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Gender Differences between Role Expectations, Role Strain and Use of Coping strategies among Dual-Earner Couples

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Abstract

Managing the demands of competing life roles has become a common experience for many men and women. Dual-earner couples, in particular, are responsible for many different roles in their fast-paced lifestyles. These responsibilities range from child caregiving, to household maintenance, to working outside the home. These multiple responsibilities create role strain among dual-earner couples. Role theorists maintain that the amount of role strain experienced by man and woman depends on the degree of his/her commitment to different roles and the role reward value expected by him/her from these roles. When, dual earner couples expect to gain life satisfaction from more than one role, especially the occupational role along with other family roles, the likelihood of role strain increases. But, effective use of coping strategies may reduce role strain among dual-earner couples. The cross sectional study on gender differences in role expectations, role strain and coping strategies was carried out in Jaipur city of Rajasthan state. Total 200 couples (200 wives and 200 husbands) were selected for the study. Data were analyzed using SPSS 16.0 statistical tools. Independent t-test result shows that husbands exhibited high role expectations in occupational roles while wives attributed high role expectations in parental and homecare role than husbands. Wives perceived high role strain as compared to their husbands. Wives used distancing, seeking social support accepting responsibilities and escape avoidance coping strategies for reducing role strain while husbands choose Confrontive coping, self-controlling and plan ful problem solving strategies for dealing with role strain situation.

Keywords: dual-earner couples, role expectation, roe strain, coping strategies.

1. Introduction

With increased employment opportunities, more and more women are entering the workforce in large numbers. This increased labor force participation outside the home among women led to dual earner families trying to balance their work and family responsibilities.

A common problem for adults in today's society is increased responsibilities from work and family. With the addition of children to the family, caregiving responsibilities increase dramatically. Parents, especially women are responsible for taking care of the children's best interests, education, wellness, housecleaning, clothing care, food preparation, and financial management. Employed women are still primarily responsible for the majority of household labor and management, childcare and elder care (Eliot, 1994) [9] and employed women work close to the equivalent of two full time jobs. The role of women as employees has changed, but the role of women as homemaker and child care has not changed. For the most part, the predominant societal view expects women to provide care for their families and be fully committed to their maternal role and take on many responsibilities (Chasteen & Kissman, 2000) [5]. Women are under social pressures to be capable and caring which can put them at risk for stress related symptoms (Kenney & Bhattacharjee, 2000) [18]. Employed women work for more total hours in comparison to their stay-at-home counterparts or men, the range of household activities they perform does not decrease (DeMeis & Perkins, 1996) [8].

Having multiple roles, such as worker, mother/father, and caregiver for elderly parents, may lead to role strain (Coty & Wallston, 2008) [7]. Goode (1960) [14] found that people engaged in several roles experience role strain, resulting in poor well-being. On the other hand, several studies have shown that having more than one role can lead to increased psychological distress (Gignac *et al.* 2012; Honda *et al.* 2015) [12, 16].

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Role strain refers to a condition whereby an individual experiences unease in fulfilling role expectations. For various reasons, the expectations associated with a role may be mutually incompatible or undesirable, leaving a person with feelings of discomfort as she or he is called upon to fulfill role obligations. There are numerous causes of role strain, some avoidable and others inevitable. Feelings of stress and the sense that one is unable to fulfill role expectations are problematic for the individual and for society. Sources of role strain may originate with the individual or with the expectations of a role. In some cases, an individual may feel unable to successfully meet role expectations because he or she does not accept or is not committed to the underlying values that justify the expectations. The role expectations may contradict an individual's values or call upon one to behave in an undesirable manner or at an unavailable time. Amatea, *et al.* (1986) [2] suggested that the primary sources of personal stress are an individual's occupational and family role expectations. Dual earner couples have four different areas of expected roles: occupational role, parental role, marital role and homecare role. These multiple roles seem very challenging to accomplish but may give rewards depending on how one accepts and commits to these roles. Past studies also show that a key source of stress for individuals managing such multiple role commitments is the nature of their personal work and family role expectations.

Role Theory: Scarcity/ Enrichment versus depletion

Two competing perspectives within role theory have been proposed to explain the effects of multiple roles on role strain. The role-strain perspective, also referred to as the scarcity hypothesis, which proposes that an increased number of roles leads to overload and strain (Chrouser & Ryff, 2006) [6]. The scarcity theory postulates that individuals have a limited amount of time, energy and attention. Therefore multiple roles could easily and quickly deplete an individual's resources if not allocated appropriately (Marks, 1977) [21]. In other words, participation in one role leaves fewer resources for participation in another role. Goode (1960) [14] argues that the more roles an individual has the more likely he or she is to deplete his or her resources. This can result in adverse psychological and physiological outcomes (Chrouser & Ryff, 2006) [6].

The role enhancement perspective, also referred to as the role accumulation, expansion or enrichment hypothesis (hereafter the Enrichment Hypothesis), suggests that multiple-role engagement enhances an individual's resources, social connections, power, prestige and emotional gratification (Sieber, 1974; Thoits, 1983) [32, 36]. The Enrichment Hypothesis suggests that multiple roles can actually serve as a buffer against stress (Rothbard, 2001) [30], and that feelings of well being generated in one role can positively influence experiences in other roles (Barn, 2008) [3]. This hypothesis shows that engagement in multiple roles such as caregiver (of a parent), mother, wife and employee, is associated with better psychological well-being and reduced stress (Martire, 2000) [22].

Coping Mechanism

Balancing work and family responsibilities has become a challenge for many dual earner couples now-a-days. It is widely known that the role strain due to multiple roles has adverse effects on dual earner couples' well-being. When

dual earner couples perceived high role strain then it becomes necessary to know about their coping strategies with the role strain they experience within both the work role and the home and family role and their attempt to integrate these roles.

Coping strategies defined as "Thoughts and actions individuals use to change the perceived experience of a stressful event so as to master, reduce, or tolerate the demand created by that event" (Folkman & Lazarus, 1980) [10].

It is more and more acknowledged that adequate use of coping strategies may reduce negative effects of role strain. Coping strategies may prevent, reduce, divert, avoid or control role strain. Coping strategies are successful if the source of the problem has been dealt with or the results show that the experience of strain has been directly reduced. Consequently, it is important to study coping mechanisms in dual-earner families that may diffuse or prevent potential deleterious effects of role strain.

Objectives: The present investigation was planned with the following specific objectives:

1. To identify the role expectation of dual earner couples as perceived by husband and wife (male & female).
2. To assess the role strain of dual earner couples in fulfilling role expectation as perceived by husband and wife (male & female).
3. To identify the specific Coping strategies used by dual earner couple to reduce the specific role strain perceived by husbands and wives (male & female) separately.

2. Methodology

2.1 Locale of the study

The study on gender differences between role expectations, role strain and use of coping strategies among dual-earner couples was conducted in Jaipur city of Rajasthan state.

2.2 Sample

According to Jaipur Municipal Corporation, Jaipur city is divided into eight geographical zones i.e. Mansarovar zone, Moti-Dungari zone, Hawamahal-East zone, Vidyadhar Nagar zone, Civil Line zone, Hawamahal-West zone, Amber zone and Sanganer zone. To get the complete representation of the population. Total 40 organisations were selected for data collection. In each zone five organisations were selected for the study purpose, which are expected to meet out the objectives of the study i.e. such organisations 1) where a good number of females are working, 2) work has to be done as per the MNCs or large organisation management system, 3) where the employee is supposed to work hard meet out their targeted work in stipulated time and 4) minimum working hours being 8 hrs.

Five female respondents and their husbands were randomly selected from each organisation after acquiring the list of workers from the organisation. Those female respondents were selected who fulfil the study criteria. The study criteria was (1) nuclear family (2) husband-wife and at least one child living together (3) youngest child below 12 years of age and (4) husband – wife each having at least eight hours job period. Twenty-five female respondents and their husbands were randomly selected from each zone. Selection of the male respondents was done on the basis of female respondents. Total 200 dual earner couples (200 wives and 200 husbands) were selected for the study.

2.3 Instruments

2.3.1 Role Expectation: To assess role expectation, the 'Life Role Salience Scale' (LRSS) developed by Amatea *et al.* (1986) [2] was used after suitable modification. The LRSS was designed to assess women's personal expectations. In the LRSS, four major life roles- the occupational, the parental, the marital and the homecare roles were assessed in terms of two dimensions. The first dimension was **role reward value**, indexed by means of statements in which the individual agree that the role is an important means of self-definition and personal satisfaction. The second dimension, the **role commitment** level dimension, was assessed by statements describing the extent to which the person demonstrates a willingness to commit personal resources to assure success in the role or to develop the role. A total of eight separate scales, assessing each of these two dimensions for each of the four life roles, were used. The LRSS is a 40 items scale (5 statements in each aspect). A Likert type attitude scale format was adopted, with five possible response choices: (1) disagree, (2) somewhat disagree, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) somewhat agree, (5) agree.

2.3.2 Role Strain: To assess role strain of the female spouses 'Women's Role strain Inventory' developed by Lengacher and Sellers in 2003 [19] was used. To assess role strain of the male spouses' aforesaid inventory was used after suitable gender effect modification. The role strain inventory consisted of total 46 items. Five point Likert rating scales with responses of strongly disagree, disagree, agree, frequently agree, and strongly agree and rating scale 1-5 was used. In the 46 item inventory there was a possible range of the items from 46- 230 points, with 46 indicating absolutely no role strain and 230 indicating complete role strain. The questionnaires were divided in three sub-scales:

2.3.2.1 Role Distress: indicating that there was adverse strain associated with multiple roles of working and family/ significant others/ personal.

2.3.2.2 Role Enhancement: indicating a positive response to multiple roles of working, family and personal.

2.3.2.3 Role Support: indicating the importance of support from family/ friends/ children and significant other.

2.3.3 Coping Strategies: The third variable Coping strategies were measured by using the Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WCQ) developed by Folkman and Lazarus in 1988 [11] after suitable modification. WCQ was developed in order to measure coping in terms of the person- environment relationship and measures how people cope or manage with the role strain of everyday life. Folkman and Lazarus (1988) [11] identified eight categories of coping strategies that depict a broad range of cognitive and behavioral strategies people used to manage the demands of stressful encounters/ role strain. These categories were further grouped into two forms: problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. **Problem-focused coping strategies** include categories of confrontive coping, seeking social support, plan ful problem solving and positive reappraisal. **Emotion-focused coping strategies** include categories of distancing, accepting responsibility and escape-avoidance. The category of self-control strategy is outside of these two main forms i.e. problem focused and emotion focused strategies. In this study 48 items were included. The eight sub-scales of WCQ are described below:

2.3.3.1 Confrontive Coping: describes aggressive efforts to alter the situation and suggests some degree of hostility and risk-taking.

2.3.3.2 Distancing: describes cognitive efforts to detach oneself and to minimize the significance of the situation.

2.3.3.3 Self-controlling: describes efforts to regulate one's feelings and actions.

2.3.3.4 Seeking Social Support: describes efforts to seek informational support, tangible support, and emotional support.

2.3.3.5 Accepting Responsibility: acknowledges one's own role in the problem with a concomitant theme of trying to put things right.

2.3.3.6 Escape-Avoidance: describes wishful thinking and behavioural efforts to escape or avoid the problem. Items on this scale contrast with those in the Distancing scale, which suggest detachment.

2.3.3.7 Plan ful Problem Solving: describes deliberate problem-focused efforts to alter the situation, coupled with an analytical approach to solving the problem.

2.3.3.8 Positive Reappraisal: describes efforts to create positive meaning by focusing on personal growth. It also has a religious dimension.

Problem-focused coping strategies: It refers to a person's efforts to change the conflict situation by defining the problem and finding alternatives and is an objective, analytical process (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) [39].

Emotion-focused coping strategies: It involves regulating emotional reactions to stressful events in order to alleviate emotional stress. Through emotion-focused strategies, the person changes the meaning of the situation without actually changing behaviours or events or avoids the emotions brought up by the situation (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) [39].

2.4 Research Design

Descriptive cross-sectional study with survey method was used. Survey method was organized attempt to analyze, interpret and report the present status of a social institution, group or area.

2.5 Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to the female respondents in their working places after the permission of their managing director along with written and verbal instruction that explained the nature and scope of the study. Two sets of the questionnaire were distributed to each respondent, one to be filled by female respondents and other by male respondents i.e. their spouses. Respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire without discussing their responses with others. After few days questionnaire were collected by investigator.

2.6 Data Analysis

Data were analysed using SPSS 16.0 statistical tools. To analyse the difference between husbands and wives regarding role expectation, role strain and coping strategies mean, standard deviation and Independent T-test was used.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Gender differences in Role Expectations:

Managing the demands of competing life roles has become a common experience for many men and women. No longer is the parental role assumed primarily by women while men define themselves exclusively by their work. Men and women have ambitions and commitments in both the work and family arenas simultaneously. Past studies revealed that today's women are upwardly anchored and expect to gain life satisfaction from their involvement in a job. They take up jobs not only to contribute to the financial resources of

family but also to obtain status, esteem, power and psychological satisfaction. Hence, it is quite likely that these women attribute high level of personal importance to occupational roles as well as parental, marital and homecare roles. Researchers have established that a key source of strain for individuals managing multiple role commitments is the nature of their personal work and family role expectations. Personal role expectations are considered a key variable to explain role strain and to predict the degree of involvement in particular roles.

Table-1: Independent T-Test depicting Comparison of Role Expectation based on gender

N=400 (200+200)

S No.	Aspects of Role Expectation	Wives (Females)		Husbands (Male)		T-value	Level of significance
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D		
1	ORRV	18.10	2.329	19.12	3.390	3.507	0.01
2	ORC	15.16	2.400	16.54	2.670	5.434	0.01
3	PRRV	19.38	2.440	17.65	3.134	6.141	0.01
4	PRC	19.23	2.776	17.63	2.819	5.718	0.01
5	MRRV	18.62	2.880	18.30	2.212	1.246	NS
6	MRC	18.13	2.674	17.73	2.678	1.513	NS
7	HRRV	18.94	2.873	16.85	3.050	7.053	0.01
8	HRC	18.20	3.173	15.78	3.818	6.893	0.01
	Overall Role Expectation	145.78	16.546	139.62	17.671	3.598	0.01

ORRV- Occupational Role Reward Value, ORC- Occupational Role Commitment, PRRV- Parental Role Reward Value, PRC- Parental Role Commitment, MRRV- Marital Role Reward Value, MRC- Marital Role Commitment, HRRV- Homecare Role Reward Value, HRC- Homecare Role Commitment, NS- Not Significant

Gender differences in aspects of role expectations are presented in table 1. This table indicates that a significant difference between husbands and wives in the aspects of occupational, parental and homecare role reward value and role commitment. It was significant at 0.01 level. The mean scores of husbands were higher in occupational role reward values and role commitments as compared to mean scores of wives. While the mean scores of wives were high in parental and homecare role reward values and role commitments as compared to their husbands. A significant difference was also observed between husbands and wives in overall role expectations because the mean scores (145.78) of wives were higher than the mean scores (139.62) of husbands. It was significant at 0.01 level. The results indicate that husbands attributed high role expectations in occupation roles and wives shows high role expectation in parental and homecare roles. This could be due to the fact that traditionally, parental and homecare roles were considered the primary role of female spouses and occupations role was considered the primary role of male spouses. In Indian society this traditional role allocation pattern has not yet changed. Therefore, men in Indian society conceive occupational role as their primary role and they attribute higher degree of personal importance to this role. On the other hand women in Indian society conceive occupational role as a subsidiary role to their childcare and household responsibilities. Due to the above reason males are highly committed to occupational role compared to the females.

Indian women still perform major role in parental and homecare responsibility. Since mothers are more likely to prepare their children for day care and school in the morning hours than fathers. Working mothers, in reality, are engaged in three shifts combining family, care work and paid work. Such findings are in agreement with those of Philip (2010) [25], who revealed that women attributed a high level of personal importance to the parental and homecare roles while

men exhibit a higher level of personal importance to occupational roles. Rajadhyaksha and Bhatnagar (2000) [27], they revealed that occupational role reward value and occupational role commitment of husbands was significantly greater than that of wives.

Amacker (2004) [1] found significant difference between men and women in the parental subset (parental role reward value and parental role commitment) and the overall family subset, with women scoring higher than men on both subsets. The family subset score was comprised of the mean of the scores of the marital, parental, and homecare subsets. Singh (1994) [34] revealed that women attributed greater commitment than men to all the roles related to the domain of family, namely, spouse, homemaker and parent.

The mean scores of wives were higher in marital role expectation as compared to the mean scores of husbands. But, there was no significant differences observed between both spouses. One of the possible conclusions for this table is that in dual-earner families wives showed high overall role expectation as compared to their husbands.

3.2 Gender differences in Role Strain

Role strain has been defined as "a transactional process reflecting an imbalance between demands and the resources available to cope with those demands" (Scharlach, 2001) [31]. This role strain is a direct result of taking on a number of responsibilities and not being able to successfully balance them.

The main reason of role strain in working couples has been identified as the intended level of commitment of personal time and energy resources to enactment of different roles. Employed women perform multiple roles and it requires additional time and energy resources for them to carry out such roles effectively. Role theory suggests that the maintenance of multiple roles across work and family institutions is a source of strain (Voydanoff 1987) [37]. Goode

(1960)^[14] presents the scarcity hypothesis in that the social structure creates over demanding role obligations, resulting in role strain. Goode (1960)^[14] believe that an individual

faces many role demands and cannot meet all of them; therefore, role strain is a 'normal' experience that everyone encounters.

Table 2: Independent T-Test depicting Comparison of Role Strain based on gender

N=400 (200+200)

S. No.	Aspects of Role Strain	Female		Male		T-value	Level of significance
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
1	Role Distress	62.26	9.101	54.86	9.070	8.144	0.01
2	Role Enhancement	37.62	7.653	41.85	8.295	5.300	0.01
3	Role Support	49.42	5.532	42.55	8.469	9.604	0.01
	Overall Role Strain	170.06	16.870	151.56	21.391	9.603	0.01

Above table clearly indicates that wives have a higher mean score on role distress, role support and overall role strain as compare to husbands and husbands have high mean score in role enhancement. The mean score of wives i. e 62.26 was higher than the mean score of husbands' i. e. 54.86 in role distress. The mean of husbands (41.85) was higher than the mean score (37.62) of wives in role enhancement. The mean score of wives and husbands in role support was 49.42 and 42.55 respectively and in overall role strain was 170.06 and 151.56 respectively. A significant difference was observed between wives and husbands in all the aspects of role strain. It was significant at 0.01 level. Thus, it can be concluded from the findings of this table that female spouses experience higher level of role distress and receive little support in family responsibilities as compared to their husbands. Due to high role distress and lower support in household tasks they perceived high role strain. This could be due to the fact that, Indian working women have dual responsibility of concentrating on the family and work. The men expect their wives to be homemakers and child rearers and at the same time continue to work outside home for earning. Thus women have a dual role to play, when they take up jobs they have to take care of their homes along with their outside employment. This leads to scarcity of time and energy which may put strain on them. Similar findings also reported by Thoits (1983)^[36], who revealed that women with increased roles exhibit greater distress than men. Honda *et al.* (2015, June)^[16] examined the differential impact of multiple roles associated with psychological distress among Japanese workers (women and men). They found that psychological distress was higher in women (17.8%) compared with men (11.5%). Simon (1992) found that mothers exhibit significantly higher levels of distress than fathers. These results were also supported by Nurullah (2010)^[24], who found that females experienced more psychological distress compared to males.

In Indian families wives receive low support from their spouse, their family member and significant others compared to their husbands, while husbands receive more support from their spouses and other family members. So, women experience more role strain when they are exposed to multiple demands and receive lower support. Men reported significantly more support than women in supervisor support, coworker support and extended family support in managing work and family responsibilities (Ramadoss & Rajadhyaksha 2012)^[28]. Greenhaus *et al.* (2001)^[15] observed that individuals who experience difficulties with partners or children or receive little support and aid from their families may find that their family stress intrudes into their work life. Rao *et al.* (2003)^[29] found that spousal support provided women with a sense of security and stability at home and also reduced role conflict in working

women. Women, while facing the stressful life events will always be seeking support – either from husband, parents, family members, friends, colleagues, and children and even from pets (Mansuri, 2012)^[20].

A significant difference was also observed between role enhancements. The aspect of role enhancement is based upon Sieber's (1974)^[32] role accumulation hypothesis, which proposes that multiple roles contribute to better health and focus on the rewards or privileges associated with multiple role involvement. He further revealed that involvement in multiple roles allows for rewards and privileges, overall status security, resources for status enhancement and role performance and enrichment of personality.

Compared to wives, husbands experience higher level of role enhancement. The reason is that in Indian society men play traditional roles in which the occupational role as their primary role and the most important role performed by them. Occupational role can provide a means to participate in society and provide monetary and non-monetary rewards and satisfaction. This situation may increase role enhancement among men. Similar findings also made by Thoits (1983)^[36], who found that increased numbers of roles enhance an individual's resources, social connections, power, prestige, and emotional gratification.

The results clearly indicate that working women encountered higher level of role strain and lower level of role enhancement as compare to their husbands because an increase in multiple demands increases the risk of suffering from fatigue and increased role strain. Similar findings also made by Humphrey *et al.* (2006)^[17, 31], they found that women experienced more role strain due to multiple roles than men.

One of the possible conclusions for this table is that wives perceived high role strain as compared to their counterparts. These findings support those of Humphrey *et al.* (2006)^[17, 31], who found that women experienced more role strain due to multiple roles than men.

3.3 Gender differences in Coping Strategies

It is an established fact that men and women differ in many ways, with different emotions and perceptions, with different personality characteristics. Gender difference in coping is an interesting issue among these various issues regarding gender differences. The different coping styles adapted by the different sexes itself shows that there are evident differences between how both sexes cope with stress and chaotic life experiences. Researches show that men adapt more action direct approaches than women in stressful work situations (Porter & Stone, 1995)^[26]. Folkman and Lazarus (1980)^[10] found that men in stressful work situation used more problem-focused coping than women.

To facilitate comparison between husbands and wives, mean and standard deviation of the scores obtained by spouses on coping strategies were calculated. The findings in this respect are given in the table- 3.

The mean score of females was higher than the mean score of males in distancing, seeking social support, accepting responsibility and escape avoidance strategies. Independent

t-test result indicates that there was significant difference between husbands and wives in aforesaid strategies. It was significant at 0.01 level. This result indicates that wives choose distancing, seeking social support, accepting responsibility and escape avoidance strategies significantly more often than their husbands.

Table 3: Independent T-Test depicting Comparison of Coping Strategies based on gender

N=400 (200+200)

S. N.	Coping Strategies	Wife (Female) Mean(S. D.)	Husband (Male) Mean(S. D.)	T- Value	Level of Sig.
1.	Confrontive Coping	12.02 (3.44)	12.83 (2.40)	2.728	0.01
2.	Distancing	13.88 (2.23)	13.04 (2.35)	3.661	0.01
3.	Self-controlling	12.09 (2.59)	12.74 (2.90)	2.358	0.01
4.	Seeking Social Support	13.97 (2.31)	13.31 (2.99)	2.463	0.01
5.	Accepting Responsibility	8.45 (2.06)	7.76 (2.58)	2.950	0.01
6.	Escape-Avoidance	15.23 (4.29)	14.07 (4.51)	2.622	0.01
7.	Plan ful Problem Solving	13.25 (2.43)	14.19 (2.55)	3.793	0.01
8.	Positive Reappraisal	13.47 (2.17)	13.36 (2.54)	0.486	NS
9.	Problem Focused Coping	52.72 (6.53)	53.70 (7.41)	1.403	NS
10.	Emotion Focused Coping	37.57 (6.32)	34.88 (7.24)	3.948	0.01
11.	Overall Coping Strategies	102.38 (12.82)	101.33 (14.73)	0.764	NS

NS- Not Significant

A significant difference was also observed between husbands and wives in confrontive coping, self-control and plan ful problem solving strategies. It was significant at 0.01 level. Comparison of the scores on confrontive coping, self-control and plan ful problem solving strategies indicate that husbands choose these strategies significantly more often than their wives. There was no significant difference between husbands and wives in positive reappraisal strategy and overall coping strategies.

Distancing, accepting responsibility and escape-avoidance coping strategies are included in emotion focused coping strategies and confrontive coping, seeking social support, plan ful problem solving and positive reappraisal are included in problem focused coping strategies. The result shows that wives' mean scores were high in emotion focused coping and husbands mean scores were high in problem focused coping. This is because males and females have been socialized into different gender roles, with greater emphasis being placed on autonomy and independence for males and social relations for females (Gilligan, 1982) [13]. Sud and Sharma (2013) [35] revealed that females are making more use of emotion focused coping strategies to deal with stress than males. Zhang, L. (2001) [38] observed that females use distancing, seeking support, confrontation and rational problem solving more frequently than males. The only factor with no gender differences is fantasy. Grambling, *et al.*, 1998 reported that women are more apt to use escape-avoidance under stress, while men use problem solving. Mc Donald & Korabik (1991) [23] found that most male and female managers reported coping with stressful job situations by taking direct action to solve the problem. Brink and Rey (2001) [4] concluded that the participants (European white women, black African women and white African women) used both emotional and problem focused coping strategies to deal with the hypothetical work-family interaction strain situation. These strategies were positive reappraisal, plan ful problem solving, self-controlling and seeking social support. They further observed that participants were less likely to choose escape-avoidance as a coping strategy in dealing with the work-family interaction strain situation.

4. Conclusion

It can be concluded that husbands score higher in occupational role reward value and role commitment than wives and the wives' scores higher in parental and homecare role reward value and role commitment than their husbands. This clarifies that in Indian society men consider occupational role as their primary role and the most important role performed by them. Hence they attribute higher degrees of personal importance to this role, whereas women in Indian society conceive occupational role as a subsidiary role to their parental, homecare and domestic responsibilities. Indian women still perform major role in parental and homecare responsibility.

The level of strain increases for both women and men when they were exposed to demands from both work and family and receive little support from their family members and significant others, but women felt higher level of role strain as compare to their husbands because Indian working women still perform major role in parental and homecare responsibility as well as occupational responsibility. Due to multiple responsibilities women experienced higher level of role strain than their male counterparts. Self-role expectation, societal expectation and little support from their family members also increase role strain of female spouses. In addition, women are still expected by their spouses to be responsible for the majority of household management which puts a strain on them.

The respondents preferred using both emotion and problem-focused coping strategies in an integrated manner for reducing role strain. It was found that wives score higher in distancing, seeking social support, accepting responsibility and escape avoidance strategies than husbands. Husbands used Confrontive coping, self-control, plan ful problem solving strategies to a significantly greater extent than did wives.

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