Career Aspiration and Achievement Motivation of Women Academicians:
A Struggle for Dual Role Conflict

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Abstract

The scenario of women in contemporary India shows that they do not have a subjugated state; there is greater prevalence of relative independence of women whereby they choose their own line of path in domains of career and livelihood. However, careerist women are looked down upon for neglecting the traditional role in family. Motivation provides an important foundation to complete cognitive behavior where career aspiration involves a decision to work full time even when it is not necessary for economic reasons, which requires a serious life style commitment. Increasing workforce participation of women requires understanding women's motivations and career as role conflict for careerist women is a contentious issue. The attitude of women to career and family commitment is gaining serious attention. A few studies of achievement motivation have been conducted and much less have been conducted on women. Research examining women's career development in academia suggests that despite the introduction of equal opportunity policies, women continue to be underrepresented in the profession, particularly in the higher rank. They face a serious problem of work-family priority where many women seek support mechanisms from spouses, relatives, friends, colleagues etc. Bringing such balance between work and family roles are the biggest challenge for lady academicians.

Keywords - *Achievement motivation, careerist women, academicians, role conflict.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The work contributed by women is a significant factor in a nation's progress. It is said, without women participating in the national activities, the overall social, economic and political achievements of a country will come to a standstill. The patriarchal notions of the Indian society still believe that man is the primary bread-earner in the family. Earlier, society viewed women as those, who are confined to home, to take care of the domestic affairs and to look after the children. Investing proportionally more in women than in men in education, health, family planning, access to land, inputs and extension is an important part of developmental strategy, as well as an act of social justice. It directly reduces poverty through substantial economic and social payoffs. It contributes to sustainable development. It results in social gains on the one hand and mortality on the other. Currently, many developing countries are witnessing a massive influx of women into workforce. To reduce gender inequality and to make women empowered is to engage them into economic activities.

There lies a difference between a housewife and a woman working outside where the working woman is paid for her work by her employer, where as the housewife does not get anything for her work. There are many obstacles to female employment in the course of the country's economic development and progress. The present paper focuses on attitude and achievement motivation of lady academicians in higher education especially on their motivations for growth, the barriers they encounter, the mechanisms they adopt to strike a balance and the approach they assume to resolve role conflict. Very few studies of achievement motivation have been conducted and, within that, much less have been conducted on women [1]. One of the most important factors that lead people to their goals is the drive. This drive is known as motivation. For every individual there is a variable driving force. In fact, it is not just a single factor, but a combination of factors that lead people to achieve their goals.

Motivation is defined as an internal drive that activates behavior and gives it direction. Motivation theory is concerned with the processes that describe why and how human behavior is activated and directed. The mental state of individual is considered as the motive to achieve or excel over others. Achievement motivation being psycho-social, its characteristics is more acquired than inherited. The type of environment, the basis/ the degree of opportunity provided to individual put diverse impact upon the achievement motivation of the individual. The classification of achievement motivation items concerns the time perspective relative to task performance; whether the

behavior is relevant mainly before, during, or after performance. Most studies of achievement in higher education have been conducted on students at major research universities in urban areas and virtually all of these have been based on quantitative analysis.

The research gap shows that there is abundance of literature available on women's career but the discrepancy between the achievement motivation and their dual role work family conflict has been less highlighted upon. Achievement motivation in men has been studied extensively; however, it has rarely been studied from the point of view of women. It seems clear that women do have achievement motivation; but this motivation is directed differently as compared to their male counterparts. The present study identifies the link in the careerist women about their dual role conflict that they suffer from and the achievement motivation to pursue career thereby segregating the work and family priorities. It would highlight whether women are capable of balancing or they end up in neglecting either family or work.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The paper is based on secondary data. The author has resorted to studies pertaining to the field. The paper presents a critical review of past research and studies on gender and work. Based on this exercise, the author offers her assessment and observation concerning dual role (home and employment) of lady academicians and their achievement motivations. The paper intends to examine the socio-cultural barrier and the women's motivation towards achievement. Like other occupations, women in teaching as a career is most often found to have a dual role conflict to balance the work and family sphere. They often face an inner conflict pertaining to their commitment and priority: professional v/s familial. The paper attempts to explain this under the following rubrics: careerist women in teaching and achievement motivation; career aspiration and perspective of achievement motivation; achievement motivation in males and females; maternal influence on achievement; family and carrier commitment attitude of women; conflicting roles in career and family priority.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Careerist women in teaching and achievement motivation*

Although achievement motivation is particularly related to the instrumental aspects of behavior, feelings (affective aspects) and preferences (cognitive aspects) are also relevant to one's achievement tendencies. Thus, when one is motivated to undertake a difficult rather than an easy task, the instrumental aspects of achievement motivation are involved. In other situations, the other modalities are relevant. In the case where one is more satisfied with a difficult task than with an easy one, the affective aspect is revealed; when one prefers the difficult task, cognitive aspects are concerned. All behaviors motivated by the need for achievement include two primary components whereby one is ready mentally to confront a challenge and second to find out solutions to those hurdles. One tends to cope up with a number of challenges such as working hard, being tolerant of ambiguity and uncertainty, and resuming personal responsibility for performance and its outcomes. It includes behaviors such as calculating risks, providing innovative instead of conventional solutions to problems, and considering to what extent one actions and deeds fulfill the need for success.

Achievement motivation is a subjective and internal psychological drive, enabling individuals to pursue work they perceive to be valuable and prompting them to reach their goals. Meanwhile, achievement motivation is also a mentality to compete and compare with others. Achievement motivation is a stable learned characteristic in which satisfaction comes from striving for and achieving a level of excellence. David McClelland and Atkinson were the first ones to concentrate on the study of achievement motivation. Mc Cleland, Atkinson, Clark and Lowell, (1953) argue that people who strive for excellence in a field for the sake of achieving and not for some reward are considered to have a high need for achievement. Achievement motivation has been defined as the extent to which individuals differ in their need to strive to attain rewards, such as physical satisfaction, praise from others and feelings of personal mastery. People with high achievement motives will act in ways that will help them to outperform others, meet or surpass some standard of excellence, or do something unique [2]. Features of achievement motivation include personal disposition to strive towards a particular goal, the person undertakes risk for personal accomplishments and the person motivated by achievement is more future-oriented.

Teaching has always been one of the choicest professions open to women. All kinds of professions do not provide the flexibility of timing which is possible only in a few professions like in teaching. Women in teaching foster creativity, develop character, give students the much needed lenses with which to view the world and provide students with the skills they need to reach their potential and lead productive lives. Many individuals are attracted to teaching by a sense of service, because they want to make a clear, tangible difference in the lives of others [3]. There are four reasons most frequently mentioned as to why people

choose teaching as a career: (i) service or opportunity to contribute to society, (ii) love of or desire to work with children, (iii) love of teaching or the profession and (iv) the influence of family members or teachers. Hence, in recent decades there has been a significant change in the field of higher education in India, whereby an increasing number of women has entered the academic field.

Moreover, motivating factors of influencing teaching as a career shows that choosing to teach as a fallback career was rated very low as a motivation for entering the profession [4]. Another factor that is often considered a limit to women's research development is that they have less access to academic networks which is vital for a successful research career whereby women are more concentrated in teaching activities while men focus on research and publishing. In addition to this, the challenge for female teachers are the socio-cultural barriers that they face such as the biological clock, the physical demands of pregnancy and childbirth, the gendered expectations of family obligations, and the ongoing disparity with which women take on the "second shift" through maintenance of children and home. In addition, this perception that they alone are responsible for the domestic work, leads to a feeling of guilt when they are not able to look after the children or the family due to their official work, often resulting in emotional disorders. Further, cultural expectations which persist about women's responsibilities and capabilities have a negative impact on their careers. Many women feel that their career advancement is limited after having children because when a woman teacher steps out to work, the conflict with her own instinct begins as she has to sacrifice the comforts of home leading further to half hearted efforts that become a barrier. There is no dearth of studies to point out the barriers lady academics face in managing home and work responsibilities [5].

B. *Career Aspiration and perspective of achievement motivation*

Attempts to explain academic achievement in terms of underlying drives are, perhaps, best represented by studies which investigate "anxiety" or "achievement motivation". "Anxiety" is often considered as a drive which will inevitably facilitate learning [6]. This is emphasized as an over-simple view. Anxiety can be "trait", representing a general tendency, or "state", relating to a specific situation. The more specific dimensions of "academic motivation" appears to have been conceptualized in terms of the type of intrinsic motivation which links competitive academic attainment with self-esteem. Since young women are increasingly attempting to combine the housewife role with various achievement concerns [7]. It is important to note that degree expectations and

career orientation each involve different degrees and types of conflict with home and family concerns. Career aspiration, which involves a decision to work full-time even when it is not necessary for economic reasons, requires a serious life style commitment. But it need not require high level achievement strivings, since the chosen career may or may not be a high status/an achievement-oriented one. Thus, career orientation should be related to positive evaluations of the work role, both by women and their male peers, and to a devaluation of the traditional home-only view of the female sex role. But it should not be as strongly related to the achievement variables of support and role modeling. Support from personal-significant others, who can contribute to basic self-confidence and from achievement-specific significant others, who can provide a critical judgment of the person's actual achievement performance, have been shown to be related to the development and maintenance of high levels of achievement behavior [8]. Educational attainment represents the most immediate achievement goal presented to college women, and, because of the correlation between education and occupation, it is likely to predict career commitment. career orientation, because it involves more of a life style commitment, but not necessarily as high a level of achievement striving, which would be more strongly related to a positive evaluation of the female work role than the degree of expectations, but less strongly related to the achievement variables of support and the presence of role models.

Research examining women's career development in academia suggests that despite the introduction of equal opportunity policies women continue to be underrepresented in the profession, particularly in the higher rank. Psychologically based explanations for this situation have focused on a range of individual and environmental factors. Finkelstein identified two explanations for the lower status of lady academics. The first explanation suggests that female academics are disadvantaged due to structural factors such as overt discrimination. The second explanation for the status of women in the academic profession focuses on gender differences in performance, for example, female academics' lower publication rates and lower teaching evaluations. Differences in performance have been attributed to various sources including women's differing values, orientations, and activity preferences; greater role conflict and overload among female academics; and differences in educational background and training, such as lack of mentoring. Several studies have investigated the contribution of self-efficacy beliefs to explaining gender differences in the academic career. Self-efficacy beliefs are people's perceptions of confidence in their ability to perform successfully a

given behavior and are derived and shaped by social experience. A positive relationship between research self-efficacy and research productivity has been suggested. The implications of such studies are that female academics may be disadvantaged in their career advancement due to their lower research self-efficacy beliefs and productivity, given that excellence in research is a major consideration in the academic reward structure. In order to extend the empirical investigation of the application of self-efficacy theory to women's career development in the academic profession, it is necessary to examine additional behavioral domains relevant to the academic career.

Research on attitude and beliefs describes studies which have found that although belief in the achievement is widespread, individuals differ greatly in achievement behavior [9]. Studies conducted show that sometimes people hold dual value system: one abstract and the other concrete. One system reflects society's abstract norms while the other is situational specific to people's lives. Both women and men are sometimes afraid of the heights of ambition, achievement, and accomplishment: all of these have their costs. But men are forced to face their fears and, for those who are successful in conquering them, the lives they chart may be rich and meaningful. Women are not challenged to face their fears and thus remain self-doubting. Women lack support and encouragement to do their best and to enjoy doing well; most of those who could "make it," do not get appreciation. The problems of female personality development and sex-role stereotyping are important in understanding women's achievement motivation. The assignment of women to low-status roles is significant, for the anticipation of these adult roles influences the psychological, behavioral, and intellectual development of female children and adolescents [10]. The relative unimportance of their future roles is particularly crucial in accounting for the limited development of achievement motivation, strong positive identity, and self-esteem in adolescent girls. Self-identity for female adolescents derives from a prevailing concept of femininity which focuses almost exclusively on the fulfillment of wife/mother roles. At the same time, their failure to develop a strong positive sense of identity reinforces the conformity and dependency encouraged during their earlier socialization.

C. Achievement Motivation in Males and Females

There exists a difference between men and women in so far as career success is concerned. In comparison to men, women depend more on formal, objective factors such as education, prior experience, and performance ratings [11]. Relationships, family structure and support services have an impact on work-family conflicts that are different for women and men

[12]. The conflict between femininity and achievement is likely to make a young woman especially anxious to see how working, achieving women are accepted by their male peers [13]. There is no sex difference in the type of reinforcement preferred [14]. Marriage and parenthood are negatively related to women's career success where both achievement and self-fulfillment among girls may be impeded by over-concern for others, a concern that is traditionally part of the feminine sex role stereotype [15].

Gender differences in achievement motivation and related achievement behaviour are viewed from a social learning perspective incorporating a dynamic view of learning and development where socialization experiences in the past and present as strong determinants of achievement motivation and behaviour. Moreover, studies hypothesized that male and females were oriented toward different kinds of achievement. Males were interested in achieving on tasks that involved impersonal ideas or inanimate objects whereas, females were interested' in tasks that involved interaction with people. Another related hypothesis was that males were mainly interested in the task for its own sake, while females worked primarily for the praise and approval of others. Women place emphasis on relationships throughout their lives [16] whereas men are more likely to sacrifice relationships for the sake their careers in early career [17]. Studies have found that personality factors, especially sex-role orientation affect feminine achievement motivation. Moreover, studies [18] suggest that differences in self-concept may account for the decline in feminine achievement in young adulthood. Till women reach the college years, any sex difference in self-concept is not seen. At this time, however, females have less sense of being able to control their own fate, tend to define themselves in more social terms, and have less confidence in their ability to perform. Hence, sex differences in achievement motivation have been studied widely [19]. There are sex differences in academic achievement depending on motivation [20]. It has been suggested that women have been disadvantaged on entry to an academic career by being more likely than men to gain their initial employment in a non- tenured position, and particularly as a tutor [21]. Promotion beyond the level of lecturer has also been slower for women than for men.

D. Maternal Influence on Achievement

Many researchers have found that child-rearing practices can affect achievement. But it seems clear that young women must judge the advantage of pursuing a career or achievement goals relative to the perceived advantage of a more traditional, primarily domestic lifestyle. Women who enter and maintain careers as

academics may well be 'hardy survivors' to a greater extent than their male counterparts. For example, the pursuit of career goals at the expense of marriage and being a parent is found more often among women than men. Marriage seems to have contrary effects on occupational career for men and women respectively (or is at least negatively correlated with their occupational chances). It enhances the advancement chances of men and increases the risk of downward mobility. A woman's attitudes toward holding a paid job may be contingent upon her definition of appropriate familial role expectations. Married academicians' experience with job and family represents the dialectic of achievement versus ascription. Married female academics can be expected to experience greater conflict over geographic mobility. Disadvantages can include having to take a lower-level job as a consequence of following the spouse or being unable to accept an attractive position in a location removed from the spouse's employment. Further, when married and with children, lady academics experience career discontinuity at much higher rates than their male colleagues.

Studies [22] found that number of children in the family had a negative effect on the publication rate of men and women in the physical sciences but not the humanities as the responsibility for child-care adversely affects research output work. Marriage and parenthood leave women more vulnerable than men to career interruption, geographical relocation, and family responsibilities added to work commitments, the women who enter and maintain careers as academics may well be 'hardy survivors' to a greater extent than their male counterparts [23]. For example, the pursuit of career goals at the expense of marriage and being a parent is found more often among women than men. Moreover, maternal acceleration during the early years is positively related to high achievement during adulthood [24]. Identification with the mother is usually associated with low motivation. However, the presence of an achieving mother seems to encourage achievement in her daughter. Studies [25] found that daughters of working mothers assessed the professional competence of females higher than daughters of nonworking mothers. Among adolescent females, parental restrictiveness is associated with low leadership, low responsibility, and low achievement aspirations.

E. Family and Carrier Commitment Attitude of Women

The way young women perceive the evaluations of traditional housewife and work-achievement roles significantly influences their educational goals and career commitments.' Thus, careers have been described in fundamentally two different ways. Firstly, they can be described as being subjective reflections of the individual's own sense of his or her meaning derived from career. Secondly, they can be described as being objective reflections of the more observable positions, salary and status that serve as standards of gauging progress in society. Career Commitment may be defined as one's attitude towards one's profession or vocation [26]. It is about a strong desire and obligation of remaining in a profession. Family too expects such responsibility and obligation for women to be intact in that. There exists a negative relationship between high career role salience and high family role salience. In particular, a woman's attitudes toward holding a paid job may be contingent upon her definition of appropriate familial role expectations. The more masculine the career field chosen and the higher the degree sought, the less likely the women were to report enjoying domestic activities or to anticipate that child care, contact with parents and homemaking tasks will be important to them [27].

Individuals with a high career commitment are found to invest extra effort for attaining career goals which often are not found in case of married women who neglect their family commitments. However, individuals who are committed to their career are more likely to set high career goals for themselves, put more effort and pursue these goals despite obstacles and setbacks [28]. Studies have shown that it was not housework which created problems but children. The deepest sense of conflict arose with respect to their desire to get more time with their children for proper socialization. women deduce a low 'commitment' to job because in the event of any family crisis they are ready to give up their jobs. Family commitments and work commitment for women cause "double role" causing many obstacles experienced by women in working life. This suggests that social and individual-level factors may work together to shape gender role attitudes. The more dependent women are in society as a whole, the more vulnerable their attitudes may be to individual-level dependence. On the other hand, the more independent women are at a societal level, the more likely it is that they will be able to translate individual-level resources into more egalitarian attitudes.

F. Conflicting roles in career and family priority

There is a demand for bringing a balance in the roles of family and career priority and dealing with work-family conflict. Studies [29] reveal that it is the teaching profession that has different dimensions such as pattern of work, authority, identification and career etc, and most important thing is that all these dimensions differ with different institutes and subjects. That is why this field is most preferred for by women as it involves lesser work family conflict. In this regard,

[30] it is found that the greater is individuals' perceived work-family conflict, the lower will be their career satisfaction. Specifically, the negative effects of work-family conflict on career satisfaction will be stronger for women than for men. Age of women, marital status, parental status, financial resources and geographic mobility all ten d to affect the work family conflict in relation to career but nevertheless, professionally aspiring women were much less likely to choose a family accommodated pattern; they were more likely to choose one of the career-centered life styles. Marriage and child rearing are unmistakably defined as "woman's true vocation," occupational competition is viewed as a masculine activity, and women who compete directly with men for occupational success are regarded with a mixture of hostility and amused disdain. A career woman, if she is married, is condemned for being an unsatisfactory wife and mother. If she is unmarried, it is automatically assumed that she would prefer to be married and that her career is only a compensation for the lack of something she would rather have. The presence of children increases domestic labor, traditional gender roles may be particularly consistent with men's interests when children are present. In addition, greater dependence and interpersonal ties fostered by having children may encourage more traditional attitudes among women as well. Given the necessity to choose, nearly all women undergraduates would prefer marriage to a career. Two lifestyle patterns - career and family - have a built-in potential for role conflict as individuals attempt to combine family and career roles. Organization of work, sequence of career, and professional norms in high-status professions are predicated on the conventional male role in the family and do not accommodate either female biological constraints or nurturing of children.

The resulting "dual career" couples constitute significant focus of interest including the new patterns of relationship work and family roles. These patterns allow the wife's pursuit of a career in addition, may be a force for change in the organization of work generally. The woman, preconditioned for placing personal goals second to family demands, is most likely to sacrifice her career aspirations. Alternative resolutions include divorce, conscious rejection of parenthood, "commuter" marriages, as well as both spouses lowering their career aspirations. Women rely on support system to balance the dual role of work and family, where they expect their husbands as first priority to support them in their career and family balance. They expect their colleagues to support them Further, community involvement may also make available resource support (for in- stance, church day care and outreach programs) that may help individuals cope with work-family conflict. Thus, women's socialization reinforces the "incompatibility" of career and family.

IV. CONCLUSION

The idea that women academicians face serious barriers in their career pursuit is greatly researched and contemplated in discourse on gender studies. It is true, in India women today receive the same education as men, and nearly all prepare for some occupation. Ironically, very few of them are promoted to pursue employment in public world. Nevertheless, a woman can win more social approval and undergo less role conflict through full-time marriage and motherhood than through an occupational career. It is easy to see that achievement motivation, or lack of it, in females is a consequence of several factors working together. The factors that impinge upon women's achievement, their academic productivity, career growth and their familial responsibility vary greatly in terms of rank, class, region, profession, type of family and decision making ability of the women careerist concerned. Women do not constitute a homogenous category and therefore, their problems appear multifarious.

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