Majority of the women in the study work as IT analysts with 5.81% respondents reported working as team leaders or project heads. On further deliberation, the respondents reported that they are mentally and physically drained by the time they reach the middle layer of the corporate hierarchy and end up being comfortable in that stage where they get to balance both their work as well as their family, which according to one respondent is ‘enjoying the both the worlds so that I don’t miss out’.

Time management becomes the biggest concern for the corporate women with children. In this regard, few of the organizations in Kolkata have introduced certain measures for their women employers. To adduce, women who are delegated night shifts are always

⁸ See McKinsey Report, November 2015.

provided with company drop off facilities post work (though this facility is not limited to women alone), some companies make sure that women employees are given morning shifts and work from home facilities. Majority of the respondents reported spending their weekends at home to compensate for the time they spend away at work. Watching movies, weekend dine out, sometimes cooking special lunch or dinner topped list of the activities done by the respondents on weekends, unless it becomes absolutely urgent to report to the office. Sometimes majority household chores are stored to be finished during the weekends like one respondents reported, 'I do all the washing on Saturdays; my neighbours have started calling me laundry lady on weekends'. Almost all the respondents have maids to take care of the regular household chores who are supervised by the in-laws. In the absence of the in-laws (especially for respondents in neo local residences) the maids are scheduled in the early morning so that the respondent themselves can supervise them.

One startling lacunae that was noticed during the fieldwork was the absence of crèches or surrogate care centers provided by the organizations where the respondents could admit their toddlers. The importance of crèche facility has been first discussed in the Factories Act 1948, which made it a mandate for a factory with more than 30 female employees to have a crèche for children below the age of 6 years. But earlier the factories the flouted the mandate by employing less than 30 workers, the IT offices in Kolkata too are terribly lacking in this department. The only respite given to the women during pregnancy and childbirth is the 3 months (minimum) of sabbatical with pay. But post delivery care and making arrangements to take care of the child after the cessation of the leave are totally the responsibilities of the women with little or no help from the organization concerned; on the flip side these women are negatively appraised if they happen to extend their leave (information gathered through grapevine). But few of the respondents informed that sometimes team leaders are cooperative enough to allow them to finish work and leave office a little early, though informally.

6.2.2 Corporate women and Harassment within the office:

A behavior takes the form of harassment when, 'enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment or the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider

intimidating, hostile or abusive⁹. Sexual harassment too involves abusive environment or voyeuristically charged ambience inside the place of work. Sexual harassment at work place came to the forefront in India after the Bhanwari Devi¹⁰ incident that gave rise to the Vishakha guidelines to be followed by all the organizations to curb such incidents. In the recent development, Vishakha guidelines have been superseded by the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 that has successfully widened the definition of harassment and aggrieved women to cover all women, “irrespective of her age or employment status, whether in the organized or unorganized sectors, public or private and covers clients, customers and domestic workers as well”.¹¹ With the increase in the number of complaints transcending professional boundary by the managers and other workers, it has become a mandate for every organization to have a committee to look into the complaints and take stern measures when the harassment is proved to have taken place. The Human Resource department (HR) deals with such matters and strong HR ensure safety to the female workers to the extent that the harassers are often fired on the spot.

In the study, a handful of women reported facing harassment of sexual nature of some sort like managers asking them to stay back post office hours on the pretext of discussing work, colleagues behaving indecently at office parties after drinking, deliberate crowding and brushing against, indecent text messages or late night calls. Few of them reported the matter to the HR, but most of them confronted the harasser themselves. According to one respondent who was victimized, “my colleague got my phone number and texted me once. I replied, but the frequency of texts started increasing. He asked me out many times to which I refused and told him that I was married. He would stop for few days and then start again. I had no other option but to report the matter to the HR and shown them the text messages as proof of his guilt. He was immediately fired”. The above is a case of cooperative HR, but oftentimes it is seen

⁹ Sexual Harassment has been defined by many agencies but the standard definition has been provide by the U.S Equal Employment Opportunity Commission available at <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/harassment.cfm>.

¹⁰ The rape of Bhanwari Devi by five high caste men in Rajasthan resulted in the formation of Vishakha guidelines to deal with the sexual harassment at workplace, since Bhanwari Devi was raped owing to her attempts to stop child marriage in her district in her capacity as the social worker. Before this incident there was no avenue to report the sexual harassment at workplace.

¹¹ Sexual Harassment at work place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_Harassment_of_Women_at_Workplace_\(Prevention,_Prohibition_and_Redressal\)_Act,_2013](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sexual_Harassment_of_Women_at_Workplace_(Prevention,_Prohibition_and_Redressal)_Act,_2013)

that HR sides the management instead of the victims. Another respondent working in the same sector reported that, “my manager called me to his room one day and touched me inappropriately. I was stern and told him to behave himself. He was so audacious he replied that there were no cctvs in his room. I reported the case to the HR, but the manager was influential, HR told me that they could not do anything about this as I could barely provide a proof of his wrong doing. I started making plans of getting the manager in trap and initiated a chat on facebook where I indirectly hinted at the incident that took place in his cubicle. He was unaware that I was doing it deliberately to collect proof. My husband was sitting with me while I was chatting. When the manager jokingly agreed and referred to the incident I took the printout of the chat and handed it to the HR team the next day. The manager was called and was forced to take a transfer to another branch of our office”.

It is brave enough for the women to fight a battle against such influential heads despite the fear of being sacked any moment. Many organizations have made it their motto to provide a safe environment for the women to work in. But asking a woman colleague out for coffee or asking her stay back after office hour or crowding her in her cubicle are very common practices. The problem with such apparently innocent gestures are they do not fall under the purview of hardcore sexual harassment and thus are often let off with a word of caution to the woman or warning to the perpetrator in extreme cases. But if the complainant and the perpetrator happen to belong to different official hierarchies and continue to work after the reporting of incident then the chances of former getting negative appraisal from the latter is almost inevitable. Goswami (2007) has categorically jotted down the events which can be regarded as forms of sexual harassment. According to her, it is harassment if someone invades your personal space either literally or metaphorically, it is harassment when someone displays too much personal interest in you or your sex life, even after you have indicated your discomfort, if somebody makes comments about your appearance, asks you when you lost your virginity, whether you and your boyfriend go all the way, then you have adequate grounds to complain even if no actual sexual proposition has been made. As the complaints of sexual harassment have been rising ever since, many organizations have buckled up their HR to deal with such cases with strong hand, sometimes resulting in immediate extermination of the term of office if the offense is proved. As mentioned above The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 has made it a mandate for the organizations to form Internal Complaints Committee (ICCs) to

investigate the cases and to provide all kinds of support to the aggrieved woman. Sexual harassment at private sector has attracted the attention to the extent that government has asked private companies to submit monthly status reports on sexual harassment cases, if any, in their organizations.

Harassment can take many forms and not just sexual in nature. Perhaps the most common harassment or mental agony that women workers face in the corporate world is at the time of their annual appraisal. Many respondents reported a strange trait followed in the corporate world. There is hardly any gender bias in the hiring process, on the contrary women are given preferences during recruitment at times. They also reported that gender of the employee does not affect the pay package while recruitment. The difference in income arises during appraisal. According to some respondents, it is always easier for men to get promoted because of their continued presence in the office even after office hours- ‘Visibility is rated more highly than efficiency at times’, a respondent. In this case visibility does not refer to regular office attendance, rather the extra hour they can make themselves available in the office after work. It is even more precarious for women with infants and toddlers to extend the hours of work unless it is absolutely necessary. The discrimination in appraisal persists but it is subtle and does not apply to all organizations. Infact, according to many reports few organizations have taken up the drive to recruit, promote and train more women to control the leaking talent pipeline.

6.2.3 Corporate women and health issues:

With the spurt in the cardiac ailments reported mostly in the urban areas, researches have been done on the stress and the resultant health issues faced by the IT workers. Health of the IT workers has been an issue of global interest. According to the report by the American Institute of Stress (AIS), “increased level of job stress as assessed by the perception of having little control but lots of demands have been demonstrated to be associated with increased rates of heart attack, hypertension and other disorders”¹². Work related stress and anxiety have formed a major part of corporate life and this problem is magnified with a disrupting family situation. Almost 93.75% of the workers reported stress to be a major side effect of working in a corporate firm. Stress is created due to constant pressure to meet targets and long working hours (Fig 4). Pfeffer (2018)

¹² Corporate stress is the major source of medical research. More reports available on <https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress/>.

in his research highlighted the severe ailments resulting in death among the corporate workers in US and other countries due to what he calls ‘work exposures’ that ‘negatively impact human health including working long hours in a week, facing family-to-work and work-to-family conflicts, having relatively low control over one’s job and job environment and facing high job demands such as pressure to work fast’ (Forbes 2018).

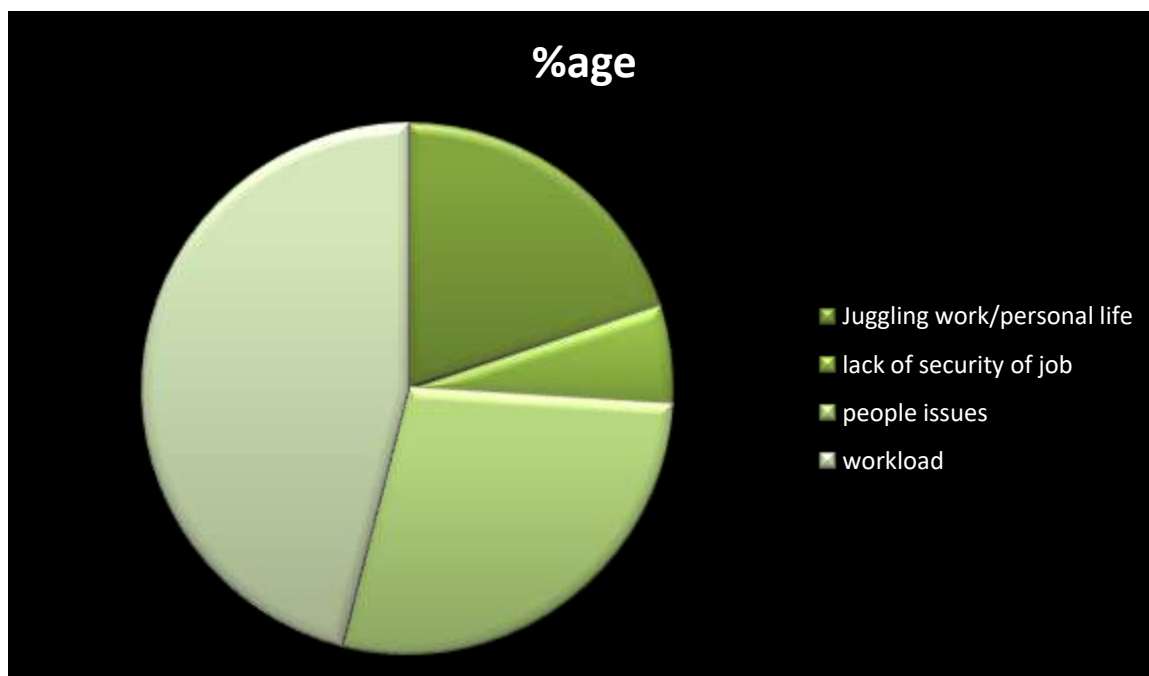


Figure 4: The Stress Wheel developed by American Institute of Stress, 2006.

The study conducted among the married women workers bears proof to the above fact that corporate job is taxing. Most of the respondents agreed that the work is draining and most of them are prepared to burn out before they reach the age of 60. According to one respondent, aged 29, “we have to think about savings much more than those employed in the public sector as we can’t think of sticking in the same sector post 50, we know freshers and upgraded technology will drive us out of the competition because corporate firm thrive on speedy solutions”. The lack of job security is another reason why corporate workers are always on the edge as a single mistake can get reflected in the appraisal and can hamper the upward mobility as well as increment.

Corporate job lacks specific work schedule or working hours. Since a firm caters to western countries, the job timings are rather ‘odd’ going by IST. The preset biological clock is forced to get reset depending on the hours of work thus making it quite a task for the workers. But the major problem lies in change in shifts that calls for total rescheduling of the day to day activities. This takes a toll on the health of the workers

adding to the stress factor. The *Economic Times* reported, “Increasing stress has, in turn, led to a surge in the number of people who are suffering from depression and are at high risk of suicide. Employers, therefore, face an increasing challenge of dealing with workers who are not only personally depressed but may also adversely impact the productivity of their organizations”. It further surveyed the major sources of stress to be work, money, family and other sources include pregnancy, parenting, care giving and social isolation. Depression and suicide and generally found high among the women, the survey found.

In the study with 155 women more than 60% of the women reported being dissatisfied or moderately satisfied with the job (fig 5) on scale on 1 to 5 (where 1 represents least satisfaction and 5 represents maximum satisfaction); sometimes because of the non alignment with the project or due to the stress of maintaining both the fronts. Some respondents also reported commuting to the place of work daily is also equally stressful as it leaves them with very less time post work to indulge in other activities. To understand the level of stress associated with covering the distance between home and work place, we commuted along with the techies for a week to sector 5 from south Kolkata and found that it took nearly 4-6 hours for them to travel back and forth, leaving barely 3-4 hours to interact with the family members on an usual weekday. The level of stress accelerates in the absence of cooperative colleagues in the work place and most of the respondents confessed maintaining a deliberate distance with the fellow colleagues and managers in their attempt to keep work and private lives separate.

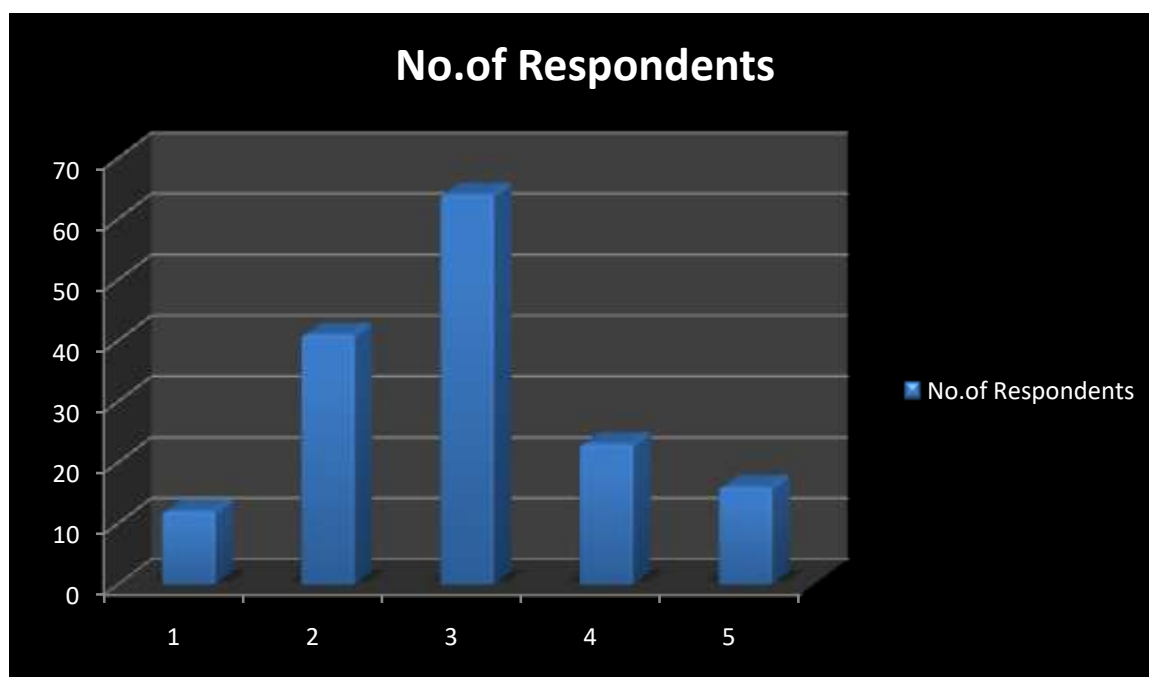


Figure 5: Scale of Satisfaction among the women regarding the current position (x=scales from 1 to 5; y=no. of respondents)

The increasing awareness of the stress in the lives of the corporate workers, many organizations have taken proactive measures to ensure a healthy lifestyle. Most of the office complexes that we have visited have their own state of the art gymnasium and yoga centers, cafeterias and stores. Some organizations regularly organize workshops with prominent psychologist or counselors to ensure wellbeing of the workers and unhindered productivity. Mental well being of the workers have become a core issue of the organizations, prompting them to provide facilities which will help the workers devote time in the projects as well as enjoy other non-work benefits. Hochschild (1997) theorized this effort on the part of the organization to make work attractive by providing facilities as the strategy of capitalism to sustain itself. As further elucidated by Leana (1998), “For many harried parents, home had become a joyless arena where tasks like cooking, cleaning and even parenting were dispatched with a determined, almost Tayloristic efficiency. In the language of business, the emotional side of family life- nurturing, support, companionship- had been downsized by the working parents facing mounting demands for shrinking hours” (p-628). As far as the corporate scene in urban Kolkata is concerned the need of the hour is introducing crèches for the women with toddlers, which will ensure better attention and contribution on the part of these women. Though some organizations provide more work from home facilities to their workers especially women with children to compensate for the absence of on-site child care centers.

6.3 Concluding discussion:

The strain of vacillation between the private and public spheres for women can be diluted with the cooperation from the respective organizations. Women are not only directly contributing to the economy through their sustained labour but are ensuring future production by socializing and disciplining their children (Mitchell 1966, Folbre 2008). Working women is a capitalistic need so is child rearing, thus putting double pressure on the women to live up to expectations. As mentioned by Hochschild (1997), ‘Capitalism is not just an economic system but a highly inventive cultural system, and at present it is in the process of inventing a zero-drag version of work-life balance’ (p-12). Hochschild (1997) went on to explain how zero drag companies are modeled to provide all comfort to the employees so much so that family turns out to be an arena that seems like a job to the latter thus, explicitly justifying the need of a ‘third shift’ where

emotional balance will be restored among the family members and relation between them will not be guided by the market forces. Such powerful grip of the market has not been felt in among the corporate in urban Kolkata yet, where they are still juggling the two worlds to create the perfect nash equilibrium, the attainment of which is possible by empathetic understanding by the people they face off on a day to day basis- be it home or work.

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EMPOWERMENT, AGENCY AND CONSTRAINTS: A GLIMPSE OF GENDER SOCIALIZATION AND THE ‘CULTURE OF ADJUSTMENT’

Abstract:

This chapter is an attempt to understand the construction of agency among the financially independent women by battologizing the influence of gender socialization that commences from infancy. “Family and educational institutions are the sites of social reproduction and communicate the binary opposition of femininity and masculinity to the little girls and boys through socialization. Thus, similar ideologies permeates the socialization process in the family and the home and also underlie the classroom processes, educational structures and organizations” (Chanana 2007,p- 591). The juxtaposition of the traditional gender socialization in the private sphere that stereotypes gender roles and the unmistakable allure of the public world of work coupled with financial independence have resulted in the women vacillating between family and career for a long time. Women’s entry into a field dominated by the masculine presence has been a multi-causal transition, yet the grip of the internalized gender straitjackets is felt in the day to day life of these women corporate workers. This chapter deals with the process of gender socialization and gauges the changes in the process along with the shift in the mindset of the parents in an attempt to understand whether the perceived change is the real road to empowerment or is patriarchy operating in an altered form. It is also an attempt to find answer to why women’s negotiating capability in the ‘patriarchal bargain’ (Kandiyoti 1988) is mostly likely to be rigged that sometimes compels women to choose between work and life. It is based on the field survey involving 155 married women working at the IT sector of Kolkata. This chapter also includes the narratives of 5 women, their trials, tribulations and aspirations.

Keywords: family, gender socialization, working women, corporate women, IT hub, globalization, work-life balance, gender roles, public/private dichotomy.

7. Introduction:

Empowerment as understood by Kabeer(1999) is a clarification to the ongoing dilemma surrounding the definition of the term. Empowerment, simply put, “is the ability to

make choices: to be disempowered, therefore, implies to be denied choice” and “is inescapably bound up with the condition of disempowerment and refer to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability”(Kabeer 1999, p-437). In a society, *the denial of ability* and *ability to deny* rest on the same social structure that mould both the genders. The choices to be made available for self actualization are somewhat predetermined by the system to which an individual is inducted; structures are limiting (Giddens 1984) and patriarchal system is selective in its limiting function. The presence of women in a sphere totally dominated by the men has attracted attention. The terms like ‘glass ceiling’ ‘mommy track’ and ‘leaking talent pipeline’ have been reiterated in the gender discourse with respect to the corporate culture. Dual reasons can be cited for stressing the significance of the women working at the IT hub- 1.It marks the women transcending the patriarchal boundary of working in the ‘feminized occupations’ like teaching and nursing and 2. The less discussed change in the women’s choice of disciplines i.e, trend away from choosing ‘feminized subjects’. It also hints at the change in the parental expectation from daughters which seem to have changed over times. Parents, especially in the urban areas are undergoing a transition in their mindset when it comes to their daughter’ career (Chanana 2007); though marriage still remains a primary concern. Thus traditional gender roles are juxtaposed with the image to new age careerist woman, the way agency function is shaped and exercised depends on the adjustment between the two counter forces.

In this chapter, three questions have been dealt with- a. what is gender, gendering and proliferation of culture of adjustment? b. why the women with the same level of opportunities experience agency and empowerment differently? and c. What are empowerment and agency in the context of corporate women? This chapter is divided into three sections dealing with the process of socialization in India, the idea of empowerment in a apparently patriarchal society and how intrinsically linked it is to the idea of agency and the lived experience of five married women working at the corporate sector of urban Kolkata.

7.1 Gender, Gendering and the Birth of the Culture of Adjustment:

The internalization of the gender rules and norms in such a way that they get ingrained and become a part of our psyche and are played out in a completely fluid and unconscious manner in different situations an individual faces in his/her life is termed as gender socialization. It may sound like a hackneyed saying, gender socialization is ubiquitous and therefore challenging it can be perturbing for the smooth functioning of an individual in a social setting as it helps in the ‘social construction of reality’ (Burger and Luckman 1966). ‘Women are not born, they are made’ (Beauvoir 1949) sums up the whole process of gendering a sex and also hints at the sheer obduracy of the society with which it debars itself from challenging the process. Beauvoir’s endeavor in unearthing the deep rooted societal bias in dealing with gender is well reflected in her post mortem of human physiology, where she claimed that public/private divide in our society is subtly corresponding to the male and female organs. The rationale cited is that a woman is expected to be confined in the private domain just like an ovum which remains hidden inside a woman’s body and can hardly claim an external existence like a man’s testicles which are visible and thus justifies man’s visibility in the public sector. According to Beauvoir every biological and physiological difference has been interpreted to go against the women and has been used to strengthen the gender difference and discrimination. The groundwork was laid by Freud, who identified femininity as a ‘lack’, his phallocentric explanations outrageously graded men’s body and genital structure above women. A woman, according to Freud is someone who is ‘lacking a penis or an external genital organ’ and this ‘penis envy’ automatically relegates woman to a secondary position vis-à-vis a man. Beauvoir retorts to this outrageous claim by pointing out that ‘the girl’s envy, when it appears, is the result of valorization of virility. Freud takes this for granted when instead he should account for it’. A different take on ‘penis envy’ was posited by Alfred Alder where he explained that a girl subconsciously interprets penis as the external manifestation of the male domination and thus prepares to submit herself to be dominated initially by her father and husband later.

Gendering of sex, to some extent, is connected to the internalization and cementing of the public/private dichotomy. The early feminists’ engagement with mainstream gender discourses brought to the forefront their take on the practicality of this dichotomy. Early feminists, as it was their period of inception, did not want to jeopardize the social

equilibrium by challenging the familial set-up and thus ‘politicize the private sphere’ which, according to them, is the sphere of freedom and individual choice. It is not unknown that radicalization of the feminist ideas took place during the second wave feminism which successfully challenged the private/public divide and needs were felt for its demolition to render true emancipation to women.

To counter the ‘no politicization of the private sphere’ claim of the early feminists, the radicals gave birth to the idea ‘personal is political’ and they rationalized their slogan by pointing out that men living on the physical labour of the women at home amounts to exploitation. In their effort to provide a meta-narrative to understand a ‘man’ and a ‘woman’ by amalgamating psychology and biology, the psychoanalysts have explained and painted a female as a deviation from a ‘male’, the latter being treated as a universal sex, a reference point- ‘feminine’ is only a reflection of what is constructed as masculine (post modern feminism) or in other words, feminine is a distorted reflection of masculine as it is equated with a ‘lack’ whereas men with a visible sexual organ, which psychologically symbolizes domination, come to be associated with everything ‘mainstream’. Therefore, man becomes the defining point and this whole psycho-sexual setup has been used as a rationalization for the differential gender socialization.

Gender Socialization is an unconscious process, manifested in a very subtle manner. The strength of the process is gauged by the fact that even if a child is socialized from a non-sexist perspective at home, he/she is bound to get conditioned in school (Anthony Giddens, 1989). Even while participating in extra-curricular activities, gender socialization unconsciously meddles with the choice and through these activities boys and girls internalize different sets of values (Eder and Parker, 1987). Through a participant observation method, Eder and Parker highlighted that men are mostly seen participating in the highly agile and competitive games like football and basketball and are therefore, capable of gaining ‘status through athletic involvement’ whereas ‘females continue to rely on social relations to gain status among peers’. Girls’ involvement in competitive games has always drawn appreciation much less than their stint as cheerleaders. The research also indicated that from school women are prepared for occupations which place more importance on physical appearance while men are molded to handle competitive jobs with higher perks. Therefore, schools indirectly socialize men to value aggressiveness and women to value attractiveness and in the

process, unconsciously promote gender socialization through sex segregation (hidden curriculum). Male aggressiveness is so valued that men's inability to display aggression is often criticized and punished by 'accusing' those men of being 'feminine' which is seen as a matter of great shame as it is expected of men to show disdain for female activities.

Competitiveness ingrained at childhood, unconsciously drive a man's behavior even at work. Climbing up the corporate hierarchy becomes a primary preoccupation and failure to do that affects them both socially and psychologically. In a society in general and Indian society in particular, the status of the man within the family as well as in the larger community is determined by his occupation and his financial contribution in running the family. It is deeply ingrained within the cultural set-up and psychological make-up that a man is supposed to occupy a higher position and earn more vis-à-vis a woman. This perception is clearly associated with the way men are valued at birth- "a male child is so valuable that the sister after whom it is born comes in for special praise as auspicious and auguring good fortune" (Dube 1988, p-12). Girl child in the post colonial patrilineal India has always been invisible in the economic context. Their confinement in the private sphere has been all-encompassing and water-tight with customs like child marriage and purdah augmenting it. Stressing the importance of marriage in the life of the Indian women, Dube (1988) observed, in the context of gender socialization and how women are forced into the process of anticipatory socialization, "A girl should walk with soft steps: so soft that they are barely audible to others. Taking long strides denotes masculinity. Girls are often rebuked for jumping, running and rushing to a place and hopping"(Dube 1988, p-16).

7.2 Culture of Adjustment, Women and Work:

Unfathomable number of injunctions issued to the women from infancy, consciously or unconsciously prepares them for a life where are expected to 'adjust'. Adjustment is a state where people (in this case the women), despite having the conscious knowledge of the unfavorable circumstances for their self-actualization, cooperate with the system. Adjustment is taken resort to in the view of a definite purpose; however in case of the women adjustment is taught as a part of the socialization process. Borrowing from Oscar Lewis' 'culture of poverty', the germination and the flow of the 'culture of

adjustment’ can be analyzed. Lewis describes the ‘culture of poverty’ as, “a subculture of western society with its own structure and rationale, a way of life handed on from generation to generation along family lines. The culture of poverty is not just a matter of deprivation or disorganization, a term signifying the absence of something. It is a culture in the traditional anthropological sense in that it provides human beings with a design for living, with a readymade set of solutions for human problems, and so serves a significant adaptive function” (Lewis 1959, p-19). Similarity can be drawn between these two conceptual frameworks- ‘the culture of poverty’ and the ‘culture of adjustment’, the latter being exclusive to women. The culture of adjustment stems from the very idea of turning women into docile bodies; the idea is ingrained in every activity associated with girls from infancy. From lullaby to the dramatization of marriage rituals, everything is done with the inherent objective of informing and preparing a girl for marriage and life after it; a blatant patronization of female sexuality (Dube 1988; Chakravarti 2003; Lindsey 2016). Women are consciously taught to ‘adjust’ or be ‘satisfied with’ the existing situation. The prevalence of the expectation of adjustment is so encompassing in a woman’s life that they are always expected to balance their private and public worlds, while men are discounted from such balancing act.

Occupations like teaching and nursing are feminized (Menon 2012) because they are aligned with the culture of adjustment that women have internalized. Firstly these are care giving services that conform to the notion that women are intrinsic care givers and this care giving can be marketized (Folbre and Nelson 2000), secondly, these occupations maintain a schedule that leaves the women with the time to attend to their domestic duties and thirdly feminine presence in these occupations have not been able to put a massive dent in the hegemonic masculinity. Initial hiccups of entering the job world have been ironed out with the capability of the women to ‘adjust’ to the demands of both the private and the public spheres. In the post globalization and liberalization era, the shift in the economic scenario hinted at an impending change in the overall societal structure. With the creation of the IT hubs and women’s entry into it challenged the internalized adaptive function and called for newer ones. The new scenario gave rise to a new crave for adjustment not only from the side of the women but from the socializing agents as well. Shift in the forms of gender socialization has been indicative in the rising expectation of the parent from daughters especially in the urban areas and a rising trend of women opting for ‘non-feminized’ disciplines. As noted by Chanana

(2007), ‘one could treat the post-1991 phase as a period which put forth a change which increased the social demand for specific kind of professional education, specially skill-oriented undergraduate degree which lead to a career and job’ (p-596). But this engagement in the corporate world demands a very different set of ideologies that challenges the existing culture of adjustment. Being the first generation corporate workers these women are stripped of the opportunity to draw from the learned body of adaptive functions. The responsibility now lies with these women with come up with a newer variant of adjustment process where they can vacillate between the private and public spheres without altering the spheres much.

In-depth interview with 155 married women engaged at the corporate sector provides insight into their modes of adaptation. Most of these women have chosen various modes to adjust to the changing demands. Some are choosing to marry late, or marry from the same sector to get the requisite professional understanding, delay having kids, let go of the onsite duties after having kids, their own retirement plans as many of them reported the possibility of ‘burning out’ very early in their career. According to one respondent (aged 28)- “we have to think of retirement much earlier than people in the public sector, though there is no official retirement age. But it is an unwritten law that more you age, it is believed more time you take to come up with swift state of the art technical solutions. To top it freshers are hired because they will not only work on a less package but they will be more visible and agile than those in their 60s”. This information can be corroborated with the fact that ‘aged’¹ people are visibly lacking at the corporate sector. But this trend is gender neutral and not specific to women alone, what is specific to women is the problem of leaking talent pipeline, discussed in the previous chapters. The problem of leaking talent pipeline is also related to the culture of adjustment where women are expected to prioritize their private sphere over public. According to report collected through grapevine, World Bank Report² and leading dailies³ like *The Hindu*,

¹ By aged we mean employees above 60 years of age. During my fieldwork I have not come across women above 60 actively working at the corporate sector.

² This is the speech delivered by Annette Dixon, the Vice President of the World Bank South Asia at The Economic Times Forum, Mumbai, India on March 16, 2018. The whole speech can be accessed at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2018/03/17/women-indias-economic-growth>.

³ This data is based on the gender based research by Anupriya Singh of Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management in the year 2014 in the city of New Delhi, India. The report can be accessed at <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/only-five-percent-indian-women-in-senior-corporate-posts-study-668627>.

the percentage of dropout within the corporate sector is more among women and women with children. The culture of adjustment forces women to find their comfort zone, to adjust, settle down and be satisfied in that zone. Therefore, many women choose to rise up to a certain level at the corporate hierarchy and then focus more on maintaining it than rising further. There can be many reasons for this like corporate politics or the existence of glass ceiling, but the field study with 155 women has helped to deduce that family and birth of kids bring a huge modification in the corporate aspirations of women. The adjustment comes in the form of limiting mobility by letting go of the onsite duties and sometimes projects that require them to stay overtime; the reflection of this is sometimes seen in their annual appraisal. This no-win, doubly disadvantaged situation sometimes form a major part of the corporate glass ceiling.

Despite these loopholes, the respondents have agreed that there has been a surge in the number of women workers in the corporate sector, prompting to the possibility of this sector turning more ‘women friendly’ in the near future, if not totally ‘feminized’. There is a possibility that the culture of adjustment can be relegated to non existence at the corporate sector with the active cooperation of both the men and the organizations. Success stories of the women leaders who have been able to shatter the glass ceiling are there as well but they are more exceptions than trend. Women’s engagement in the corporate sector have no doubt enhanced their agency function, where they are able to voice their choices, but the internalized values that sometimes guide these choices cannot be discounted when holistic empowerment is sought, as empowerment and agency are epistemologically distinct. This brings us to the question that why some women with the same level of opportunities at the corporate sector experience empowerment in different way?

7.3 Agency, Empowerment and Constraints:

In order to understand the underlying cause that interferes with the uniformity in the way women experience and practice agency and empowerment, the meaning of the two concepts has to be clarified. Though sometimes used synonymously these two concepts are different (Drydyk 2008).

7.3.1 Understanding Agency:

‘Agency’ in the gender discourse refers to the ability to make choices even in the face of extremities; these choices can be first-order choices like the choice to work or get married or have children as well as less important second order choices (Kabeer 1999). The existence of the dialectic relationship between agency and structure has always formed the core of sociological studies; where thinkers like Karl Marx believed in the capability of the human agency to act on its social circumstances after the disenchantment from the ‘false consciousness’. This belief in the agility of the human agency to bring about a change in the society has always dominated Marx’s Dialectical and Historical Materialism (Coser 1971; Ritzer 2016). The idea that man makes his own history but under circumstances ‘existing already, given and transmitted from the past’ shows that Marx had assigned a proactive role to the human beings as ‘agents’. Thus values transmitted and imbibed from the past plays an interesting role in determining the extent to which may or may not exercise agency.

This relationship has been further explored by Giddens (1984) in his structuration theory. Premised on the idea of duality, structure has been presented as existing both internally within an actor in the form of adaptive functions or memory traces and externally as the manifestation of social actions (Turner 1974). Giddens (1984) has categorically established the relationship between power and agents by stating that “to be an agent is to be able to deploy (chronically, in the flow of daily life) a range of casual powers, including that of influencing those deployed by the others” (p-14). As active agents experience the structural constraints on a daily basis they learn to negotiate the constraints and create a stock of knowledge which they draw from on facing any exigencies later. In the course of this negotiation, the agents can bring about modifications in the structure as well. This capability to negotiate and modify structure to serve the needs of the actor depends on the resources at their disposal. Here, ‘resources’ refer to actions indulged in by the actors to modify the surroundings and entails both authoritative (power to dominate) and allocative (power over materials) resources. Hence, actor’s ability to choose depends on the access to resources. Kabeer (1999) used the same model and fitted it into gender framework by extending the women’s ability to exercise choice on three factors- resources, agency and

achievements. Mishra and Tripathi (2011) consider that agency ‘encompasses the ability to formulate strategic choices, and to control resources and decisions that affect important life outcome. Therefore, agency should be treated as the essence of empowerment, and resources and achievements as enabling conditions and outcomes respectively’ (p-59).

The concept of ‘agency’ has formed a major part of the work of Amartya Sen’s capability approach. But in his engagement with agency, Sen (1990) has been categorical in pointing out that ‘well-being functions’ are generally subtracted from the agency function when it comes to women. Alkire (2008a) explained, “People who enjoy high levels of agency are engaged in actions that are congruent with their values” (p-3). Inability to exercise agency can turn a person inward into passivity. In simplifying Sen’s conception of agency, Alkire broke down the concept into five different characteristics; i. agency can be exercised with regard to ‘multiple aims’, ii. Agency involves ‘effective power’ (it refers to the ‘group’s power to achieve the chosen results’), iii. though agency and well being are two distinct concepts but for some people capability is related to agency based on the fact that people achieve goals to advance their sense of well being, iv. Agency is invariably linked to the values internalized by the agents, v. how far the agent has been ‘responsible’ with regard to a particular state of affairs will involve an assessment of the role played by the agent in bring about that situation (this perspective can be used to understand the crimes and justifications use by the criminals to commit them). One characteristic of agency that can be directly applied in the feminist discourse is people may achieve various levels of agency at different points in their life that to some extent extends an explanation to why women experience agency differently.

If this model is fit into India and particularly Bengal, a clear trajectory of the change in the position of women at different points in time or at different phases in their lifetime can be noticed. The agency function for a woman in traditional Bengal was limited and concentrated within the private sphere, with significant invisibility in the public. In a culture that nurtures holism, decisions taken by the women even in the private sphere were mostly subtracted from the well being. A woman could rise up the ladder of status-quo within the private sphere (*‘andarmahal’* in colloquial Bengali) based on seniority; explains the special position accorded to grandmothers in any household as the

custodian and socializing agent (*Thakurmar Jhuli*) who are more cordial and sympathetic than their immediate successor (Palriwala 1994; Dube 2000; Paul 2015). It should also be mentioned that child marriage was the custom in traditional Bengal, thus nipping at the bud the chance of developing opinions; let alone voice them. Early marriages made it convenient to socialize women into the age old customs thus making agency sound like an alien concept in those times. Women education introduced in the colonial Bengal did little to enhance the agency of the women rather the curriculum was modeled to help women better themselves in running the private sphere; a sphere that was exclusive to women with little or no interference from men. The development of agency can be understood by comparing the condition of women separated by a decade or more (Alkire 2008) and if that criteria is considered, then it can be said that the breaking the public/private dichotomy by entering the public world of works has definitely brought some visibly positive result when it comes to accessing the agency function (Kishore and Subaiya 2008; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001; Mishra and Tripathi 2011; Kabeer 1998).

In order to operationalize the concept ‘agency’, in the fieldwork involving 155 women, few indicators were included based on the review of relevant literature and researcher’s discretion. Indicators like pre marital job engagement, the choice of spouse, household chores attended to after office hours, sharing of household duties, decisions regarding expenditure, say in major decisions in the family, tactics resorted to when faced with disagreement with the spouse and the capability to determine future were taken into consideration to arrive at the qualitative understanding of the concept. As far as the urban women working at the corporate sector is concerned, financial independence has added to the capability of the women to exercise agency as 82.58% women agreed to be working before marriage and they have continued doing so. The respondents have shown their decision making capability in the public world of works and reported changing of jobs (57.42%) for various reasons like higher emoluments and better job profile. The complexity in dealing with agency arises when the structure in which a woman is placed becomes private. Locating women in the domestic setting modifies the power dynamics; and this is especially true in case of women with children. As discussed in the previous chapters, child rearing is still largely regarded as a woman’s

responsibility. Based on simple statistics it can be shown that exercise of agency is largely constrained within the private sphere (fig 1)

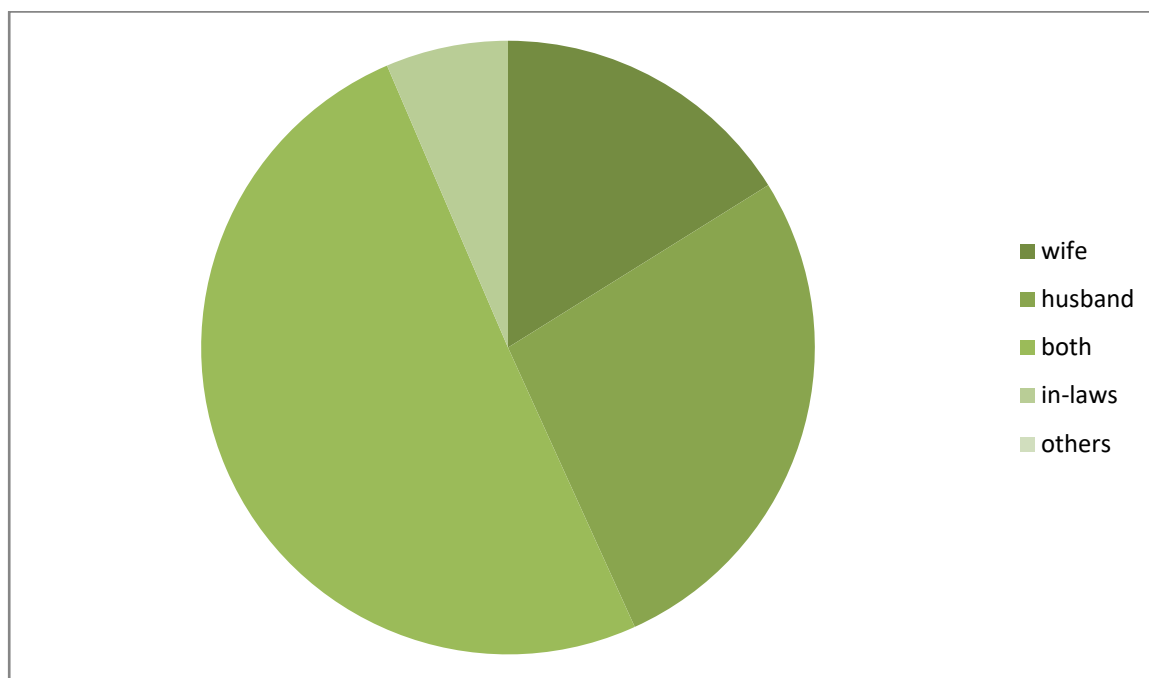


Figure 1: Overall Decision makers within the family. Based on the data gathered from the field (N=155)

This finding from the fieldwork based on the limited number of respondents corresponds with the analysis based on NFHS data. Mishra and Tripathi (2011) reached the following conclusion based on the NFHS-3 data, “Women in jobs for cash are always in a better position than those who are not paid anything at all. Obviously unpaid work (like household duties) does not lead to any improvement in authority. Similarly, education helps improve control; those with higher education have larger control than those without any education at all” (p-60). This nexus between agency-empowerment and autonomy in decision making will be better understood with further clarification of the terms.

7.3.2 Understanding Empowerment:

‘Empowerment’ and ‘agency’ have always been used synonymously, but the recent discourses have made it clear that these two terms have very different connotations and the presence of one does not guarantee the simultaneous existence of another. A comprehensive understanding of empowerment and how the holistic understanding of

the term is jeopardized when used synonymously with agency has been described by Drydyk (2008):

“So ‘empowerment’ evidently refers not to a state of affairs but to a process of change with a specific kind of result. In this respect it differs already from ‘agency,’ which refers either to a given person’s degree of involvement in a course of action, or to the scope of actions that a person could be involved in bringing about. Thus an initial difference appears: ‘agency’ refers to a state of affairs while ‘empowerment’ refers to a process of change. Moreover, ‘empowered’ and ‘empowering’ are scalar: one person can be more empowered than another, or one development project can be more empowering than other” (p-2).

It can be deduced from the above exposition that given the other conditions intact, agency or the capability to take decisions does not always guarantee that the decision will actually ensure that it empowers the woman. Drydyk (2008a) suggests the term ‘extended agency’ as a substitute of empowerment to refer to circumstances like this. Another interesting take on empowerment has been presented by Kabeer (1999):

“As far as empowerment is concerned, we are interested in possible inequalities in people’s capacity to make choices rather than in differences in the choices they make. An observed lack of uniformity in functioning achievements cannot be automatically interpreted as evidence of inequality because it is highly unlikely that all the members of a given society will give equal value to different possible ways of ‘being and doing’. Consequently, where gender differentials in functioning achievements exist, we have to disentangle differentials which reflect differences in preferences from those which embody a denial of choice.” (p- 439).

Empowerment, thus, has been equated with the ‘process of change’; unlike ‘agency’ that deals with the ability and not the end result of the decision. Attempts have been made to measure the level of empowerment from the developmental perspective but there is an inherent risk of reducing a qualitative aspect into quantification, as empowerment is the broader aspect of agency. For the sake of clarification many discourses have broken the empowerment into numerous indicators to fathom the ‘progress’ of women like assets owned, level of education, working before marriage, ability to get loans, equality in marriage, sharing of chores, financial autonomy (Kabeer 1999, 2010; Mishra and

Tripathi 2011; Jejeebhoy 1997; Jejeebhoy and Sathar 2001, Malhotra, Schuler and Boender 2002).

In our study, empowerment has been defined as the ability to make decisions that bring about a tactile positive change in the life of the woman concerned; harping on the importance of connecting agency with well being. It also refers to the capability of the women to determine their future course of action- be it continuing working at the same sector or taking voluntary retirement to engage in some other creative vocations. Empowerment has been dissected into following indicators in the study:

- Engagement in work pre marriage
- Sharing of the household chores
- Taking ‘major’ decisions within the family
- Sharing of expenditure within the family
- Opinion about childbirth and mommy track
- Personal savings
- Change of jobs
- Modus operandi in case of an emergency transfer
- Rating themselves as a corporate executive and as home makers
- Opinions about whether financial autonomy leads to autonomy in decision making.

The study involving 155 married corporate women working at the IT hub in urban Kolkata reveals some interesting facts surrounding the term empowerment that makes it a convoluted route to tread on rather than a unilinear path. The corporate women belong to the same strata when it comes to their educational qualification which is another important indicator of women making progress. It is important to iterate this fact that almost all of them are the first generation IT workers who have not only transcended the boundary of the ‘feminized occupations’ but have also subtly broken the myth that women and technology do not gel. According to the recent NASSCOM Diversity and

Inclusion Summit 2018, the average age of the women taking up onsite jobs is much lower in comparison to men i.e, 28 years for woman and 34 years for men. But the percentage of women considered for onsite jobs significantly lowers post marriage in general and post child birth in particular. In the study the engagement of women in jobs pre marriage is expectantly high (82.58%) and they have continued working even after marriage, that is indicative of the existence of ‘agency’ of women to take decisions related to their career. The *feeling of* being empowered comes from the fact that almost all the women (94.19%) agreed to the statement that financial autonomy leads to more say in the decision making within the family, which is corroborated with the reliability check question inquiring who has more say in the major decision making within the family. Interestingly, 50.32% of the respondents informed being consulted with before a decision is taken in the family while 27.09% agreed that it’s their husband. While 86.45% women informed having their personal investment and savings, 56.77% (combined) women reported taking resort to the option ‘I generally give in’ and ‘my husband’s words prevail as he is more logical than I am’ when asked about their disagreement solving techniques. The reason for juxtaposing these two statistical figures is to clarify that empowerment is not an unalienable concept that comes with financial autonomy, but it is more of a ‘feeling’, highly individualized with social values internalized at childhood playing a major role- “A patriarchal society that relaxed customary rules of dress and behaviour for women would thereby expand their agency freedom somewhat, but it would be far more empowering if these women gained control over major life-decisions about education, employment, marriage, childbearing, and household division of labour” (Drydyk 2008a, p-4).

The subjective nature of the concept of empowerment makes it an imperative to study it from a qualitative angle. Women working at the corporate sector are drawing a handsome amount of salary, going by the measurement and meaning of empowerment they will be regarded as being empowered. Being empowered is to bring about positive changes in the life where they themselves participate in bringing about the change rather than being passive recipients. In the study with the married corporate women, empowerment is intrinsically linked to the structure within which they are situated. It is true that gender discrimination in hiring is much less at the entrance level at the corporate sector, where many women reported having greater chance of being picked

than men thus making them ‘feel’ empowered to bring positive changes in their lives; monthly emolument giving them a source of ‘power’ and ‘autonomy’. But as discussed elsewhere, the life of the corporate women can be divided into pre and post childbirth phases where agency and empowerment diverge to some extent. The corporate structure is limiting in scopes post childbirth, with women with kids rarely getting picked for the onsite duties and even if they are they prefer to turn it down. In response to the question about their modus operandi regarding transfer, both national and international, 50.97% women chose the option to persuade her manager to stall her transfer or change the job and take up the one that will allow her to stay in the city along with her husband and kids in comparison to 20% who readily chose the option to take up the offer. Though the actual behavior gravely differs from the hypothetical answer, but the enthusiasm in taking the onsite project was more among women without children (Table 1). Women are displaying agency in making life choices and designing their lives in such a way so that both the spheres are equally maintained but it subtract agency from empowerment.

Opinions	If you get relocated to another city at this juncture what will you do?					
	I will leave	I will consult with my husband and then decide	I will consult with all family members and then decide	I will stay for my kids and family	I will change job and take the one which will allow me to stay in this city	Others
No. of Respondents	31 (20%)	25 (16.13%)	19 (12.26%)	24 (15.48%)	55 (35.48%)	01 (0.65%)

Table No.1: Respondents’ opinions on job related relocation

Kabeer (1999) conceptualized ‘empowerment’ in terms of power that involves resources (pre-conditions), agency (process) and achievements (outcomes). An individual’s control over resources along with conscious decision making, give her the ability to bring about positive outcomes. As far as the study is concerned, the question whether the women at the corporate sector are empowered, presents with a certain ambiguity; as empowerment is a feeling very susceptible to the change in the structure in which a woman is placed. The subjectivity inherent in this concept cannot be overlooked; because if Kabeer is to be believed then empowerment is linked to the ability to make choices and to be able to make choices there has to alternatives given to an agent. But in

case of women trying to break the glass ceiling in a non-feminized job, alternatives are limited. From the indicators listed above, it can be said that when it comes to engaging in wage work, or making their presence felt in the corporate offices to having their own investment and savings; corporate urban women are new age women who know their battle and are prepared to face it. But the terms of the bargains are somehow rigged when the setting shifts to the private sphere. The influence of structure on the agents is markedly visible when we try to understand empowerment within the private sphere; thus bringing us to the constraints that these women face which negates the uniformity in their experience of agency and empowerment.

7.3.3 Corporate women and Constraints: Understanding Agency, Empowerment within the Culture of Adjustment:

Situating the concepts of agency and empowerment within the private sphere, the germination point of the culture of tolerance, creates a problematique. It calls for an understanding of the strategic decision making engaged by the women to navigate the patriarchal structure and how agency and empowerment gets subtracted from each other once women are navigating the sphere that is so personal. It should be iterated that agency function enables women to make decisions based on the *value* accorded by them; it may or may not have connection with the well being function and some women are capable of exercising more agency than others while empowerment is associated with making decisions that invariably brings positive results. But as explained by Drydyk (2008a):

“Restricted agency means a reduction in the degree to which people’s activities is autonomously or deliberatively chosen. This is one way in which people can be disempowered. But they are also disempowered if there are barriers blocking such autonomous/deliberative activity from having an impact on well-being freedom. When agency is disconnected from well-being freedom in this way, it is it reduced in some cases to the freedom to choose which pathway or sidewalk to sleep on, or which bridge to sleep under. So, from a capability perspective, empowerment must be concerned not only with expanding agency but also with removing the gaps and barriers between people’s agency and the expansion of their well-being freedom” (p-5)

The private sphere is an arena where the application of these terms in their literal form is somewhat constricted; as this sphere involves certain subjective considerations like love

and care money value of which is difficult to compute but are getting increasingly commodified to suit the need of the capitalism. The employment of the women in a sector where time management becomes a major issue, there is a constant outsourcing of the care giving services. The respondents informed about the regular monitoring of the maids and cooks which is advantageous as it guarantees that whatever little time they get to spend with their family members it is done voluntarily and not as a compulsion of fulfilling certain obligation- “As families purchase more services, they may reallocate their non market time and effort away from material production towards the personal and emotional. Increased freedom to explore career opportunities outside the home means that the time that women devote to homemaking is given more freely- and perhaps more joyously- than before” (Folbre and Nelson 2000, p-128). But the equation changes with the addition of the child to the family. Majority of the respondents with children below school going age has confirmed that they rarely rely on the outsourced cook and due to hygiene issue they cook for their child despite the extra stress. One thing that should be highlighted is the way agency gets subtracted from empowerment when the setting shifts. Agency for women remains constant, with the increasing awareness about gender issues and also the myth that women and private sphere are intertwined, woman’s say in the decision making matters but the problem arises when this capability to determine as outcome is confused with increasing empowerment. As discussed above, agency involves a reference to the value system intrinsic to the agent. In case of women the value system thus inculcated through the process of socialization unconsciously trains them for altruistic purposes; putting others before self. The stereotypical views about the traditional gender roles run in direct contradiction with the new globalised values that women are now exposed to. Going by the functionalist interpretation of Talcott Parsons, any individual, in the course of their social action, is faced with contradictory values called ‘pattern variables’. Pattern variables are reflective of the traditional/modern dichotomy (table 1)

Traditional (Gemeinschaft)	Modern (Gesellschaft)
Affectivity	Affective Neutrality
Diffuseness	Specificity
Particularism	Universalism
Ascription	Achievement
Collective orientation	Self orientation

Table 1: Pattern Variables of Talcott Parsons (Wallace and Wolf 1999; Turner 1974)

This dichotomy and the associated values guide an individual to act in any social situation and in case of women the guiding values have always aligned with the traditional as men are expected to be the instrumental leader (Ramu 1987). But in the study with the married corporate women of urban Kolkata, this dichotomy in choosing values is not absolute. Especially young couple in a dual earning family display greater symmetry in sharing chores and household expenditure; but the equation topples with the birth of the first child. Women are somewhat compelled to give in to mommy track and they sometimes do that willingly. Therefore, it can be deduced that financial independence has indeed raised the women's agency to make decisions affecting their life but the resultant empowerment is not *sustainable* and susceptible to structural setting-culture of tolerance playing its part to normalize the trend. As explained by Ramu (1987), "(Also), wives believe that their husbands are incompetent in housework and that no amount of pressure will improve matters. As far as husbands are concerned, their 'cultivated incompetence' has helped them neglect housework without guilt" (p-911). Though gauging the male perception of housework has been out of the scope of study but women's tendency to disconnect husband from child care, if not housework, has been well documented.

It should be borne in mind that women's participation in the household decision making is not a recent development, rather women and private sphere have always been synonymous with women assuming absolute control of the family while men have been labeled as providers. History has documented that a woman's say in the household matters mattered even decades ago, "the idea of women as powerful was accommodated into the patriarchal culture and retained its visibility" (Liddle and Joshi 1986, p-51). Hence, though limited, women's agency in deciding or choosing between options within the household had existed even when women were financially dependent on their husbands. Financial autonomy of the women has only expanded the agency function (Drydyk 2008), giving them the requisite financial support in case they want to hire outside help to relieve them of the household burden post work.

But in this study the involvement of the husbands in the housework is rather limited; even shows a downward trend when it comes to sharing the child rearing responsibilities. This finding has been consistent with the other time budget studies that show that the involvement of the husband in the housework for women who earn wages

is not more than the husbands of the women who are traditional housewives (Hartmann 1981). While another comparative study of the decision making in the dual and single career families in India by Shukla (1987) suggests there is a greater involvement of husbands in housework in a dual career family than in a single career family; but decision making has been contextualized in relation of how much 'power' one possesses to make a decision and power is a tricky terrain when it comes to private sphere. Hartmann(1981) described the family or the private sphere as the 'locus of internal struggle' where the interests of men and women are not always in congruence even if the family is portrayed as an unified entity. The sources of conflict within the household has been categorized into 'production issues' (conflict surrounding housework) and 'redistribution issues(conflict surrounding expenditure). Family has also been described as susceptible to market forces, patriarchy and capitalism (Hartmann 1981; Hochschild and Machung 1989; Hochschild 1997). Women have formed the reserve labour that was pooled into the economy at the time of need and pumped out during depression with no tangible contribution to the economy. But with increasing urbanization, globalization with the creation of the IT hub, women's involvement in the public world works has become a necessity to sustain capitalism itself. For example, division of labour and specialization in the capitalist society has given rise to specialized services like home delivered cooked meals, trained nurses with degree in child psychology, fast food joints, branded items for personal use, are exorbitant to afford until both the partners are working and drawing handsome salary.

The subtlety ingrained in the functioning of the culture of tolerance is witnessed mainly in the household division of labour that further separates agency from empowerment. The absolute absence of the husband in the sharing of the household chores as reported earlier has toned down a lot in the modern urban dual earning family where certain amount of symmetry is still visible in the initial phase of marriage but diminishes post childbirth. The ideological manipulation associated with the culture of tolerance prepares women for such balancing act and even render a perceived sense of equality (Sen 1989) or societal reward by conferring of the tags like 'super mom', 'tiger mom', 'active mom' (Ramu 1987). It may appear rhetorical, it is indeed the choice of the women that they are letting go of the onsite duties and sticking to the family, they are doing it consciously with the full knowledge of the repercussions on their career but

since choice is value laden and these values are internalized much earlier in life; it's a cycle that women are trying hard to transcend, especially in the corporate sector. But interestingly, these women put the onus on the organization and the associated stress of working in the corporate environment rather than the lion's share of work they do back home for their reason to drop out or retire early.

The proof of the thawing of functioning of the culture of tolerance was noticed in the change in the attitude of the in-laws towards their working daughter-in-laws. Most of the respondents reported sharing a mutually supportive relationship with the in-laws that extends to staying together in the patrilocal household. This changing equation of relationship with the in-laws has definitely helped in expanding the women's agency. But a tiny lacunae lies in the fact that though the in-laws are playing proactive roles in helping their daughter-in-laws, their ideas regarding the role of their sons within the family remain stubbornly traditional. In-laws are impressively helping the women to balance but not transcend the burden by involving their sons in housework.

Of all the indicators of empowerment mentioned above the convergence of agency and empowerment has been noticed in the area of personal saving and investment of the women. Even in case of sharing expenditure women are coming forward to help their husbands as the cost of living in the urban area is ever increasing with capitalism giving introducing new specialized services that can be outsourced. Empowerment of women is not an isolated concept, though it implies changes brought about by the agents themselves, but to carve out a niche in a patriarchal system calls for the active participation of the men as well. This is especially valid in case of sharing chores and shouldering some responsibilities of child rearing. Inclusive child rearing process is an imperative for the functioning of the family as a unified unit in general and the holistic development of the child in particular. If a rational compromise is made to tackle this area then women will rate them as high as a homemaker as they rate themselves as corporate executives. Sometimes work for these women become a refuge to escape the banality of life or a solution to 'the problem that has no name' (Friedan 2010).

7.4 Their life in their words: Five Corporate women and Their Narratives

In this section the narratives of the chosen five respondents have been presented in an attempt to understand how they perceive their work and family. The names of the

respondents and their place of work have been changed to preserve their anonymity. The reason for presenting the stories of these five women out of 155 is to highlight the true meaning of agency and empowerment in the face of challenges. The lives of these women are by no means easy yet they have crafted a niche for themselves in this highly competitive world despite the constraints. It's an ode to their courage:

- i. Anjali: Born into a Marwadi family in North Kolkata, the story of Anjali befits the story of a woman who can fight all odds when being strong is the only option left. Anjali received her education in a Marwadi school and was not allowed to continue her study after Higher Secondary. She was married off early to a jeweler in Delhi which turned out to be a nightmare for her. She was tortured for dowry, mentally and even physically abused. The marriage was a farce as the man was already married which her family didn't know. Her plight didn't end there as her husband even tried to pimp her out, she somehow managed to escape and returned to her natal home where she started her ten years legal battle to declare the marriage null and void. Her indomitable spirit won as she not only completed her Btech from a private college in Kolkata but completed her Chartered Accountancy too despite the opposition from her conservative family. She claims to be the only woman in the family to have graduated, let alone a CA. She also started helping her family jeweler business, where she met her current beau, also a jeweler and married him after finalizing her divorce. She has started working after her second marriage at a private firm at the Salt lake sector 5 as a senior manager. She claims to be pretty satisfied with the way life has given her a second chance to start over. She has no plans to change jobs and wants to have her own identity. She is currently childless and staying with her husband, her in-laws are in Jaipur. Her husband supports her work and her only chore back home is to supervise the maids.

This narrative is of a heroic woman who has been able to turn her fate around. But the question is why do we still need a calamity of this magnitude to make a woman understand the power of empowerment?

- ii. Alka: Graduated from Presidency College, Kolkata, masters from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Alka got married when she was 25 to her childhood sweetheart. She is blessed with a baby daughter who is 5 years of age now. What makes Alka stand out is the fact that she stays with her parents in her family of orientation along with her husband, very near to salt lake, her place of work. She is associated with the Research and Development of a giant multinational company. Alka is the classic case of the troubles faced by the first generation IT workers. She admitted not having a close relationship with her in-laws, her staying with her parents is well indicative of that. She also confided that her in-laws are still archaic when it comes to the role of a woman in the family. What makes her special is the fact she belongs to that rare number of respondents who earns more than her husband and takes it as a leverage to be vociferous about her opinions and needs. She is doubtful about the stability of the marriage and hence she invests her income in assets that bring in return. Alka's married life started in Delhi, where she worked with the HR team at a firm. Alka claimed her family was almost symmetrical when she was alone in delhi with their, like sharing chores and expenses. Then she shifted to Kolkata and conceived, thus giving rise to the break in the achieved symmetry. She claims that child rearing is totally her responsibility and since her organization doesn't have a crèche, she mostly asks permission to work from home. The shocking revelation was the way she was treated by her in-laws after giving birth to a baby girl that forced her to shift to her parental home. She aspires to continue work and has no complaints about her career on the contrary she claims to love her job and the perks that comes with it.
- iii. Sudipta: Daughter of a famous director of Bengali Film Industry, Sudipta works at one of the well know firms at the Rajarhat, Kolkata. 34 yrs old, mother of twin daughters, Sudipta had her share of ups and downs. She was in a live-in relationship with her husband who was working at an IT firm and it was on his insistence that she choose to join the IT sector, otherwise she aspired to be a director just like her father. She is a Btech

MBA, currently working as an IT analyst. She travelled a lot on the purpose of business but pregnancy forced her to leave Poland and settle in Kolkata. Not in good terms with her husband anymore, who is still in Poland. Problem started when she got paid more than her husband while in Poland that she ultimately chose to return. She is alone responsible for the raising her daughters with no monetary or physical help from her husband or in-laws. Thwarted expectation of dowry turned her in-laws against her. Her in-laws also expected her to hand over her income to them which she refused and chose to walk out of the home. She is currently staying with her mother and sister and considers her mother as her role model because her mother gave up her acting career to raise them, Sudipta aspires to do the same for her daughters. Talking about her life as an IT analyst, she confessed that working for her is more a compulsion now as she is the sole bread earner. She complained about the lack of child care facilities provided by the organization and also informed about the lack of female heads as you move up the corporate hierarchy. She also reported that many of her colleagues have dropped out after childbirth due to stress or choice. She aspires to take an onsite project after her daughters reach the school going age and want to settle down abroad and start a new life. Post retirement she wants to direct movies as a tribute to her father.

- iv. Devika: 31 years old Devika lost her parents at a very early age. Grown up with her relatives, she did her MBA and working with the HR team in a leading MNC in Kolkata. Though she actually wanted to be a journalist as before getting a MBA she did her graduation in comparative literature from University of Calcutta. She lived in for 5 years before getting married 3 years back. Devika is the perfect example of a modern urban woman, outspoken, street smart and ambitious. She doesn't want to conceive at the moment as she is focusing totally on her career. To her financial independence is everything as she has grown up in some usual circumstances and also confided that though her husband is supportive, he is not financially giving, forcing her to shoulder the expenditure. She

stays in her own apartment (which is registered in her name) with her husband near her place of work at Rajarhat. She shares a very cordial relationship with her in-laws, so much so that her whole wedding was financed by them. Devika being with the HR team deals mostly with internal hiccups and sexual harassment cases. She also complained of the stress associated with working at the corporate sector yet she likes her job and hopes to grow in her career before she becomes a mother as according to her motherhood will slow her down.

- v. Mandira: Working in a well known MNC, it takes nearly 2 hours for Mandira to reach office from her home. A mother of a 5 years old son, Mandira works at as a senior manager and associated with the present organization for the last 13 years. She is married for the last 11 years and claims to be more drifted towards spirituality than corporate works. She complained about the stress to travel to and fro from place of work and the constant challenge posed by the changing technology. She is a graduate in chemistry from Presidency College Kolkata but dropped out at the sophomore year to pursue engineering due to peer pressure. She openly agreed not to be satisfied with her job and wants to retire at the age of 40 to take care her son and family. She stays with her parents as her in-laws stay out of Kolkata and reported sharing a very cordial relationship with them. She credited her parents in helping her during her child rearing phase that allowed her to continue working. She pools in income with her husband for joint spending but reported her husband's partial involvement in child rearing. She wants to retire as a senior manager and focus on the path of spirituality.

7.5 Conclusion:

The narratives above are of the women who have made their own life choices and have stuck with them despite the constraints. Being an IT worker is very different from being in other 'feminized jobs'; because in case of the latter role models already exist to be emulated. Corporate jobs require more perseverance on the part of the women as they are constantly judged and compared with their male counterparts, where the myth

already exists that women are incapable of handling technical and highly stressful jobs. All jobs involve stress and it multiplies for women with children and with little or no involvement of the partner or the subsequent help from the organization. To top it, it is an unwritten rule that women with toddlers are rarely considered for onsite duties and repercussion of this is generally noticed in the annual appraisals. The way to break free from this trajectory is to create gender sensitization programmes in the organization and to make them more empathetic towards the needs of the women and most importantly creating crèches so that both the parents can participate in the child rearing process. Efforts are now being taken to control the leaking the talent pipeline by many corporate houses, according to the report by NASSCOM.⁴ Deliberating more on the problems faced by the women can to some extent create the necessary awareness to solve these issues. More inclusive policies are needed to not only recruit more women but also to retain them and to provide them with the equal ladder to rise up the hierarchy. Infusion of women in the private world of work should not come as a double burden for them rather it should be backed by the involvement of the men in the private sphere as well. There is no doubt that urban corporate women are making progress, though slowly, yet steadily and financial autonomy is the first step towards both agency and empowerment; and this financial independence of the women should be humanized by giving them a motivation to succeed. Empowerment is feasible when this financial autonomy is sought for self actualization rather than the narrow constricted motive of fighting the patriarchy.

⁴ NASSCOM Diversity and Inclusion Summit, 2018 aimed at making corporate policies more women friendly for arresting the leaking talent pipeline and to make more women interested in STEM. In academics STEM is the abbreviation for science, technology, engineering and mathematics. The video link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wopEmDJAUSQ>.

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CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

PUBLIC/PRIVATE DICHOTOMY & THE STALLED REVOLUTION:

Abstract:

Sociologist Arlie Hochschild(1989) has introduced the concept of stalled revolution as the increasing visibility of the women in the public sphere and in masculine jobs is not supported by the corresponding visibility of the men in the ‘feminine’ jobs. The labour force participation of the women in India especially in the urban area has risen, but the rate of increase is rather slow. Interestingly, the housework, being undocumented, there exists an insurmountable and obvious incapability for the researchers in family and gender roles to present the data on the involvement of the men in the chores as a proof of the changing gender role. This concluding chapter is based on the original empirical work with 155 married women working at the corporate sector, to understand the family dynamics in the two job family in Kolkata. The chapter also studies the dual role of the women as corporate workers and home makers and the truth behind the ‘stalled revolution’ in the context of Kolkata and IT workers, the interaction between the stalled revolution and the culture of adjustment discussed in the preceding chapters. The concretization of the public/private divide to resemble a structure has also been studied in the present day context to underline the increasing ‘one-way’ fluidity of the spheres as the women are moving between spaces. This chapter also entails my subjective take on the topic under study, as a researcher. The fluidity of spaces has been established not only with the help of the data collected from IT sector but also a statistical analysis of NCRB data on the crimes against women in India to show that even the idea that private sphere is the ‘safe cocoon’ for women is an ideological tool used to keep women away from public visibility.

Keywords: public/private dichotomy, corporate women, stalled revolution, fluidity of space, NCRB data, Unstalling revolution, Kolkata, New Jersey.

8.1 Introduction:

The emergence of the public/private divide is premised on the normalization of the difference in biological sex and its extension in ‘doing gender’ (West and Zimmerman, 1987). The preservation of the divide, in the due course, was encompassed within the

concept of doing gender; and this crystallized into a structural form that associated women with private and men with public. Limited access of the women to the public sphere has been well documented in Indian history (e.g, use of palanquins for transportation, the concept of purdah¹). The private sphere was concrete and impermeable. The visibility of the women in public was not only limited but sometimes penalized; there were various ‘stalls’ to the movement of genders between spaces. A century later, the increasing labour force participation of women proves the growing fluidity of spaces but this fluidity is, to some extent, one way i.e, the women’s involvement in male jobs far surpasses the men’s involvement in jobs that are tagged as ‘feminine’. This invisibility of men in the domestic sphere vis a vis the presence of women in ‘masculine’ domain has resulted Hochschild to define it as a ‘stalled revolution’. Over the years many researchers (England 2010; Friedman 2015; Davis, Winslow & Maume, 2017; Tutchell & Edmonds 2017) have written rhetorically about how the progress made by the women’s movement to access public sphere has been paused as more and more women are ‘choosing’ to be ‘stay at home moms’ instead of attempting to make an upward journey in a corporate set-up; and this ‘choice’ is sometimes framed because the lack of involvement of the men in the domestic sphere. As far as India is concerned, there are obvious socio-cultural ‘stalls’ that are functional in contributing to this one way movement towards gender equality, which lacks the criterion of being ‘sustainable’. This chapter tries to uncover the reality behind the existence of the ‘stalled revolution’ and also tries to find a way to ‘uninstall’ it, which can guide the future researchers and policy makers to put an effort towards holistic understanding of the gender issues. The dichotomization of the spheres into public and private has also been critiqued as the whole etymology of ‘privacy’ is being redefined with the increasing encroachment of the organizations into the family of the employees. Two concepts are very relevant in this chapter- the stalled revolution with the focus on the way of uninstalling it and the fluidity of spaces that claims that the structuredness attributed to the spheres is a patriarchal creation, established with the statistical analysis of the data published by National Crime Report Bureau (2016).

¹ Purdah system was the result of the percolation of the Persian culture into India through the various Muslim rulers who invaded India in the medieval period. Initially concentrated among the Islamic women but was later adopted by the other religions to protect the status of the women. Purdah reached its vogue especially during the colonial rule to prevent the women from being ‘contaminated’ by the gaze and touch of the British ‘*firangs*’. Purdah system marked the ubiquity of the private sphere even in public or an extension of the private in otherwise public spaces.

The age old myth that connects the visibility of the women in the public sphere with their increasing propensity to get victimised has to be re-evaluated to undermine the tacit acceptance of this myth by the larger society. This myth and been created and deployed to discourage women from accessing public sphere, which starts with something as elementary as preventing them to going to school for the fear of being victimised. But this idea can be debunked with the help of the NCRB data; though the herculean task has been to categorise crimes as public or private since each encloses the element of the other. In 2016 for the first time NCRB included the crimes committed under the IT Act; in other words crimes committed in the cyberspace are taken into consideration making NCRB 2016 a bit more inclusive than the preceding years. This final chapter highlights the overall theme of the thesis that revolves around the movement of the women between spaces and the limitations they face in the form of myths and hearsays. The chapter lends statistical and historical support to the fact that boundaries are patriarchal creation (starting from the time of the *Ramayana* and the concept of a very physically drawn ‘lakshman rekha’); the birth of the dichotomy and the present scenario have been dealt with in great details. In debunking the dichotomy, this chapter also raises the rhetorical question about the space called ‘home’ in terms of providing security and how the societal valuation of the ‘privacy’ of this sphere makes it more prone to be a site of exercising power and how dissolution of the dichotomy is a crucial requirement to un stall revolution.

8.2 ‘Stalled Revolution’:

The concept of ‘stalled revolution’ or the absence of men working ‘second shift’ (Hochschild & Machung 1987) in the domestic sphere has been originally introduced in the context of US. They write:

“The influx of women into the economy has not been accompanied by a cultural understanding of marriage and work that would make this transition smooth. The workforce has changed. Women have changed. But most workplaces have remained inflexible in the face of the family demands of their workers, and at home, most men have yet to really adapt to changes in women. This strain between the change in women and the absence of change in much else leads me to speak of a ‘stalled revolution’” (p-12).

Almost 40 years after the coinage of the term, the stalled revolution couldn't have been truer when fitted in the Indian context. The fieldwork involving 155 married women working at the corporate sector provided a splendid insight into the existing family dynamics and the work environment and how crucial it is to unstick the barriers for the actualization of the women's empowerment.

8.2.1 Private Sphere and 'Stalled Revolution':

The identification of the women with the private sphere came to be successfully challenged by the feminist movements but the momentum of the movement was slowed with the rise of traditionalism, an appeal to the traditional roles of the women as housewives and mothers. This throwback was the consequence of multiple factors like the revival of the Islamic fundamentalism in the middle East, feminists like Betty Friedan (1981) focusing on the preserving family, the coming of the PM Thatcher's government that unabashedly preached the importance of the private sphere, thus undoing many of the welcome shifts acquired by and during the women's movement. The embedding of the women in an exploitative socio-cultural environment, ideologically or otherwise, continued even when the women gained the right to vote; and the germinating point of this exploitation was traced back to family or the domestic sphere. The transition began to seep in especially with the entry of the women in the public sphere that resulted in the acceptance of the egalitarian gender roles but this change was stalled around the 1990s with the rise of 'egalitarian essentialism' (Charles & Grusky, 2004). Egalitarian essentialism harps on the 'choice' rhetoric that has been later developed by economists and sociologists (Sen 1990; Kabeer 1999, 2016; Chaudhuri 2002; Kelkar & Shrestha 2002; Drydyk 2013) to elaborate on the women's agency function. As explained by Friedman (2015), "proponents of the 'egalitarian essentialism' frame acknowledge gender differences in work and family roles but reduce these patterns to women's choices instead of broader structural and cultural constraints for women and men" (p- 145). Adumbrating the choice rhetoric actually streamlines the analysis to the individualistic level, quite contrary to the characteristic holism that has always defined the Indian form of living. Family in India is the microcosmic reflection of the broader society; where the caste-family nexus controlled the major institutions and structures. 'Individualism' or 'choice' seldom formed the part of the gender narratives. Marriage and family were embedded in the larger social institutions like

caste and religion. It will be an unnecessary reiteration of how family and caste tampered with the educational and occupational choices available to individuals; in some cases they still do.

The major distinction between corporate sector and the public sector jobs is the invisibility of the caste and family as influencing factors in recruiting IT workers; that makes it a lucrative option if upward occupational mobility is considered. In my fieldwork with 155 women, the socio cultural and economic conditions of the respondents do not vary at a statistically significant level giving me a more or less homogeneous cohort to work with. Hence the inference drawn can be generalized to include a major part of the larger population. The findings corroborate with the 'stalled revolution' as described by Hochschild & Machung (1987) but with certain modifications and the first in this respect has been the overwhelming presence of joint family or patrilocal family in urban Kolkata. Though in the previous chapters I have shown that how patrilocal family is giving way to neo local family with the spurt of growth of the IT firms away from the urban centre, but the tradition of staying with or near the husbands' family is strikingly existent and functional thus stalling the revolution even further. In a traditional partrilocal family setup in Kolkata, lion's share of the household chores is performed by women, either by the wife or the mother. After interviewing the corporate women the only change reported was attitudinal, i.e, the in-laws are becoming more tolerant towards working daughter-in-laws. The change is definitely welcomed but the only con is rather than involving men in chores and creating a more egalitarian household setting, women are seeking help from their in-laws, especially in case of taking care of the children. As discussed in the earlier chapters that organizations lack proper crèche or child care facilities to involve both parents in the child rearing. Though it has been reported by one of my respondents after my fieldwork was concluded that one of the biggest firms in Kolkata has started organizing summer camps for children of the working parents to make their policies more inclusive. In this set up characterized by stalled revolution a typology can be constructed of the women trying to maintain their work-life balance. This typology is based on the one constructed by Hochschild and Machung (1987) but fitted to the context of urban Kolkata and completely based on my empirical work.

- **Careerists:** This category involves a percentage of women, though not statistically significant, but they are ambitious and are determined to transcend the glass ceiling. They believe in equal share in domestic chores or outsourcing services so that they can continue working unhindered. Most of the time it is seen these women have married late, their spouse are in the same profession and they are childless or having a single child. This type of women is generally seen as team leaders or in a managerial position.
- **Balancers or satisficers:** This category can be termed as 'have-it-all'. They want the best of both worlds. They are quintessential satisficers (Husain and Dutta 20014), a pragmatic individual who believes in 'good enough' situation than engaging in constant competition to rise up the ladder. They are generally seen working as IT analysts, the profession of their husbands vary (can be a corporate worker or can be a freelance journalists, there is no fixed category), have children, stay with or near husbands' family, mostly responsible for their child's homework and other responsibilities, take up onsite based on the family conditions (like age of children, health of in-laws), strongly support financial independence as well as family values, high on saving money so that they can retire whenever they deem fit, embedded in liberal set up where 'choice' forms a big part of their major decision making affecting their life. They can easily form the majority of those involves in big firms. They have made a decision to accommodate the stalled revolution yet get the best out of it.
- **Confused Traditionalists:** This is a category characterized by women who are 'apparently egalitarian but with a strong patriarchal base' (Hochschild and Machung 1987). They can be found at any strata of the IT industry but their number decreases as we go higher up. They are named 'confused' traditionalists because of the discrepancy between their beliefs and their actions that was very notable when they were interviewed. They have totally subscribed and submitted to the patriarchal setting and are critical of women whose ideologies are in variance with their own. Their number is statistically insignificant. They have internalized certain ideologies which have now come in contradiction with the ones they are learning from working in a cosmopolitan environment. They often confuse which idea to support and generally end up taking decisions that are in

alignment with the societal expectation. They are generally dependent on their husbands for majority decision making thus creating a sharp contrast between financial independence and ‘empowerment’ that makes us rethink the latter. Though critical of the job most of the time, they are not generally keen in taking proactive steps to climb up the ladder. They have not only internalized the stalled revolution but they engage in a conscious effort to logicalize its existence but apparently expressing a critical stand towards it.

- **‘Escaping monotony’ workers:** As suggested from the name, these women work to enjoy the change that comes with working outside the private sphere and in turn gives them a purpose. Many of the women have agreed to engage in corporate work for the sheer pleasure of working outside home to break the monotony. They strongly believe that work gives an outlet for the creative energies which can’t be exhausted doing domestic chores. These women generally vacillate between choosing a part-time job and working in a IT firm and treat their income as secondary earnings spent mostly on themselves or additional expenditure. Their husbands are generally considered as ‘bread winners’ and responsible for the majority spending. Children tend to be of the school going age. They shoulder majority of the household chores and supervision of the outsourced services.
- **Incentivized workers:** These women work simply to make the both ends meet. They are aware of the accelerating cost of living in the urban areas that makes it imperative for both the partners to earn. They are motivated by the monetary incentives and generally focus on savings and investment too. They can be considered to be a variant of the ‘ritualists’ in terms of Robert K. Merton (Wallace & Wolf 1980). More than ambition, they are driven by incentives as their husbands are seen as working at the same level as them. They are mostly seen having school going children and the majority of their earning is spent in meeting the need of the family mainly in EMIs on loans. In the domestic sphere there is a combination of taking outsourced help or doing it themselves.

The categories above are based on the data gathered on the corporate women; but it can be applied to women working in other sectors with certain modifications. The categories are neither exhaustive, nor mutually exclusive and can work in combination in some

cases as financial independence remains more or less a constant motivation underlying all the categories. Technological innovations are also making domestic chores easier and thus stalling the revolution further. Couples, now a days are taking resort to either outsourced helps (apps like UrbanClap making all the services available at the touch of the keypad) or technology (like dishwashers and vacuum cleaners) which are easy to handle either by women or third party user, thus the involvement of the men is further discounted. The sexism is so deeply encrusted that even in the television advertisement about the home appliances, ‘men are shown *demonstrating* products that help with the domestic chores, but usually not *shown* using them’ (Hochschild and Machung 1987, p-27).

After nearly spending 4 years with the corporate women in both their offices and homes, after engaging in hours of conversation I have realized that another causation that is stalling the revolution is the tendency of the women to make excuses for the lack of involvement of their husbands in household chores. Blaming women for fueling an unequal division of labor at home can be criticized as a remnant of the patriarchal culture, but the fact remains that even if the women try to bring up the issue of sharing chores, they are seldom received very cordially. Hence these women come up with a coping strategy of making excuses like ‘my husband comes home later than me’, or ‘he is really busy’, as discussed in the previous chapters. Sometimes, men do agree to share chores, out of realization or if nagged, but the consistency of division of labour within the domestic sphere is generally lacking. Another strategy employed by the men unconsciously or otherwise is to do chores during weekends like grocery shopping or cooking, thus attempting to compensate for the lack of involvement during the whole week. Maintaining the family equilibrium is still on women, where job becomes a source of emancipation as well as consternation. After visiting a couple of homes to notice the day to day living of the corporate women, I have tried to analyze the ‘choice’ rhetoric employed by the women to engage in a career. The socio-economic statuses of the women studied suggest that majority of them work out of choice rather than as a compulsion and majority of them started their career much before their marriage. So clearly, women are pro-choice; career becomes a part of their identity. But sometimes the ‘choice’ rhetoric is interpreted in a different way when seen from the perspective of those who believe in traditional gender roles. They see housework as synonymous to women; hence they accept women working outside as a need of the hour but also expect

them to abide by the gender norms of doing their duty. This is especially true in case of the in-laws where they willingly let their daughter-in-laws ‘choose’ their career keeping their expectation of ‘maintaining the family’ intact. This places women in a situation where there is a strange juxtaposition of choice and compulsion to live up to the expectation; whereas men are generally discounted from such assessments thus stalling the revolution with an apparent societal consent.

8.2.2 Public sphere and ‘Stalled Revolution’:

Interestingly, in public sphere the revolution was stalled even before it even commenced or in other words the revolution has been one-way with women making inroads into the ‘masculine’ domain but the opposite is generally not true. Education is perhaps the only area where the revolution has been successful with the increase in the enrolment of the women in higher studies in India. Though India with 65.5% of female literacy is lagging behind the world average of 79.7% but if reports are to be believed then women have even surpassed men in enrolling in post graduation and Mphil degrees, though the choice of subjects remain feminized (see the report by The Print 2018). If we look at the female labour force participation in India, we get a substantial rural-urban difference and a large chunk of women engaged in the unorganized sector. According to the Deloitte report, the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) among the women has declined from 36.7% in 2005 to 26% in 2008 (report by The Hindu 2019). It is rather an interesting observation that the enrolment of the women in the higher studies is not equally reciprocated in the higher labour force participation that points towards the presence of a loophole that is resulting in this discrepancy. The overwhelming presence of women in higher studies indicates the tendency of the women to choose academics over corporate as, in general parlance, the former is ‘more secured’ - both in terms of job security and unwanted sexual advances in comparison to the latter. As discussed in the previous chapter, the common trend seen among the women in the corporate sector is the leaking talent pipeline or the dropout among the women especially after child birth. From the perspective of the ‘revolution’, the ‘stall’ is sometimes replaced with the tendency to either ‘*slow down*’ or ‘*burn out*’, especially among the corporate workers. Tendency to stall the revolution further has been seen in the presence of the myth highlighting the propensity of the women to attract sexual advances when in their penchant to make their presence felt in the androcentric zones like the corporate offices.

To adduce, women entering the male domains like politics and bureaucratic structures have oftentimes been desexualized to prevent male gaze. I entered the field with the total awareness of the presence of the ‘saying’ that women are more prone to sexual harassment in one form or the other in the corporate sector or they are sometimes provoked to make ‘compromises’ to climb up the corporate ladder or women themselves are sometimes blamed for blatantly using their sexuality to make their way through the corporate maze. But the fieldwork revealed information that negates the vehemence with which these stories are floated sometimes to deter the entry of the women in a domain that is essentially male. Most of the top ranking organizations have made strong HR a priority to curb the complaints of harassment and to make the structure more women friendly. But the revolution is stalled when the bias are more deep-rooted, cutting into the surface gender neutrality like the appraisal based on the onsite duties and the absence of paternal leave. Getting access to the male domain is not the major issue to be considered when it comes to studying women in the corporate sector, the recruitment is not gender biased, the subtle discrimination seeps in when the women compete to rise up the ladder.

The existence of the stalled revolution is further proved when the focus is directed towards the entry of the men in the so called feminized domain. As mentioned earlier, women dominate the higher education sector making academics or teaching, more or less, a feminized profession. Nursing is another area where men are yet to make a significant dent but unlike the previous decades where the idea of male nurses was frowned upon not only by the society but by the men themselves, the recent reports gives a faint indication of change. According to a study published by the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health and Sciences (RGUHS), ‘number of males opting for the nursing course has doubled in five years. In the academic year 2007-2008, when only 97 males registered for the BSc nursing course against 276 females, the number rose to 2454 in the academic year 2010-11 against 5270 females. Similarly, men are grabbing seats in the PG nursing courses as well. The 2007-08 figures showed only 26 males opting for the MSc nursing course against 91 females, but the number surged to 98 in the academic year 2010-11 against 216 females’(report by The Times of India 2012). But my personal experience reveals a different picture in Kolkata, where I personally took a course at three top ranking nursing colleges. In my three years of close association I have never for once come across a male nursing student, as if the course has only been

monopolized by women. There are certain reasons why this revolution involving the movement of the men into the feminized jobs has been stalled and the most significant among them is the pay factor. Feminized jobs are not well paid, thus dissuading many men to venture into them, as most of the feminized jobs cater to the care giving services, an area where men are considered lacking in, if not redundant. Binary division of the society into public and private is also followed by the grading of the jobs hierarchically based on pay structure and most importantly on the suitability of the job based on gender. Gender based gradation has always been associated with the way the status in the society is determined. There are certain works that are labeled as ‘women’s work’ or ‘*ladkiyon ka kaam*’ and even if these jobs pay well, men certainly are discouraged to trade their ‘masculinity’ for them. According to the study of the child labor done by Burra (1995), in a necklace industry, beading the necklace is believed to be fitted for women for their nimble fingers, the moment the work gets mechanized women are replaced with men.

The corporate sector can be called quintessentially a male domain, their visibility surpassing the visibility of the women to a great extent. Till recently public sphere suffered from infrastructural handicap as elementary as the lack of a proper public washroom to accommodate the presence of women. A lot has changed since then, and entry of the women has revolutionized the zones, blurring the lines separating public from private. Corporate offices are architecturally modern with state of the art buildings providing all possible comforts to the employers to *lure* them to work. Unlike the public offices there are no trade unions or mandatory political affiliations; absence of which ensures unhindered services. In the society characterized by stalled revolution, men are always presented with the role model; they are not the first generation workers unlike some women. But women find their role models in their mothers who have always catered to the private sphere with little access to the public sphere out of choice or sometimes out of compulsion. Hence this tussle between home, work and prioritization does nothing but weaken the revolution in its middle course.

The ‘culture of adjustment’, concept introduced in Chapter no. 6 is another reason for stalling the revolution. On the other hand, the two concepts- the stalled revolution and the culture of adjustment are reinforcing each other to preserve the family equilibrium. If stalled revolution is explained as the lack of men’s involvement in the private sphere

chores then culture of adjustment somewhat prepares the women for a circumstance like this so that the absence of men in the private sphere is normalized. Now the family equilibrium is premised on various myths that the couple creates and maintains like the myth of equal sharing of the household chores. The reason why many IT women unconsciously become a tool for stalling the revolution is because they belong to first generation workers who have grown up in a family where their mothers were either homemakers or involved in 'feminised' jobs. Hence, for them working in an IT firm is a way of breaking the stereotype which they try to make up by shouldering responsibilities within the family rather than demanding the involvement of the husbands. The culture of adjustment sometimes feeds the women the illusion that their husbands' work is more important since it is the societal norm that men contributes to the family income, the true breadwinner. Most of the women that I have interviewed for my work have their family premised on the myth that their husbands are the actual contributors, or atleast that's how they present themselves in the family, because in a traditional patriarchal family maintaining the equilibrium is more important than demanding credit for financial contributions which can lead to unnecessary diatribes. Unstalling revolution can challenge and annihilate the culture of adjustment to be transmitted from one generation to another. It is an imperative to normalize the image the men doing household chores as much as it is important to show female CEOs at work to make the movement between spaces more holistic in terms of gender and to debunk the idea of gendered spaces.

8.3 Unstalling Revolution and Negating Dichotomy: Busting Myths behind Gender Segregation:

Women gaining access in the androcentric domain that started the revolution has resulted in negating the straitjacketed private/public dichotomy. Men's involvement in the private sphere was only limited to the penultimate decision making as a provider or the bread winner. The carefully created myths that has kept women in the private and men in public and allowed interpenetration only on a limited scale can be busted with real life examples. 'Fluidity of spaces' refers to the intermingling of the elements of both the spheres that eats into the apparent 'structuredness' of a sphere making it more like a continuum. By conceptualizing space as a continuum, the existing labeling of the tasks as 'masculine' or 'feminine' and the subsequent hierarchization that follows the

labeling can be avoided thus un-gendering spaces to a great extent. Women's visibility as labors has lead us to rethink the concept of 'private' and despite the stalled revolution how the private sphere is gradually modifying.

8.3.1 Men's involvement in a Private Sphere: Possible?

Benhabib (1998) notes that there are three ways in which a private sphere can be understood, "first and foremost, privacy has to be understood as the sphere of religious and moral conscience" where individuals can exercise their autonomy to decide on these matters; second she points out to "the non interference by the state in the free flow of commodity relations" and the third is the intimate sphere which can be characterized as the modern household, a sphere of "meeting daily needs of life, of sexuality and reproduction, of care for the young, the sick and the elderly" (p-86). It is the third categorization that has been focused and analyzed by situating it within the context of women's agency; though the focus is mainly on the intermingling of the private and the public which calls for redefinition of 'private'. This has been touched upon by Hochschild (1997, 2012) especially in the context of the current consumerist culture where intimate tasks are rather 'outsourced' like 'rent a day friend' or when organization makes its foray in to the private life of the workers under the pretext of making jobs more friendly. But in doing so they are eroding away the walls of the structured private and the activities within it which has its own pros and cons. The attempt of the organizations to take over the daily lives of the workers is still in a nascent state in IT hub in Kolkata, though the lives of the IT workers totally revolve around work so much so that Rajarhat has contributed to the major urban conurbation and real estate projects.

Interestingly, the analysis of the dichotomy and its subsequent negation has always been a one-sided affair. i.e, negation of the dichotomy is analyzed to be successfully completed with the commencement of the women's entry into the primary labour market to the total exclusion of the focus on the men adroitly evading their requisite engagement in the private. As presented in the data analysis, spaces are becoming more fluid when analyzed from the women's perspective that there is a strong traditional base that is concealed by the rise of 'new men' who 'let' their wives work. Men's engagement in the private is visibly negligible if not non-existent, yet it can be presumed that in the due course of time fluidity of the spaces will also encompass a

man's involvement at home. The fact that supports the assertion of the changing times in near future is the rise of the home appliances or technology that can be handled by both the genders. In this regard, as a researcher, I would like to draw a comparison of the division of labour at homes in New Jersey, US and Kolkata, India to make the concept of 'fluidity of space' more comprehensible. I had the opportunity to experience the dynamics within the Indian households at New Jersey, United States that made me immediately jump into a comparative analysis with the households back home. What makes an Indian experience in the United States unique is the lack of extended family to help in daily household chores, neither there is any option of outsourcing help; even if there are apps that cater to the basic needs but they are too exorbitant to be used on a daily basis. Hence the work load falls on the couple sharing the household with or without children. In case of two job couples without children, the chores are almost equally divided mostly done with the help of the appliances that defies gender binary. This equilibrium gets a little topsy-turvy with the birth of the child where the division of chores tilts in the favor of the husbands who commute to work mostly at New York. Yet, upon their return from work men are visibly seen engaged in completing the residual chores like microwaving dinner, feeding the baby, doing the dishes etc, a scene very unlike in India. This participation of men is the consequence of the realization that US lacks the benefit that a labour intensive country like India enjoys, where the services can be outsourced at the lowest possible cost. But the women still shoulder lion's share of the work especially in the morning. Similarly, it becomes imperative for the women in US to work, sometimes out of choice but most of the time to make the both ends meet and also to counter the boredom that comes with staying away from kins. Hence, explained from the universe of stalled revolution, Indian households at the United States have been able to erase the gendering of chores to some extent and make spaces more fluid with the involvement of both the genders in both the spheres. At the same time it should be warned that the issue is more layered than it appears and sometimes the 'need of the hour' overruns the traditional outlook about gender roles and makes the household appear from egalitarian.²

² This is because most of the women observed at the North Brunswick, New Jersey are engaged in 'feminized jobs' that doesn't demand extra hour, like teaching or babysitting to earn extra bucks and also to 'kill time; when their husbands go to work and their kids are in school. Some of them also left job after childbirth, only to join when their kids reached the school going age.

This fluidity of spaces has limited visibility in Kolkata, India. On the basis of my empirical data, though men are becoming more sympathetic towards women working outside but this sympathy is seldom transformed into tangible help, especially after childbirth due to two reasons: 1. Patrilocal residences where the presence of ‘mother’ mitigates any chance of men participating in the chores; a matriarch does not ‘let’ her son do the chores that are believed to be feminine duty, 2. A very enveloping gender socialization process that clearly demarcates gender territories and creates expectations towards the fulfillment of gender roles. The rise of neo local residences in and around the corporate sector gives us a glimpse of the symmetry and potential spurt of the symmetrical family with men sharing some part of the second shift. But the gender socialization is deep rooted cause; as long as feminine jobs including housework are graded below masculine ones and will be kept outside the purview of the market economy, it will be difficult to make the spheres fluid in the truest sense of the term. Hence, even if the entry of women has led many researchers to conclude the growing gender neutrality of the spheres but they have often failed to take into consider the absence of men in the equation. Fluidity of spaces and stalled revolution are inversely related; with the eradication of the stalls, spaces are bound to be fluid so much so that the in the due course of time the dichotomy that divides the public and private spheres and feminine/masculine jobs will blur.

It is often seen that the concept of ‘women’s agency’ is often projected as the reason for the informed choices women are making to determine their life courses- be it continuing their job or not ‘letting’ men share the second shift because of the prevalent belief that the latter is redundant in the private sphere. But upon deeper understanding it is sometimes seen that this agency function is bit tampered with; in the sense that women oftentimes end up taking the decision or making choices that receive societal approval in the garb of the approval of their immediate family and that explains why many women prefer to be tagged as ‘have-it-all’. Choices can be manufactured, altered or changed hence a proper understanding of where the societal interference stops and where the agency functions begin is the foremost duty to deal with the ‘stalls’ in the revolution. Unstalling revolution should not be treated as an option rather as an imperative and one way to achieve this is to normalize man’s ‘productive’ involvement in the private space which is both possible and desirable.

8.3.2 **Busting the myth: An analysis based on the NCRB data (2016):**

One of the crucial myths that has kept women away from the public sphere for long has been the fear of violence. Patriarchy has actually succeeded in creating and maintaining the fear of victimization. The fear psychosis has benefitted both who perpetrate violence and even those who do not (Brownmiller 1975). Violence perpetrated on the women has formed the major part of the discourse dealing with the spatial segregation of women. In the study with the corporate women, many claimed to have been victims of indecent conduct in the workplace and outside of it, either by the known perpetrator or otherwise. In the general parlance it is believed that increasing women's visibility in the public sphere make them more susceptible to violence and aggressive behavior. One of the major premises for the creation and the sustenance of the private sphere and women's confinement in it is the 'safety' narrative that has dominated every argument against women entering the workforce or public sphere in general. Such is the grip of the safety myth of the private sphere that, for many years women actually believed the saying and moderated their conduct to avoid male gaze in public. The transformation that is seeping into the private sphere of the two jobs couple demands a closer inspection of the constructed myths that has kept the women from accessing the public sphere for so long. As an additional argument against gendering of spaces, I have run a t-test on the data collected on the crimes against women by the National Crime Record Bureau³, 2016. NCRB has categorized crimes against women (Chapter 3A) under two heads: the crimes under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the crimes under the Special and Local laws (SLL) and a total number of 338954 cases against women have been recorded all over India in the year 2016. NCRB 2016 data is much more exhaustive and inclusive in comparison to the data gathered in the preceding years as it includes cyber crime committed against women under the IT Act for the first time. To meet the purpose of analysis, the crimes committed along with their corresponding IPC sections have been separated on the basis of their occurrence either in a private space (in a home setting or crimes perpetrated by immediate family) or in a public space (space outside the home

³ Natinal Crime Record Bureau is an attached office of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi. It is the repertoire of crime and prison statistics and is entrusted with the responsibility to empower Indian Police with the Information Technology to enable them to effectively enforce the law.

setting or crimes committed by anyone who does not belong to immediate family)⁴. Crimes committed against women in a cyber space has been included in the category public as the cyber space lacks a distinguishable boundary and is accessible to people belonging to any geographical location. Crimes with ambiguous spatial feature have not been considered to avoid faulty interpretation of the data. NCRB data include both the incidence of crimes and the number of victims of crime; since our paper is based on the hypothesis that women have almost equal or more chance of being victimized in private than in public, we have only considered the number of victims in each state and union territory. The tables of the crimes committed in public and in private are –

Crimes Committed in the Public Sphere (IPC & SLL,2016)						
States & UTs	Acid Attack (326A & 326B)	Stalking (354 D)	Insult to Modesty (509)	67A IT Act *(i)	Prohibition Act, 1986 *(ii)	Total
Andhra Pradesh	9	639	1831	7	6	2492
Arunachal Pradesh	0	2	10	0	0	12
Assam	9	88	34	114	0	245
Bihar	2	4	167	9	0	182
Chhattisgarh	0	71	101	17	0	189
Goa	2	19	35	1	0	57
Gujarat	9	87	59	14	0	169
Haryana	11	321	126	29	0	487
Himachal Pradesh	0	60	49	4	0	113
Jammu & Kashmir	0	7	153	0	0	160
Jharkhand	0	13	13	1	0	27
Karnataka	4	136	160	70	0	370
Kerala	9	132	329	42	2	514
Madhya Pradesh	4	820	358	36	0	1218
Maharashtra	2	1611	958	53	0	2654
Manipur	0	5	5	0	0	10
Meghalaya	0	1	17	2	0	20
Mizoram	0	4	1	0	0	5
Nagaland	0	1	8	0	0	9
Odisha	12	250	437	7	3	709
Punjab	13	111	10	26	0	160

⁴ Immediate family, for the purpose of analysis, has been conceptualized as comprised of own parents, in-laws, husband, brother (married or otherwise), sister (unmarried).

Crimes Committed in the Public Sphere (IPC & SLL,2016)						
States & UTs	Acid Attack (326A & 326B)	Stalking (354 D)	Insult to Modesty (509)	67A IT Act *(i)	Prohibition Act, 1986 *(ii)	Total
Rajasthan	2	80	15	44	8	149
Sikkim	0	3	11	0	0	14
Tamil Nadu	1	28	27	26	1	83
Telangana	0	1101	1011	20	2	2134
Tripura	1	4	1	1	0	7
Uttar Pradesh	52	483	35	277	16	863
Uttarakhand	0	12	3	15	0	30
West Bengal	60	276	449	64	0	849
A & N Islands	0	2	2	2	0	6
Chandigarh	0	15	13	4	0	32
D&N Haveli	0	0	1	1	0	2
Daman & Diu	0	3	2	0	0	5
Delhi UT	23	837	921	15	0	1769
Lakshadweep	0	0	1	0	0	1
Puducherry	0	10	3	0	1	14

Table No. 1(A): Crimes committed in the Public sphere in India (2016):

- i. Publishing or transmitting material containing sexually explicit act.
- ii. Indecent representation of the women through advertisements, publications etc

Crimes Committed in the Private Sphere (IPC & SLL,2016)									
States & UTs	Dowry Deaths (304B,IPC)	Abetment of suicide (306 IPC)	Miscarriage (313 IPC) *(i)	314 IPC *(ii)	498A, IPC *(iii)	354C,IPC *(iv)	DPA,1961 *(v)	PWDVA,2005 *(vi)	Total
Andhra Pradesh	194	405	3	0	6466	83	592	0	7743
Arunachal Pradesh	1	4	0	0	51	1	0	0	57
Assam	157	0	0	0	9321	31	234	2	9745
Bihar	987	0	0	0	3794	7	1058	171	6017
Chhattisgarh	84	189	0	2	623	11	19	3	931
Goa	2	1	0	0	23	2	0	0	28
Gujarat	12	271	1	0	3738	30	0	0	4052
Haryana	260	123	1	1	3314	22	8	10	3739
Himachal Pradesh	3	66	1	0	214	3	1	11	299
Jammu & Kashmir	6	65	0	0	342	1	0	0	414
Jharkhand	278	3	0	0	1002	1	1371	0	2655
Karnataka	234	220	2	0	2567	36	1698	0	4757
Kerala	25	22	0	0	3462	46	3	111	3669
Madhya Pradesh	629	565	0	0	6264	93	26	90	7667

Crimes Committed in the Private Sphere (IPC & SLL,2016)									
States & UTs	Dowry Deaths (304B,IPC)	Abetment of suicide (306 IPC)	Miscarriage (313 IPC) *(i)	314 IPC *(ii)	498A, IPC *(iii)	354C,IPC *(iv)	DPA,1961 *(v)	PWDVA,2005 *(vi)	Total
Maharashtra	248	768	2	0	7215	127	38	2	8400
Manipur	0	0	0	0	31	1	0	0	32
Meghalaya	0	0	0	0	26	1	0	0	27
Mizoram	0	0	0	0	19	1	0	0	20
Nagaland	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	4
Odisha	397	5	0	0	2781	52	1400	0	4635
Punjab	80	174	0	0	1568	21	5	2	1850
Rajasthan	462	167	0	0	13814	5	3	4	14455
Sikkim	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
Tamil Nadu	59	122	0	0	1256	12	295	0	1744
Telangana	254	560	0	1	7206	98	4	1	8124
Tripura	19	5	0	0	430	0	0	0	454
Uttar Pradesh	2478	286	407	118	11166	92	2867	23	17437
Uttarakhand	57	16	0	0	392	0	27	1	493
West Bengal	535	420	45	2	19305	101	0	5	20413
A & N Islands	0	0	0	0	7	4	0	0	11
Chandigarh	4	7	0	0	122	2	1	0	136
D&N Haveli	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
Daman & Diu	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	8
Delhi UT	162	20	0	1	3879	43	18	1	4124
Lakshadweep	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Puducherry	0	1	0	0	15	4	15	0	35

Table No. 1(B) : Crimes committed in the Private Sphere in India (2016):

- i. Causing miscarriage without women's consent.
- ii. Deaths caused by the act done with the intent to cause miscarriage.
- iii. Cruelty by husbands or his relatives.
- iv. Voyeurism.⁵
- v. Dowry Prohibition Act.
- vi. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act.

⁵ Voyeurism is the act of getting sexual gratification from watching a woman disrobing or exposing or engaging in sexual act in private. Ambiguity arises in spatially segregating this crime as recording a woman engaging in private activity and disseminating the material falls under the category of private crime. But since the act conducted is in the private realm and there is a separate IT act (sec 67) dealing with the dissemination of sexually explicit material, we have categorized voyeurism as a crime committed in private realm.

Analysis:

We intend to perform a statistical analysis to test whether there is a significant difference in crimes committed against women in public and private spheres. We set up our null (H_0) and alternative (H_A) hypotheses as follows:

H_0 : no difference in crimes in public and private spheres,

H_A : not H_0 .

To carry out the above hypothesis testing, t-test for comparing two population means is used since the standard deviations of both the population are unknown to us.

The results obtained are presented in the following table:

Table 2:

	<i>Variable 1</i>	<i>Variable 2</i>
Mean	3727.388889	438.5278
Variance	26745278.93	527371.5
Observations	36	36
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	36	
t Stat	3.77861906	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.000286068	
t Critical one-tail	1.688297714	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.000572136	
t Critical two-tail	2.028094001	

From the above table, it is clear that p-value for two-tailed test is 0.000572136 which is very less than $\alpha=0.05$, the level of significance. This clearly indicates that we fail to accept the null hypothesis on the basis of the given data and at 5% level of significance. Also the absolute value of the t-statistic is greater than the critical value leading to the same conclusion. Next one- tailed test is performed with the following defined null and alternative hypotheses:

The null hypothesis is that the number of crimes in private sphere is equal to that in the public sphere and the alternative hypothesis is the number of crimes in the private sector is greater than that of the public sector. From table 2, again it is observed that the p-value for one-tailed test is much less than the $\alpha=0.05$ leading to the same conclusion of not accepting the null hypothesis on the basis of this data. This is again justified with the value of the t-statistic which is found to be greater than the critical value. Next, we check the p-value for one-tailed test which is also found to be quite less than the level of significance. Similarly, we can conclude that on the basis of the given data and at 5% level of significance, we fail to accept the null hypothesis that the number of crimes in public sphere is less than that in the private sphere.

The statistical analysis based on the National Crime Report Bureau data, 2016 reveals with absolute clarity the constructed myth of confining women in the private sphere by producing a condition of anxiety around women stepping in the public sphere by connecting the latter with vulnerability and violence. The fear of women being raped or molested in public have always been used as a justification in both rural and urban area to debar them acquiring higher education or jobs. This fear works in a cyclic fashion and sometimes act like a self fulfilling prophecy with no data to support such a fear element. On the contrary the data above shows how space becomes immaterial when it comes to victimizing women.

‘Home is more dangerous than streets at night’- can be statistically proven with the data at hand. Having stated that, questions can be raised about excluding certain crimes from the purview of statistical analysis and here comes the epistemological problem of segregating crimes strictly based on the spatial characteristics as IPC sections under which a criminal can be booked are sometimes overlapping. The first limitation is the realization that the given data is based on the reported crimes across the country, although it is well known that there is an even higher rate of unreported crimes in India (e.g domestic violence). The second limitation is the sheer incapability to consider certain crimes due to ambiguity in ascertaining the space of their occurrence, which can be either public or private or both. To adduce, the sections dealing with kidnapping⁶,

⁶ Kidnapping can happen both from a public space or from home/relative’s place and most of the time kidnappers/ abductors are known to the victims making the relationship between the victim and perpetrator a private one, irrespective of the space where the crime takes place.

abduction and kidnapping and abduction, with the intent to murder or demand ransom, committed under Immoral Traffic Prevention Act 1956⁷, rape⁸, sexual harassment⁹ have been kept out due to the ambiguous spatial nature of the crime. The strong private nature of the seemingly public crime has to be acknowledged, thus upholding the initial hypothesis that victimization knows no space on the contrary if a woman has a chance of being victimized in the public sphere, because she becomes more visible in that domain, then she runs the risk of being attacked and injured in the so called secured cocoon as well. The two tailed and one tailed tests went on to establish that crimes in private sphere are not only equal rather more than in the public sphere as the computed p-value was less than $\alpha=0.05$, level of significance. The orchestrated patriarchal myth that has always decided against women accessing the public sphere has come under serious scanner with such data. The analysis shows that women are more

⁷ Crimes committed under Immoral Traffic Prevention Act, 1956 have been kept out of the analysis because of the inherent vacillation in categorizing the crime on the basis of space. It should be noted that prostitution in India is not criminalized in the stringent sense of the term, it is 'zoned', i.e, a distinct space has been created within the public space itself which can't be bracketed as public or private. A private space is forked out of public space and sequestered as a 'red light zone' which shows the private element in a visibly public phenomenon. Trafficking as a crime is generally the handiwork of middle men or pimps who lure women into the trade and sometimes these pimps can be a distant relative of the victim concerned highlighting the private nature of an otherwise public crime. Sections 7 and 8 of the ITP Act reveal that prostitution in vicinity of the public place and soliciting customers in public are offences that hints at the private nature accorded to the crime that otherwise is a menace for the society at large and therefore should have been treated as a public crime. On the other hand ITP Act defines brothels as those that "includes any house, room, conveyance or place or any portion of any house, room, conveyance or place, which is used for purposes of sexual exploitation or abuse for the gain of another person or for the mutual gain of two or more prostitutes", a definition that marks the private nature of the crime in a place that can be defined as 'private' in terms of both location and ownership. The whole act can be accessed at <https://indiankanoon.org/doc/69064674/>

⁸ Rape (sec 376 IPC, gang rape sec 376D IPC, custodial rape sec 376C IPC, attempt to rape sec 511 IPC) has been kept out of the analysis too due to the predicament of spatially situating the crime. According to the reports, in nearly 90% of the rape cases perpetrators are known to the victims making rape between strangers insignificant. Moreover, spatially categorizing a crime like rape is wrought with arguments regarding the nature of the nature as it seldom happens in the vicinity of a crowded place. Rape, as a crime calls for a separate discourse and it is one of the crimes that have acute private elements in an apparently public crime.

⁹ Same rationale can be used to explain keeping out Assault on women (sec 354 IPC) and Sexual Harassment (sec 354A IPC). These sections are overlapping and can be used if the assault takes place in both the public or private sphere and irrespective of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. Section 354 IPC has been used to book offenders in public space like office as well as used in conjunction with 498A IPC (Domestic Violence) against the members belonging to the family of procreation. Therefore, reducing these crimes into private and public sphere would have resulted in a faulty interpretation.

vulnerable and more accessible to the perpetrators when they are in the private sphere. It should also be noted that the test above is based on the NCRB data that record the *reported* crimes in various parts of the country; whereas the rate of *unreported* crimes are pretty high as well, especially in case of domestic violence. It is a common knowledge that reporting crimes against a perpetrator, who is a stranger, is comparatively easier than reporting against one's own family members. Victims are sometimes even forced to withdraw cases under familial pressure too making it grossly difficult to record the exact number of cases. Similarly, it is also true that are false reports of domestic torture are sometimes registered by the women in their attempts to 'teach their husbands a lesson'.

But there is no denying the fact that there is an amalgamation of the public/private elements in all the crimes committed against women, thus debunking the structured dichotomy. The act of registering a crime committed in a police station itself marks the case to be publically scrutinized no matter how private the offense is. Court trials are public, even in cases like rape and assault turning a private matter into a public spectacle and more so by the incessant involvement of the media in every part of the trial. According to the above analysis, women are targeted not because of their visibility in the public sphere but because of their vulnerability, their dependence and the age old patriarchal mindset that they are the 'other sex'¹⁰ ; which in the words of Brownmiller (1975) translates into—"the battle lines of truth were drawn, as they frequently are, on the bodies of women".

Workplace assaults are mostly reported to be sexual or voyeuristic in nature that, often do not feature in the NCRB due to lack of documentation. As narrated by the respondents most of these complaints are dealt with by the internal committees or a strong HR. It has now become mandatory for every office to have a board dealing with the complaints comprising of the HR, members selected from the office out of which at least two members must be women and a social worker external and unrelated to the organization. The above analysis lends support to the fact that the existence of dichotomy operates more at the level of consciousness than at physical plane. The private sphere, more than structured, is more of a tool to control the movement of the women and to limit their visibility in a sphere that is androcentric. Another way to

¹⁰ See Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*.

uninstall the revolution is to negate these psychological constraints that have kept the women away from the public.

8.4 Agents and Structure in the context of corporate women:

In the chapter dealing with research methodology, the theoretical pillars of the study were introduced- structuration and feminism with pragmatism being the overall epistemological standpoint. The idea is to understand how these theoretical paradigms fit into my study on the corporate women in urban Kolkata. The two important concepts that stand out in the whole study are agency and structure and how they are acting and interacting to create knowledge to be used by the future agents. As explained in details, agents are those who are capable of making proactive changes in the social circumstances in which they are embedded. In reference to structure, Giddens (1984) writes, “Structures, thus refers, in social analysis, to the structuring properties allowing the ‘binding’ of time-space in social systems, the properties which make it possible for discernibly similar social practices to exist across varying span of time and space and which lend them ‘systemic’ form. To say that structure is a ‘virtual order’ of transformative relations means that social systems, as reproduced social practices, do not have structures, but rather exhibit ‘structural properties, and that structure exists, as time-space presence, only in its instantiations in such practices and as memory traces orienting the conduct of the knowledgeable human agents” (p-17).

Human agents, in the course of interaction mobilize rules and resources to reproduce social practices across time and space. In this respect we can discern a propensity on the part of the agents to create knowledge, which becomes the guiding base of pragmatism that rejects dualistic epistemology. It is true that Giddens’ structuration has certain epistemological problem, because Giddens refrained from providing methodology to be followed, but this lacuna can be taken care of if structuration is combined with pragmatic approach of knowledge creation. The underlying factor in the creation and maintenance of the structure is power. According to Giddens, mobilization of resources is a medium through which an individual wield power and when fitted in the context of the corporate women, financial security does give them the power to negotiate patriarchal constraint to a great extent. But the exercise of power or the capability to make positive changes when opportunities are presented at their disposal depends highly on the woman concerned. Since most of the women spoken to in the course of the study

have been exposed to similar socio-economic conditions at the present, hence the successful striking of the work-life balance varies with the values they have been brought up with. Some women deliberately debar themselves from bargaining with patriarchy because of the tacit benefits they receive from it like quitting jobs whenever they deem fit. Similarly, there are some women who are by nature docile and have no intention of restructuring society along the lines of gender equality; for them work is a way to make both ends meet and not a symbolic flag of emancipation. For them the constant harping of the egalitarian family condition becomes more like a pressure than a choice. In this regard it can be said that creation of agents and deployment of agency depends on various factor like socialization, overall personality, the nature of the structure in which they find themselves and varies from one individual to another.

The major roadblock in the exercise of the choice rhetoric for the women is the constant interaction of the two opposing forces that presents the dilemma- the traditional power of the social conditioning that instill the gender norms and the counter pull of the emergence of the image of the 'new women' who are pro-choice and pro-work. The solution to this dilemma is definitely harder than the one described by the prisoner's dilemma in the preceding chapter where there is a clear existence of two separate players. But finding solution to the game becomes even more difficult when two players are encrusted within one. In other words, prisoner's dilemma and game of chicken presents an unilinear idea about player whose only motive is to maximize pay-offs in any strategic situation but sometimes dilemma within the player makes it tougher to count the pay-offs in an economic way. Sometimes a player, in this case a woman, competes within herself than with her husband to arrive at a strategic decision. Rather than two players competing to maximize pay-offs, sometimes the player competes with two separate 'definitions' or 'rationalizations'. Moreover, oftentimes in a game involving two genders, the distribution of the options is uneven. In a corporate household, rather than choosing between taking rest and doing household chores, the choices are between chores and finishing pending office work; and these two are also unevenly available. The trend that I have noticed in my fieldwork, most of the women have confirmed that they avoid carrying their office work back home so that they can productively contribute their time to family (especially child care) but when asked about their husbands' activities post-work, many of the women confirmed that finishing pending office work is a factor that often meddles with their husbands' contribution to

housekeeping. Hence, it can be said that the choices available to the two players are not the same. In the above scenario, women are choosing between chores and taking rest, while husbands are given the choice between taking rest and finishing office work in a patrilocal-patriarchal family. The choices vary a little in a two-job neo-local residence without children. Hence the things that have to be considered while positing two players (it is also interesting that in a private sphere two players have the same interest in mind and that is to reach a family equilibrium) in a co-operative game are the dilemma within the players themselves (the pull of the counter- definitions), the rationalizations they use to take a particular decision and whether the choices available to the players are same.

But in the end it can be said that despite the problems, the way these women are striking the work-life balance is definitely going to guide the next generation female workers. There is no denying the fact that the power or a perceived sense of purpose that comes with employment is enough to make modification in the social relationships both in the private and public spheres as discussed in the preceding chapters, this can be considered as the latent effect of two-job couples on the larger social processes like change in the form of family and the emergence of the newer ones.

The study has been undertaken to realize the four objectives- to understand the private sphere of the women at the IT sector in Kolkata, the work –life balance they strike, problems they face and the coping strategies they exercise that make their experiences exclusive and unique, situating and evaluating the concepts of agency and empowerment in the context of the IT women by going beyond the theoretical relevance of these terms and studying their empirical application and finally the wider objective of proving cogent arguments to adumbrate the importance of dissolution of the public/private dichotomy as a potential solution to unstage the stalled revolution. The study is premised on the ontological understanding that spheres are inherently gendered and exploitative; in their penchant to strike the perfect work-life balance women, as agents they are doubly constrained both in the public and private spheres. But at the same time, financial independence and a sense of purpose that comes with being gainfully employed has been stressed to show how the agents can actively alter and modify the structures that tend to constrain them. The presentation of the data in the preceding chapters clearly shows the variation in the application of agency as the women alter between spaces. But if the dichotomy that separates the spheres is blurred

then space can be conceptualized as a continuum and by turning space into a continuum the movement of the genders between spaces can be normalized thus unstalling the revolution. The spatial segregation also creates a hierarchization of spheres and the subsequent hierarchization and gendering of work and vice versa, these two are intrinsically linked. Gainful employment of women is definitely a way of subverting this exploitative hierarchization. The sense of identity that the women derive from being financially independent (Table 68a & 68b, see Appendix B) is unprecedented and should be tapped for connecting women, agency and empowerment in one thread.

Now the question arises regarding the way this dichotomy can be successfully dissolved and the proposed subversion of the exploitative structures achieved. As discussed in the preceding chapters one way to achieve this is to normalize the presence of men productively engaged in the private sphere and not just a token or symbolic existence as the financial contributor. Another way to do away with gendering of work as 'masculine' and 'feminine' within the domestic sphere and beyond is with the introduction of the gender neutral appliances which can be used without hassle by both the genders (like dishwashers, vacuum cleaners, microwaves) and make chores more gender inclusive. Now this creates another problematique, the acceptance of these appliances will still depend on the financial standing of the two-job family, yet it can change the way we conceptualize chores and label them as 'feminine'. Again, as presented in the analysis of the data, there is an undeniable reliance of the women at the IT sector on the outsourced help (home delivered food, nannies, private tutors, pool cars, cooks); it can be safely predicted that in the due course of time these outsourcing of services will be the biggest assistance to women striving hard to maintain the work-life balance (see Appendix B, Table 30, Table 33, Table 42). Though these are practical solutions to some of the issues within the domestic sphere, the most important being the nurturing and caring attitudes that make a work 'feminine' in keeping with the culture of adjustment they are socialized with; this justifies the solution provided by Hochschild (1997) for the need of a 'third shift' where emotional need of the family members can be catered to so that they can emotionally refueled.

As mentioned at the start of the thesis the major change in the family or the shift in the symmetry takes place with the birth of the child which is also accompanied by the birth of the 'mommy brain'. Unsuccessful unstalling of the revolution can take place only

when child care ceases to be analyzed from a gender angle and is brought under the purview of a cooperative task to be shared by both the genders. Though there is no denying the fact that there are women who draws immense sense of satisfaction from child rearing yet a successful work-life balance can be struck when child bearing and rearing cease to be responsible for the negative appraisal and hinder promotional prospects that force many women to quit job due to demoralization and overstress (see Appendix B Table 31, Table 34, Table 43, Table 44). IT sector presents a strange paradox that assures comfortable lifestyle in the form of higher emolument than the public sector enterprises but with the mixing of a sense of precarity and work pressure very unlike the latter. Hence even with the full awareness of fallacy of constantly adumbration, the importance of making spaces more gender inclusive can't be stressed more and, though nascent, the organizations are getting gender sensitized and inclusive in their approach to make work more productive by weeding out these structural constraints.

8.5 Future works:

The study of the married women working at the corporate sector in Urban Kolkata has been insightful in understanding the dichotomization of the society into two spheres, the overwhelming demands of the both the spheres and their changing nature. One of the major recommendations to the future researchers is to focus on the agency of the women to avoid motherhood altogether. In my research I came across few such women who have chosen not to have baby and have successfully subverted the societal pressure to give birth. This part of the agency should be explored which also hints at the increasing reliance on alternative sources of giving birth like IVF or surrogacy (Rudrappa 2010; Ghosh and Ghosh 2015) .

The private sphere has always been synonymous with women, but as a part of the continued study I recommend the future researchers to study the perspective of the men towards private and domestic to arrive at the holistic understanding. The opinions of the men can also be sought regarding their definition of empowerment and the way they envisage women empowerment and emancipation I the present day context.

It will be a fascinating study if future researchers can focus on the way 'family' is getting restructured as physical proximity of the two jobs couple is steadily waning. The

idea of the couple sharing the common household post marriage is coming under strain especially when both of them are working at the corporate sector and one of them accepts on-site. During my fieldwork I came across two to three such couples where their husbands have accepted onsite and staying away from them. In another scenario I came to know about a couple where both of them are working for the same company and both of them are placed in two different continents. It is an imperative that future works should focus on this changing aspect of the society where the idea of 'family' in terms of physical proximity or staying together can be debunked. A comparative analysis can also be done involving the propensity of the women to leave jobs when they are at the corporate sector vis a vis those who are involved at the government jobs. Though I tried to incorporate this aspect by collecting information from the universities in Kolkata, and the result was very encouraging with almost negligible percentage of professors leave jobs; when they do, most of the time, it is for better job opportunities elsewhere. This propensity of the women to leave a high paying corporate job to become a stay at home mom can be understood by simultaneously studying their contemporaries involved in the public sector jobs.

This study can also be undertaken from the 'role strain' perspective. Role refers to the position occupied by an individual in a society and the behavior attached to that position. It is expected that the individual occupying a particular position will follow the rules and regulation associated with it to ensure the seamless functioning of the society. Strain appears when there is a conflict between two roles played by a same individual. In this context the conflicting demands a woman faces everyday as a corporate worker and as a mother can very well be interpreted if placed within the context of role strain. The low valuation of the respondents of themselves as 'homemakers' is the clear indication of the role strain they suffer in their daily life choices and their 'perceived inability' to completely fulfill the role in the private sphere. It will be an enriching study if undertaken by the future scholars.

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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE

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Part1-General Information:

Name (optional)-

Age-

Educational Qualification-

Occupation-

Designation-

Name of the Office-

Income (per annum)-

Place of Residence-

Religion-

Caste-

Part2- Main questionnaire:

1. For how many years are you married?
 - a. 1-5 years
 - b. 6-10 years
 - c. More than 10 years
2. How many members are there in your family?
 - a. 1 (me alone)
 - b. 2

- c. 3
 - d. More than 3.
3. Who are there in your family?
- a. I stay alone.
 - b. I stay with my husband only.
 - c. I stay with my husband and in-laws.
 - d. I stay with my husband, in-laws and children.
 - e. I stay with my parents.
 - f. Others.
4. Do you and your spouse work at the same corporate office?
- a. Yes
 - b. No.
5. If no, is he working at the different office at the corporate sector?
- a. Yes
 - b. No.
6. If yes, then is your working in the corporate sector is influenced by the fact that your spouse works here too? (rate using the scale from 1 to 5, where 1 signifies least influence and 5 signifies significant influence)
- a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
7. How did you meet your spouse?
- a. We met at the same office.
 - b. We met at the other place.
 - c. Our marriage was arranged by our parents.
 - d. Matrimonial site.
 - e. Others.
8. Were you working before you got married?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
9. If yes, was it a full time or part time job?

- a. Full time job at the same office I am currently working.
 - b. Full time job at the other office.
 - c. Part time job.
10. If no, why?
- a. Never felt the need.
 - b. Parents didn't allow.
 - c. I got married immediately I passed my last examination.
 - d. Couldn't find a job back then.
 - e. Others (specify)-
11. Did you want to work at the corporate sector?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. This is temporary. I am looking for jobs in the other sectors.
 - d. This is temporary. I am thinking of quitting work altogether and spend time with my family.
12. If yes, why?
- a. The job profile is good.
 - b. Salary is good.
 - c. Both the above.
 - d. Because my husband works here.
 - e. Others (specify)-
13. If no, why?
- a. No time schedule.
 - b. Less time for family.
 - c. My husband never wanted me to work in the corporate sector.
 - d. My family objected.
 - e. Too much technical.
 - f. Others (specify)-
14. What is your office timing?
- a. Morning shift
 - b. Evening Shift
 - c. Night Shift
 - d. No specific timing.

15. When do you reach home?

16. When does your husband reach home?

-

17. What do generally do after reaching home? (tick the appropriate ones)

- a. Prepare dinner.
- b. Help children with the homework.
- c. Finish the pending office work.
- d. Spend time with in laws.
- e. Others (specify)-

18. What does your husband do after coming to home post work? (tick the appropriate responses)

- a. Prepare dinner
- b. Help Children with the homework.
- c. Finish pending office work.
- d. Go out with friends.
- e. Spend time with his parents and me.
- f. He comes home late
- g. Others (specify)-

19. Do you have children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

20. How many children do you have?

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. More than 2

21. How old are they?

-

22. Who takes them to school?

- a. Me
- b. My husband
- c. Me and my husband take them in turns

- d. My in laws
 - e. Pool car
 - f. House maid
 - g. Others (specify)-
23. Who gets the duty of preparing their lunch box?
- a. Me
 - b. My husband
 - c. Me and my husband take turns tp prepare lunchbox
 - d. My in laws
 - e. House maid
 - f. Cook
 - g. Others (specify)-
24. Do you help your children in completing their homework?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
25. If No, then who helps?
- a. My husband.
 - b. My in laws
 - c. Private Tutors
 - d. Others.
26. How often does your husband help with their homework?
- a. Once a week.
 - b. Once a month.
 - c. Whenever he gets time.
 - d. Rarely. It is basically my responsibility.
27. Did you take a maternity/sabbatical leave during your child birth?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
28. For how many months is maternity leave allowed by your office?
- a. For 3 months.
 - b. For 6 months.
 - c. For a year.

- d. There is no upper ceiling.
 - e. Others (specify)-
29. After how many months did you rejoin your office?
- a. After a month.
 - b. After six months.
 - c. After a year.
 - d. More than a year
30. Can you cite the reason for taking longer than usual break?
- a. No one but mother can take care of the child at that age.
 - b. Financially not strong enough to support a nanny.
 - c. Husband/in-laws cajoled.
 - d. Health issues
 - e. Others-
31. Have you ever changed job?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
32. If yes, when?
- a. Before marriage.
 - b. After marriage.
 - c. After childbirth.
33. What was the reason for changing jobs?
- a. Higher emolument.
 - b. Better working conditions.
 - c. Flexible timings.
 - d. Freedom from imposing boss at the previous job.
34. After you rejoined who took care of your child?
- a. My in laws
 - b. My husband.
 - c. A full time governess/ nanny
 - d. Creche'
 - e. Others (specify)
35. Do you attend the parents-teacher meeting at your child's school?
- a. Yes. Always.

- b. No. I hardly get time
 - c. My husband does.
 - d. We both do together.
 - e. We take turns every year.
 - f. My in laws do.
 - g. Others (specify)-
36. Having kids affect career advancement.
- a. Strongly agree.
 - b. Agree.
 - c. Disagree.
 - d. Strongly disagree.
37. Did your husband take the paternity leave to help you during child birth?
- a. Yes.
 - b. No.
 - c. I am not aware of the existence of paternity leave.
38. If no, why?
- a. Taking care of kids is done better by mothers.
 - b. Men's work/career is more important.
 - c. Men are incapable of handling kids.
 - d. Others (specify)
39. If yes, why?
- a. Child care is an equal responsibility.
 - b. So that I didn't have to take the sabbatical.
 - c. Men should be involved in the growing up process.
 - d. Others (specify)-
40. How did you manage to take care of the child alone? (for those whose husband stays away)
- a. I had no choice.
 - b. My in laws helped.
 - c. I left job and joined a new company after my child started going to school
 - d. I had full time nanny so that I can continue working
 - e. Others (specify)-

-
41. If your husband relocates to a different city or country what will you do?
- a. I may consider leaving my job and be with my husband.
 - b. I will stay here and work while he may work somewhere else.
 - c. I cant go because I have my family to look after and that includes my in laws.
 - d. I will go with him and find a new job there.
 - e. I will decide after talking to my husband.
 - f. I have the responsibility of my own parents.
 - g. I may go if I find a job to my husband's place of transfer
42. Why didn't you join your husband when he relocated to the other city? (for those whose husbands stay away)
- a. My husband wanted me to stay here.
 - b. Because of my job.
 - c. Because of my kid and family.
 - d. At least two of the above.
 - e. Others (specify)-
43. What do your in-laws say about your job?
- a. They are supportive.
 - b. They were initially against but they have come around.
 - c. They have asked me many times to stop working.
 - d. They dnt stay in the same house with us.
 - e. Others (specify)-
44. Do you get to spend time with your in laws?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes when the work pressure is moderate.
45. Do they stay with you and your husband?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
46. Rate your relationship with your in laws (1 signifies antagonistic relation, while 5 signifies extremely cordial)
- a. 1
 - b. 2

- c. 3
 - d. 4
 - e. 5
47. It is the duty of the married women to take care of their in laws.
- a. Strongly agree.
 - b. Agree.
 - c. Disagree.
 - d. Strongly disagree
 - e. Can't say
48. Does your husband get time to assist you in household chores?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. He has no expertise so I don't let him.
 - e. He hardly gets time
 - f. He thinks it is the sole responsibility of the wife regardless of whether she is working or not.
49. If yes, then what type of chore he likes doing the best?
- a. Cooking
 - b. Cleaning
 - c. Dressing up the kids for school
 - d. At least two of the above
 - e. Grocery shopping
 - f. We have a maid for all the said tasks but my husband occasionally does something out of his own whim.
50. Do you have any personal investment or saving?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. My husband knows
 - d. We have a joint saving
 - e. I am not good with finances.
 - f. Others (specify)-
51. On what do you spend mostly on?

- a. Regular household items
 - b. Kids' education
 - c. Luxury products for myself
 - d. My income is treated as an additional income so we spend on joint activities like movies, holidays, clothes etc.
 - e. Others (specify)-
52. Does your husband earn more than you?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
53. Do you pool in income with your husband for joint spending?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Sometimes
 - d. My salary goes to the joint account that I have with my husband
 - e. I hand over the whole amount to my husband to meet the household expenditure.
 - f. Others (specify)-
54. Does your husband save the majority of his income?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. Can't say
 - d. His savings is similar to mine.
55. Who takes the major decisions in the family?
- a. I do.
 - b. My husband does
 - c. We both do together.
 - d. My inlaws do.
 - e. Others (specify)-
56. What happens when there is a disagreement between you and your husband on any issue?
- a. I generally give in because peace is important in the family.
 - b. My husband is more logical than I am.
 - c. I am more logical than my husband, therefore my words prevail.

- d. We take help from in-laws or any trusted third person.
 - e. Others (specify)-
57. Why didn't you leave job after you got married?
- a. I was advised by my husband not to.
 - b. I wanted to work.
 - c. Money is important.
 - d. At least two of the above.
 - e. Others (specify)-
58. Financial independence leads to more autonomy in decision making.
- a. Strongly agree
 - b. Agree
 - c. Disagree
 - d. Strongly disagree
59. If you get relocated to another city at this juncture what will you do?
- a. I will leave.
 - b. I will consult with my husband and then decide.
 - c. I will consult with all family members and then decide.
 - d. I will stay for my kids and family.
 - e. I will change job and take the one which will allow me to stay in this city.
 - f. Others (specify)
60. What kind of tactics you use to balance your private and professional life?
Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 as a home maker and as a corporate executive.

Tabulation of Data:

Table No.1 : Age of the Respondents

Age of the Respondents	No. of Respondents
1. 21-30	69
2. 31-40	60
3. 41-50	26
Total	155

Table No. 2: Educational Qualification of the Respondents

Educational qualification (last examination taken)	No. of Respondents
1. Higher Secondary	00
2. Graduate	98
3. Post Graduate	57
4. Doctorate	00

Table No.3: Occupational Designation of the Respondents

Occupational Designations	No. of Respondents
1. Call Centre employees	00
2. IT Analysts	58
3. Web Designer	08
4. Senior Customer Care executive/ manager	20
5. Assistant Consultant	16
6. Senior manager	19
7. Training manager	17
8. Corporate secretariat	6
9. Instructional Writer	2
10. Team Leader/ Project Head	09
Total	155

Table No.4: Corporate offices chosen for the purpose of the Study

Corporate Offices	No. of Respondents
1. Tata Consultancy Services	105
2. Tata Interactive Services	07
3. Wipro	12
4. Infosys	02
5. Cognizant	04
6. IBM	05
7. Capgemini	02
8. AEGIS	02
9. Others	16
Total	155

Table No.5: Annual Income of the Respondents

Income slabs of the Respondents (Per Annum in lakhs)	No. of Respondents
1. 1- 5	62
2. 6- 10	79
3. 11- 20	14
4. Above 20	00
Total	155

Table No.6: Religion of the Respondents

Religions	No. of Respondents
1. Hindu	155
2. Muslim	00
3. Christian	00
4. Sikh	00
5. Jain	00
6. Others	00
Total	155

Table No.7: Caste of the Respondents

Castes	No. of Respondents
1. General	147
2. SC	00
3. ST	00
4. OBC	00
5. Do not want to disclose	08
Total	155

Table No. 8: Place of Residence

Place	No.of Respondents
North	40
South	31
East	58
West	18

Table No.9: Years of Marriage

Years of marriage	No. of Respondents
1. 1- 5	82
2. 6- 10	29
3. More than 10	44

Table No.10: No. of Members in the family of the Respondents

No. of members in the family	No. of Respondents
1. I stay alone	00
2. 2	13
3. 3	57
4. More than 3	85
Total	155

Table No.11: Composition of the family

Composition of the family	Composition of the Family						
	I stay alone	I stay with my husband only	I stay with my husband and child/children	I stay with my husband and in-laws	I stay with my husband , in-laws and children	I stay at my paternal home	I stay with my parents, husband and children
No. of Respondents	00	13	22	33	73	10	04

Table No.12: Whether Spouse working at the same office

	Do You and Your Spouse work at the same corporate office?	
Responses	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	49	106

Table No.13: Whether Spouse works at a different office in the same sector (if the answer to the preceding question is no)

	If no, is he working at a different office in the same sector?	
Responses	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	87	68

Table No.14: Rating the influence of the spouse working at the corporate sector on the women working in this sector (1 signifying minimal influence, 5 signifying major influence)

	Influence of the spouse working in the same sector on working women					
Rate of influence	No influence as he doesn't work at the corporate sector	1	2	3	4	5
No. of Respondents	68	22	15	31	9	10

Table No.15: How did you meet your spouse?

	Place of meeting the Spouse				
Places	At the same office	At other place	Arranged by parents	Matrimonial sites/ social networking sites	Others
No. of Respondents	35	67	16	12	25

Table No.16: Whether the respondents worked pre marriage

	Were you working before marriage?	
Responses	Yes	No
No. of respondents	128	27

Table No.17: Type of job the respondents were engaged pre marriage (if the response to the previous question if ‘yes’)

	If yes, was it a full time or part time job?				
Responses	Full time job at the current office	Full time job in the other office but at the same sector	Full time job but at a different sector	Part Time job	Not working
No. of Respondents	47	66	00	15	27

Table No.18: Reason why the Respondents did not work pre marriage (if the response to the previous question is ‘no’)

	Reasons which debarred the respondents from working pre marriage				
Reasons	Never felt the need	Parents didn’t allow	Got married immediately after the last examination	Couldn’t find a job back then	Others
No. of Respondents	00	00	19	08	00

Table No.19: Whether the Respondents always wanted to work at the Corporate Sector

	Did You want to work at the Corporate Sector?			
Responses	Yes	No	This job is temporary, will be shifting to other sector	This job is temporary, will quit job in near future and spend more time with family
No. of Respondents	122	15	03	15

Table No.20: Reasons why the respondents wanted to work at the Corporate Sector

	Reasons why the respondents chose to work at the corporate sector				
Reasons	Job profile is good	Salary is good	Both the preceding reasons	My husband/ then fiancé works here	Others
No. of Respondents	08	10	101	00	03

Table No.21: Reasons why the Respondents never wanted to work at the Corporate Sector (if the response to question no.17 is ‘no’)

	Reasons why the respondents didn’t want to join the corporate sector					
Reasons	No time schedule	Less time for family	My husband/then fiancé didn’t want me work at the corporate sector	Objection from paternal family	Job is too much technical and sometimes monotonous	Others
No. of Respondents	03	08	00	00	01	03

;Table No.22: Office timing of the Respondents

Office Timing of the Respondents	Morning Shift	Evening shift	Night Shift	No specific shift
No. of Respondents	84	26	00	45

Table No.23: Timing of reaching home after office

Timing to reach home	4.00p.m-5.55p.m	6.00p.m-8.55p.m	9.00p.m-11.55p.m	Post 12 a.m	No fixed timing	Work from home
No. of Respondents	00	66	25		60	4

Table No.24: Time at which Respondent's husband reach home after office

	When does your husband come home?					
Timing	5p.m-7.55p.m	8.00p.m-10.55p.m	11.00p.m-12.55a.m	Post 1a.m	No fixed timing	He doesn't stay in the city
No. of Respondents	08	78	13	12	41	03

Table No.25: Activities Respondents indulge in post office

	What do you generally do after reaching home?						
Activities	Prepare dinner	Help children with the homework	Finish pending office work	Spend time with in-laws	More than 2 of the mentioned activities	All the activities in moderation	Others
No. of Respondents	16	23	12	15	85	00	04

Table No.26:Activities that Respondent's spouse indulge in after returning from office

	What does your husband do after reaching home post office?								
Activities	He prepares dinner	Helps children with the homework	Finishes pending office work	Spends time with his parents and me	He comes home really late	Go out with friends	At least 2 of the preceding options	Others	Husband stays away
No. of Respondents	02	00	24	19	17	01	83	06	03

Table No.27: Whether or not Respondents have children

	Do you have children?	
Responses	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	98	57

Table No.28: No. of Children Respondents have

	How many children do you have?		
No. of Children	1	2	More than 2
No. of Respondents	82	16	00

Table No.29 (A): Age of Respondents' Children

How old are your children?

	First Child				
Age of first child	1month-5years	6 yrs- 10 yrs	11 yrs- 15 yrs	16 yrs- 20 yrs	Above 20
No. of Respondents	49	37	12	00	00

B)

	Second Child				
Age of second child	1month-5years	6 yrs- 10 yrs	11 yrs- 15 yrs	16 yrs- 20 yrs	Above 20
No. of Respondents	14	02	00	00	00

Table No.30: Children and School

	Who takes them to School?							
Responses	Me	My husband	Me and my husband take them in turns	My in-laws	Pool car	House maid	Have not joined school yet	Others
No. of Respondents	14	08	00	04	48	00	12	12

Table No.31: Children and Lunchbox

	Who gets the duty to prepare the lunch box of the kids when they go to school?							
Responses	Me	My husband	Me and my husband take turns to prepare it	My in-laws	House maids	Cook	Others	Have not joined school yet
No. of Respondents	46	00	00	11	00	27	02	12

Table No. 32: Whether the Respondents help their children in completing their homework

	Do You help your Children in completing their homework?			
Responses	Yes	No	Sometimes	Too small to start formal education
No. of Respondents	56	08	22	12

Table no. 33: If the response above is 'no' or 'sometimes', then who helps the children of the respondents in completing their homework?

	If the above response is 'no' or 'sometimes' then who helps?			
Responses	My husband	My in-laws	Private tutors	Others
No. of Respondents	02	00	25	03

Table No. 34: Frequency at which the respondent's husband helps with children's homework

	How Often does your husband help with their homework?				
Frequency	Once a week	Once a month	Whenever he gets time	Rarely, it's basically my responsibility	Haven't joined school
No. of Respondents	12	07	33	34	12

Table No. 35: Whether the Respondent took sabbatical/ maternity leave during Child birth

	Did you take maternity/ sabbatical leave during your child birth?	
Responses	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	84	14

Table No. 36: Duration of maternity leave allowed by the office

	For how many months is maternity leave allowed by your office?					
Duration	3months- 5 months	6 months – 11months	For a year	There is no upper ceiling	Others	Left job due to pregnancy
No. of Respondents	61	23	00	00	00	14

Table No. 37: Rejoining office post child birth

	After how many months did you rejoin your office?			
Time period	After 3 months	After 6 months	After a year	More than a year
No. of Respondents	27	66	05	00

Table No. 38: If the response to the above question is ‘more than a year’, then what took the respondents longer than usual break post child birth?

	Can you cite the reason for taking longer than usual break?				
Reasons	No one but the mother can take care of the child at that age	Financially not strong enough to support a nanny	Husband/ in-laws cajoled	Health issues	Others
No. of Respondents	00	00	00	05	00

Table No.39: Change of Jobs

	Have you ever changed job?	
Responses	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	89	66

Table No. 40: The time of change of job by the Respondents

	If the response to the above question is 'yes' then when did you change job?			
Time	Before marriage	After marriage	Both before and after marriage	After childbirth
No. of Respondents	19	36	08	26

Table No. 41: Reasons for changing Job

	What were the reasons for changing jobs?						
Reasons	Higher Emolumen t	Better working condition s	Flexibl e timing	Freedo m from imposin g boss at the previous job	At least 2 of the reason s	Locatio n shift post marriage	Not willing to disclos e
No. of Respondent s	35	25	08	00	14	04	03

Table No. 42: Taking care of the child after joining office

	After you rejoined who took care of your child?				
Agents	My in-laws	My husband	My full time governess/nanny	Crèche	Others
No. of Respondents	26	00	63	00	09

Table No.43: Attending Parents-teacher meeting at the child's school

	Do you attend the Parents-teachers meeting at your child's school?						
Responses	Yes. Always	No, I hardly get time	My husband does	We both do together	We take turns every year	My in-laws do	Others/ haven't joined school
No. of Respondents	42	00	00	38	06	00	12

Table No.44: Respondents' opinion about having kids and career advancement

	Having Kids affect career advancement			
Responses	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
No. of Respondents	65	76	10	04

Table No.45: Child birth and Paternity leave

	Did your husband take paternity leave to help you during child birth?		
Responses	Yes	No	I am not aware of the existence of paternity leave
No. of Respondents	18	67	13

Table No.46: Enlisting reasons if the response to the above question is ‘no’

	If ‘no’, why?			
Reasons	Taking care of the kids is better done by mothers	Men’s work/career is more important	Men are incapable of handling kids	Others
No. of Respondents	45	00	18	04

Table No.47: Enlisting reasons if the response to Table no.43 is ‘yes’

	If ‘yes’, why?				
Reasons	Child care is an equal responsibility	So that I didn’t have to take the sabbatical	Men should be involved in the growing up process	At least 2 of the reasons above	Others
No. of Respondents	04	00	00	13	01

Table No.48: Taking care of the Child by those Respondents whose husband stayed/stays away

	How did you manage to take care of your child alone? (for those whose husband stays/ stayed away)				
Responses	I had no choice	My in-laws helped	I left job and joined a new company after my child started going to school	I had full time nanny so that I could continue working	Others
No. of Respondents	01	03	01	00	04

Table No.49: Relocation of Spouse

	If your husband relocates to a different city or country what will you do?						
Choices	I may consider leaving my job and be with my husband	I will stay here and work while he may go and work somewhere else	I can't go because I have a family to look after and that includes my in-laws	I will go with him and find a new job there	I will decide after talking to my husband	I have responsibility of my own parents	I may go if I find a job to his place of transfer
No. of Respondents	27	27	15	47	15	11	13

Table No.50: Reasons for not joining the spouse in case he has already been transferred

	Why didn't you join your husband when he relocated to other city/country?				
Reasons	My husband wanted me to stay here	Because of my job	Because of my kid and family	Atleast two of the reasons above	Others
No. of Respondents	00	02	04	02	01

Table No.51: Corporate Job and Opinion of the In-laws

	What do your in-laws say about your job?			
Responses	They are supportive	They were initially against but they have come around	They have asked me many times to stop working	Cant say
No. of Respondents	88	37	22	08

Table No.52: Spending time with in-laws

	Do you get to spend times with your in-laws?		
Responses	Yes	No	Sometimes when the work pressure is moderate
No. of Respondents	75	37	43

Table No.53: Whether the in-laws stay with the Respondents

	Do your in-laws stay with you and your husband?	
Responses	Yes	No
No. of Respondents	97	58

Table No.54: Rating the respondent's relationship with in-laws

	Rate your relationship with your in-laws (1 signifies antagonistic relationship and 5 signifies extreme cordiality)				
Rating	1	2	3	4	5
No. of Respondents	20	14	65	28	28

Table No.55: Reaction of the respondents to the statement 'it is the duty of the married women to take care of their in-laws'

	Statement: It is the duty of the married women to take care of their in-laws				
Reactions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Can't say
No. of Respondents	31	88	27	08	01

Table No.56: Husband and House husbandry

	Does your husband get time to assist you in household chores?					
Responses	Yes	No	Sometimes	He has no expertise so I don't let him	He hardly gets time	He thinks it is the sole responsibility of the wife regardless of whether she is working or not.
No. of Respondents	57	10	43	15	21	09

Table No.57: Husband and types of household chores

	If the above response is 'yes' or 'sometimes' then what type of chore does he generally do?						
Chores	Cooking	Cleaning	Dressing up kids for school	Grocery shopping	At least two of the above	None of the above	We have a maid for all the said tasks but my husband occasionally does something out of his own whim.
No. of Respondents	08	07	-	05	54	10	16

Table no.58: Personal Investment or Saving

	Do You have any personal investment or saving?					
Responses	Yes	No	My husband knows	We have a joint saving	I am not good with finances	Others
No. of Respondents	134	08	04	09	00	00

Table No.59: Income and Spending

	On what do you spend mostly?					
Responses	Regular household items	Kids' education	Luxury products for myself	My income is treated as an additional income so we spend on joint activities like movies, holidays etc	Others	At least 2 of the above
No. of Respondents		22	12	5	3	113

Table No. 60: Does your husband earn more than you?

Responses	Yes	No
No.of Respondents	153	02

Table No.61: Joint Spending

	Do you pool in income with your husband for joint spending?					
Responses	Yes	No	Sometimes	My salary goes to the joint account that I have with my husband	I hand over the whole amount to my husband to meet the household expenditure.	others
No. of Respondents	57	41	51	06	00	00

Table No.62: Spouse and Saving

	Does your husband save the majority of his income?			
Responses	Yes	No	Can't Say	His income is similar to mine
No. of Respondents	54	46	27	28

Table No.63: Family and Decision making

	Who takes the major decision in the family?				
Responses	I do	My Husband Does	We both do together	My in-laws do	Others
No. of Respondents	25	42	78	10	00

Table No.64: Disagreement with Spouse

	What happens when there is a disagreement between you and your husband on any issue?				
Responses	I generally give in because peace is important in the family	My husband is more logical than I am	I am more logical than my husband, therefore my words prevail	We take help from in-laws or any trusted third person	Others
No. of Respondents	54	34	45	16	06

Table No.65: Reasons why the respondents didn't leave job post marriage

		Why didn't you leave job after you got married?				
Reasons	I was advised by my husband not to	I wanted to work	Money is important	A and B above	B. and C above	Others
No. of Respondents	02	32	28	11	82	00

Table No.66: Opinions of the respondents to the statement 'Financial independence of the women leads to more autonomy in decision making'

	Statement: Financial Independence leads to more autonomy in decision making			
Opinions	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
No. of Respondents	132	14	09	00

Table No.67: Respondents' opinions on job related relocation

	If you get relocated to another city at this juncture what will you do?					
Opinions	I will leave	I will consult with my husband and then decide	I will consult with all family members and then decide	I will stay for my kids and family	I will change job and take the one which will allow me to stay in this city	Others
No. of Respondents	31	25	19	24	55	01

Table No. 68(a): Rating oneself as a corporate executive

	How do you rate yourself as a corporate executive?		
Rates	1-4	5-7	8-10
No. of Respondents		17	138

Table No.68(b): Rating oneself as a home maker

	How do you rate yourself as a home maker?		
Rates	1-4	5-7	8-10
No. of Respondents		134	21