

## *PART - B:*

### *Status & Role of Working Women in Family, Society and Work Places in the Study Area*

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**4.B.1 INTRODUCTION:** Family is the basic social unit for every society. The socialization process initiates only in a family. It is composed of persons united by either blood or by kin (marriage or adoption). The members of the family have common habitation or household and they interact or communicate with each other by performing their social roles like that of grandparents, parents, husbands, wives, sons, daughters etc. Families maintain common culture but every family nurtures its own distinctive culture within its domain. The structure of the family varies from society to society but whatever may be the form, the basic constituent members of parents with their children are seen everywhere.

The structure of the Traditional Joint Family in India felt the tremor of change when Industrialization and Westernization were introduced in the Colonial Era. Gradually, families migrated from rural to urban areas. The new industrial system started drawing women into its purview by modern education and employment. Though majority remained away from emancipation, economic independence to a handful changed the age-old doctrine – ‘man for the field and woman for the hearth’. The kinship relations started breaking up and the families started becoming smaller units than it used to be. This change was more clearly visible in the urban and sub-urban settings where the dearth of space was becoming a major issue. The advent of the Britishers led to the general realization and need for education for the males as well as for the females. More and more girls were given education and it remained unquestionable in the urban areas.

After the independence and partition of our country huge influx of people was witnessed across the newly formed borders. Poverty and turmoil in the then society deteriorated general living conditions. The traditional joint families disintegrated into smaller nuclear families. Women were forced to take up jobs and they stepped outside to complement their family income as the cost of living in the urban areas soar high. The educated handful entered into professions like law, medicine and teaching. In the initial years after independence, approaches to development

for the women and children were taken up in a welfare mode along with the other deprived groups like destitutes, disabled, aged etc. until the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74) when importance was given to women's education. The Sixth Plan (1980-85) for the first time included a chapter on Women's Development. From then onwards, the issues related to Women were started given due attention (the detail of which is written in the following chapter i.e. Chapter V). The scope for white collar jobs for women increased day by day and more women got into earning though remaining at much lower proportion compared to their counterparts.

The society metamorphosed with time and the wave of social progress touched each and everyone on its way. Women might have attained a changed status in due course of time but her generative, productive and distributive roles remained intact however. No society can disapprove women's association with the very function of child bearing and rearing activities; no matter how far the society progresses, Women remain as the core stone of the family and the society in a broader sense. She inculcates the life and living among her off-springs and hence her role and status in the family has a deep bearing with the progress and prosperity of the society at large.

**4.B.2 THE MEANING OF STATUS:** 'Status' may be defined as: "The position of an individual in relation to another or others, especially in regard to social or professional standing" or "State or condition of affairs" or "The standing of a person before the law".

Menon explains the term 'status' explicitly in her work 'Women Empowerment and Challenge of Change' where she says that 'status' was initially a legal term referring to the legal standing of an individual enjoying certain rights or subject to certain limitations. Later, the meaning of the word was extended to cover an individual or group's position in society in a more general sense. Most references to the status of women imply a comparison with the status of men but it is also possible to compare one group of women with another, or to examine changes in the status of women over time. While legal and political rights are one aspect of women's status, other aspects concern their actual experience in practice (Menon, 2008: 214). She also opines that demographic indicators like mortality by age and sex are the important indicators of women's status. Other important indices might be related to literacy, level of formal education received by women, occupational structure clearly defining the job categories of high, moderate or low job status etc.

Natarajan (2013) elucidates the meaning of status in her work where she opines it to be ‘the result of a pattern of relationship between men and women – a pattern composed of images they have of themselves and each other’. To some women, it is the access to resources that some women presently possesses or in the past; while others think of having something that men would respect. ‘So, Status really lies in the eyes of the beholder’ (Natarajan, 2013: 121).

‘Social Status’ therefore mean the state or condition of an individual within the society; in other words, a person’s social standing. Similarly, for the working women of the study area, social status would refer to their position in the social arena. The researcher is motivated to enquire how far they have accomplished to ascertain social rewards for themselves, so that they can lead a decent and enlightened living. The literature related to women largely presents the account of deprivation from different points of view, so this was an attempt to find out the actual position of the urban working women in their family, society as well as in their work places in the present day situation in the study area.

#### **4. B. 3 THE STATUS & ROLE OF WORKING WOMEN IN THE FAMILY & SOCIETY:**

The status of women in societies throughout the world has a diversified picture. As Natarajan reasoned quite correctly that women cannot be considered as a homogeneous social & intellectual class and neither all inequalities apply to every woman. Lack of employment opportunities can affect only the middle class women; while those in the primary occupation along with the men got involved in the field; the higher class women hardly wishes or has any urge to take up employment (2013:120-121).

Geographically, the continent of Asia can be divided into 3 regions on this basis. The South Asia and East Asia where women have been kept under control of men throughout her life cycle by the sequential custody of father, husband and son. In South East Asia, women have striking freedom especially the married ones. Conversely, Green Revolution in Indonesia has displaced poorer women from agriculture, as it demanded the use of technical knowledge involving the use of mechanized farming (where women lack). Thus, it has lowered the status of women as they were forced to seek other employment. The statuses of the female household heads have remained neglected as a matter of development planning. However, a number of western feminists and reformers have objected to this; as a result the term ‘household heads’ have been replaced by ‘reference member’ by the Economic Commission for Europe in 1978 (Menon,

2008: 13-14) since they are used in tabulation and analysis of the census. The culture of a society is reflected in the manner in which it treats the women, widows and aged persons. High proportion of the female headed single families in a society (developing) indicate that high proportion of women who were widowed because of the considerable age difference with the older husbands and also that high proportion of aged people who remain alone by themselves do not have anyone to take care of them.

A common feature in the contemporary Western thoughts with regard to the status of the women is concerned with women's control over reproduction and their own bodies. As some writers feel that women of the developing nations feel oppressed by the burdens of child bearing and rearing; they also held the women herself responsible for this because of their lack of knowledge with regard to fertility regulation. Though providing contraceptives to the women would not improve their lives unless the societal concept changes. Women's rights should not be compartmentalized and treated separately; instead they should be viewed as human rights issue and not means to an end. This is why it is so important to change the emphasis from women's rights and status to women's participation in creating development and in sharing its benefits (Menon, 2008: 220).

Astige (2006: 34) identifies the following in her work to explain social status of working women in family and within their work places:

- Right of empowerment, authority to decide for one's life
- Opportunities to develop her social self
- Sharing of domestic responsibilities by other members, including husband
- Freedom accorded for participation in social and public activities
- The degree of differential treatment given
- Provision for protection of women from their exploitation, harassment and disabilities.

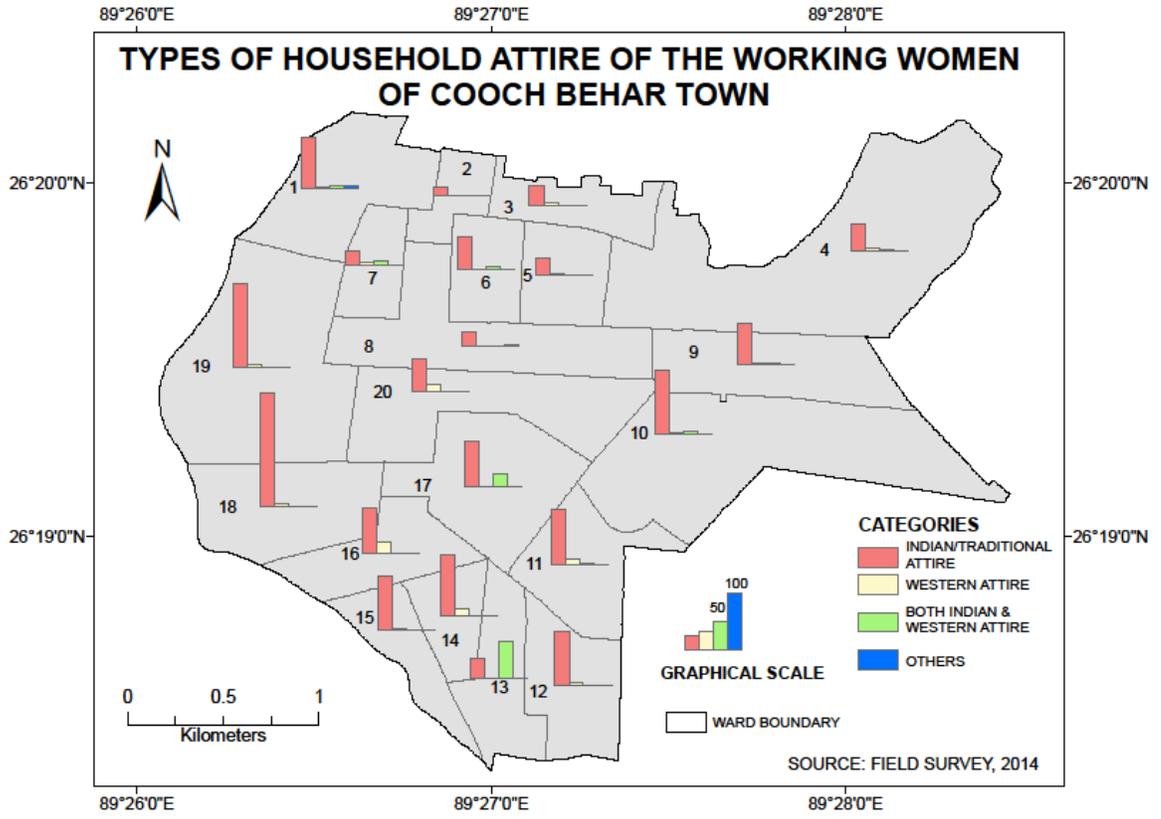
**4. B. 4 THE STATUS & ROLE OF RESPONDENTS IN THE FAMILY & SOCIETY IN THE STUDY AREA:** The connotation of the word 'status' and the legacy of social control have become clear from the aforementioned representation. Several aspects have been viewed to

analyze the status and role of the working women in their families pertaining to the study area. These are:

- 1. Freedom enjoyed by the working women in the family**
- 2. Decision making in the family**
- 3. Sharing of domestic responsibilities by other members of the family**
- 4. Position of working women in their families**

**4.B.4.1 FREEDOM ENJOYED BY THE WORKING WOMEN IN THE FAMILY:** Status and role of women depends on the degree of freedom accorded to her particularly in the family and in the society in the broader sense. On the other hand, restriction imposed on her increases deprivation of the right to equality. Thus, freedom and equality for the working women goes hand in hand. The target group was asked several questions during the survey to adjudge their freedom in their families.

**4.B.4.1.1 Respondent's Attire in Household:** The respondents were asked about their usual household dresses they wear. Majority of the working women (86.55%) stated that they wear Sarees and Kurtis in the house. Only small proportion of the respondents (5.85%) told that they wear western outfits in their household. About 7.20% of the working women declared that they wear both traditional Indian dresses and western outfits in their house. An insignificant proportion of about 0.40% wear dresses other than these mentioned types. The dressing habit of the respondents is represented by simple cartographic technique in Map no. 4.24 which shows the above mentioned trend.



**Map No. 4.24**

In order to find out the degree of freedom regarding selection of the household attire, the respondents were asked that whether they experienced any confrontation from the family members about their dressing or not. 95.66% of the respondents confirmed that they did not face any objection for their household attire. Only 4.34% of the respondent stated that they faced disagreement regarding this from their family members.

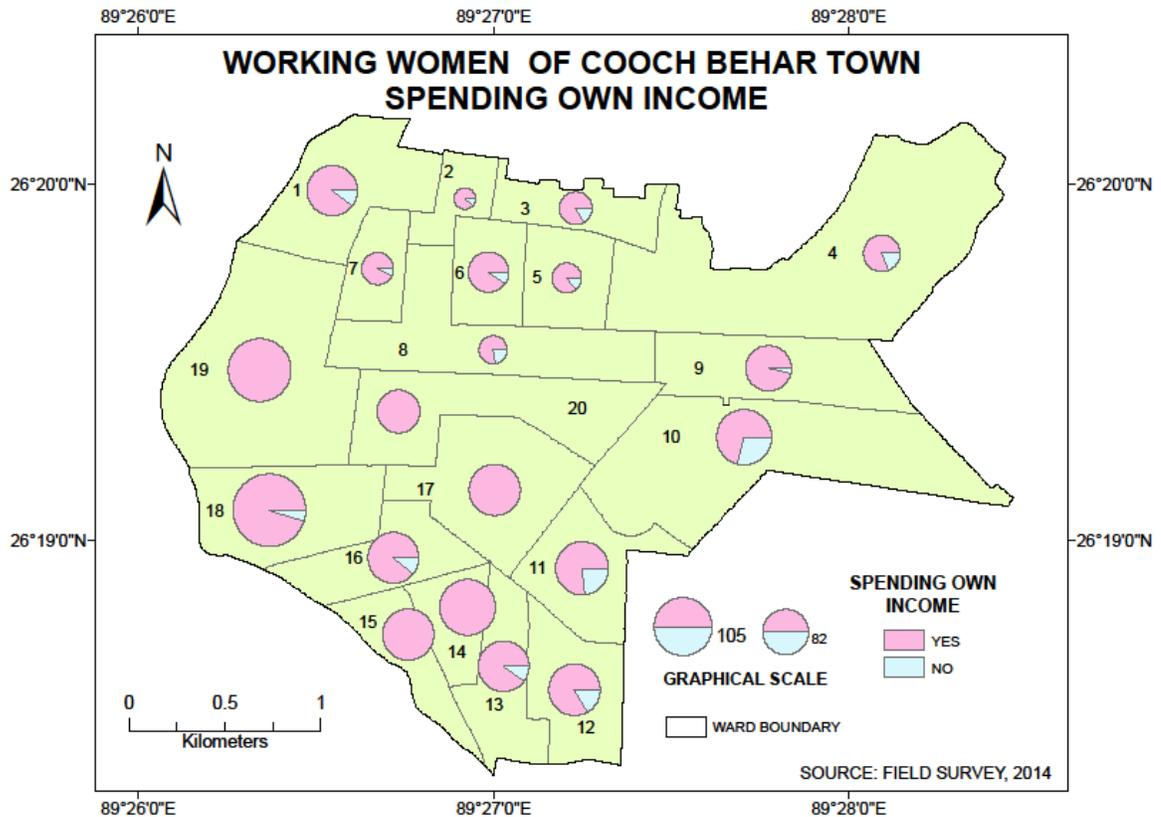
**4.B.4.1.2 Freedom of Spending Own Income:** Most relevantly, they were asked ‘Do you spend your own income?’ 90.88% of the respondents opined in affirmation that they spend their own income (as in Table 4.10). Only 9.12% of the sample said that they kept their salary with their husbands and in-laws.

**Table: 4.10 Freedom of Spending Own Income**

| Respondents' Opinion | Frequencies | %     |
|----------------------|-------------|-------|
| Yes                  | 1615        | 90.88 |
| No                   | 162         | 9.12  |
| Total                | 1777        | 100   |

Source: Field Survey

This group has to seek permission of their husbands and in-laws if they wanted to spend their money. Considering the ward wise picture (evident from Map no. 4.26), it can be said that ward nos. 1-9 and 13-20 has respondents where almost 90% are capable of spending their own income. Only in ward nos.10, 11 and 12 about 70-80% of the working women faces difficulty and requires permission of the family members for expenses. So, employment has given freedom and independence to greater proportion of the sample in the study area.



**Map No. 4.25**

**4.B.4.1.3 Interference in Spending Own Income:** Though verbally almost everyone said that they have perfect understanding with their husbands and in-laws regarding the money matters, they admitted that to some extent they face interference of them in spending their own earned

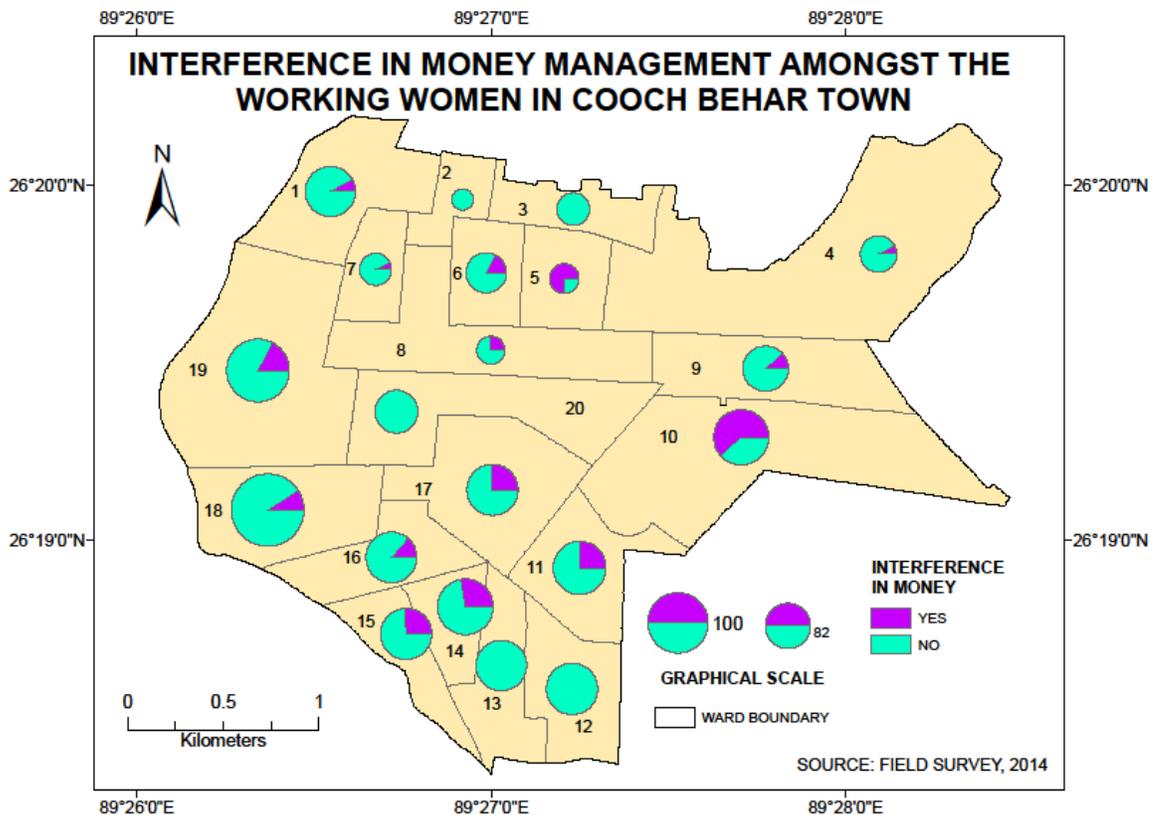
money, When it was asked that ‘Do you face any interference regarding spending your income?’ About 18% of the respondents confessed that they faced interference (Table 4.11). The respondents of ward no. 5 and 10 mostly (about 60-70%) complained about the infringement of their housemates in their expenditure. A much smaller proportion (i.e 12- 28%) of the respondents pertaining to the ward nos.

**Table: 4.11 Interference of the Family Members on Respondents’ Expenses**

| Respondents’ Opinion | Frequencies | %   |
|----------------------|-------------|-----|
| Yes                  | 320         | 18  |
| No                   | 1457        | 82  |
| Total                | 1777        | 100 |

Source: Field Survey

11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18 and 19 complained about the same. The majority of the working women (82%) still said that they did not face any interference regarding money matters and enjoy total freedom while spending their own income (found in ward nos.2, 3, 12, 13 and 20). Map no. 4.26 displays the interference with regard to the management of money faced by the respondents.



**Map No. 4.26**

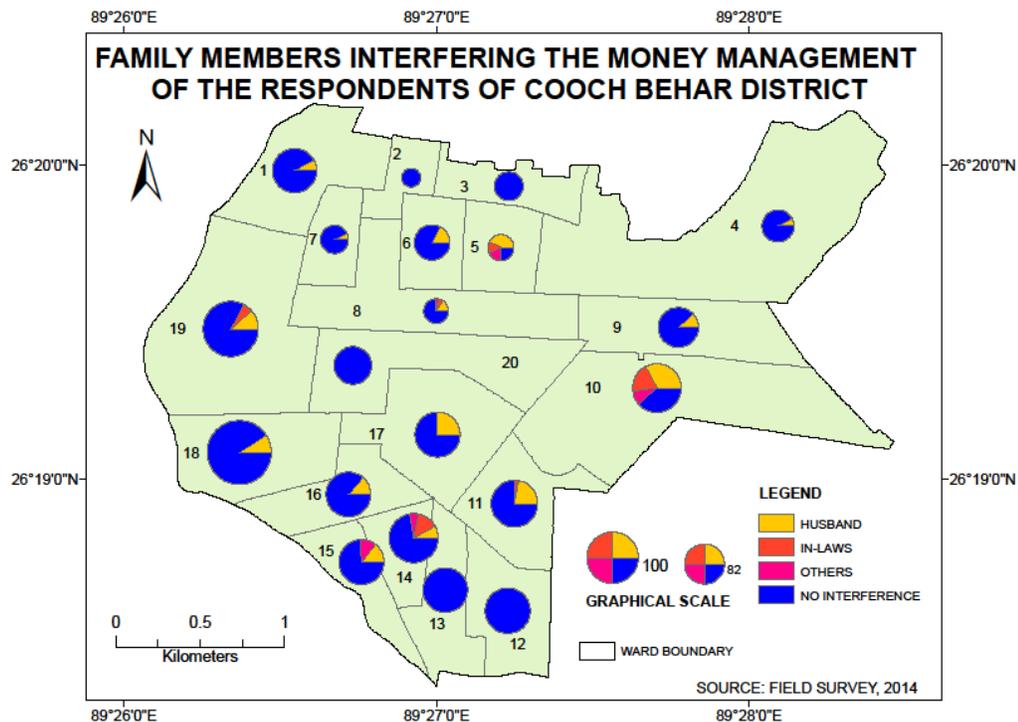
**4.B.4.1.4 Who Interferes? :** Of this 18%, the husbands intrude in the money matters of 223 respondents (i.e. 70% of 320 respondents); in-laws of 59 respondents amounting to 18% (of 320 working women) interferes and 38 respondents forming 12% (of 320 working women) tolerates

**Table: 4.12 Who Interferes the Respondents' Expenses?**

| Interfering Persons | Frequencies | Total Frequency | % (out of 320) | % (Based on Total no. of Respondents) |
|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Husbands            | 223         | 320             | 70             | 18                                    |
| In-laws             | 59          |                 | 18             |                                       |
| Others              | 38          |                 | 12             |                                       |
| No Interference     | 1457        | 1457            | -              | 82                                    |
| Total               | 1777        | 1777            |                | 100                                   |

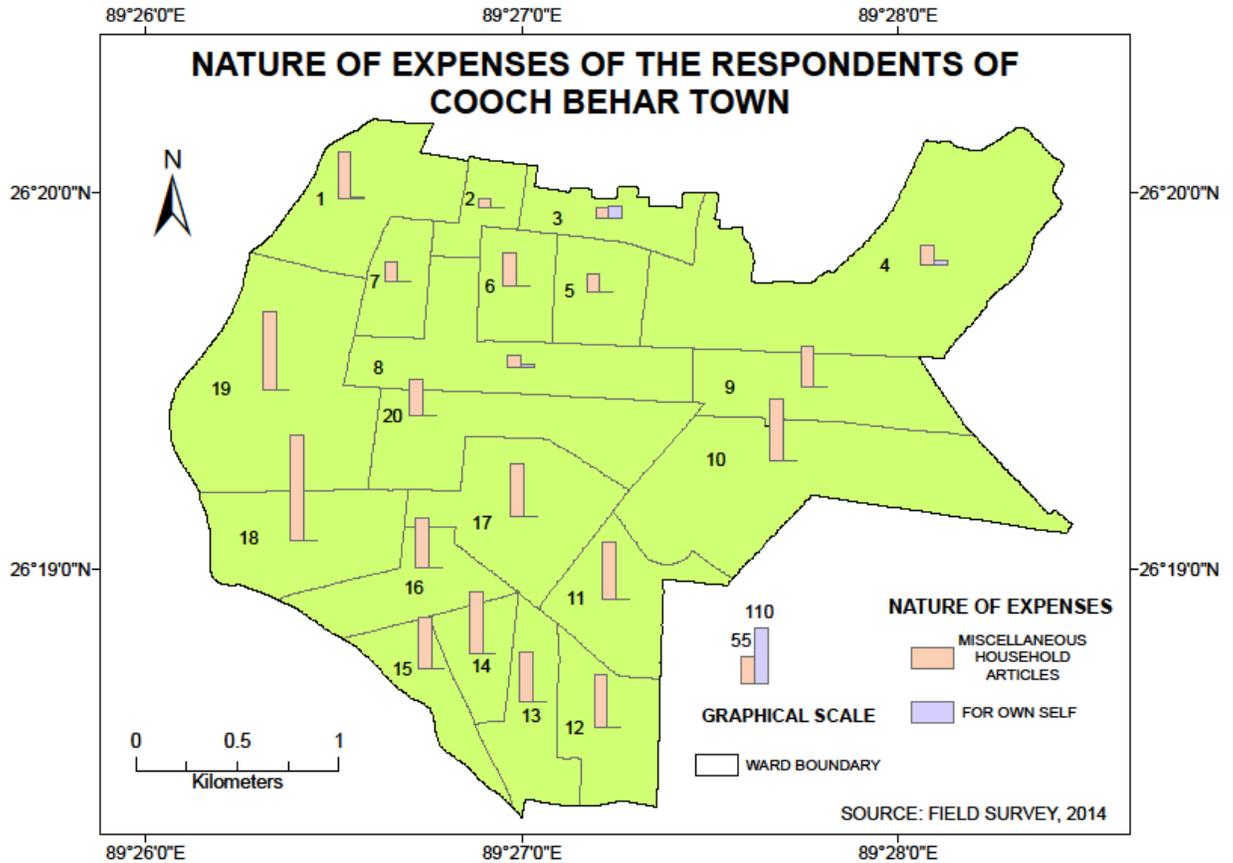
Source: Field Survey

intervention of other relatives and family members regarding their expenses (Table no. 4.12). The ward wise interference regarding the money management of the respondents has been recorded and mapped in Map no. 4.27. It reveals that the husbands are the interfering persons in most that is found in ward nos. 1, 4- 11, 14-19. In-laws of the respondents matters the most in ward nos. 5, 8, 10, 14, 15 and 19. Other relatives' interference can be noticed in ward no. 5, 10, 14 and 15 respectively.



**Map No. 4.27**

**4.B.4.1.5 The Nature of Respondents' Expenses:** With regard to the nature of expenses, about 97.41% of the respondents reported that the lion share of their expenses moved round the household articles or those related to family (very well represented in Map no. 4.28). These included clothes, food stuffs, domestic appliances, healthcare for the household members, gift items for relatives and friends etc. On the other hand, 2.59 % of the working women spends on her personal clothing,



**Map No. 4.28**

jewellery, saving schemes, home loans, children's education, savings for the children, medicines for own self and the like (Table 4.13). Having a view of the pattern of the expenses by the working women of the CBT, it may be inferred that the working women takes the load of the family to a

**Table: 4.13 Nature of the Respondents' Expenses**

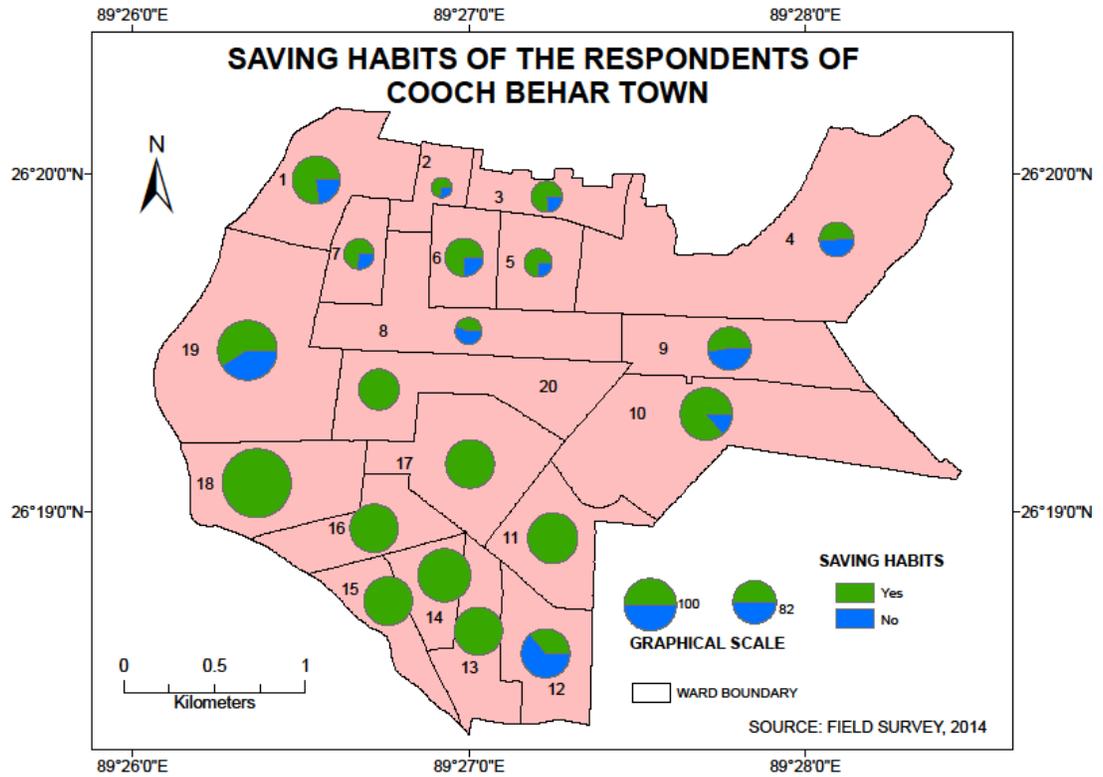
| <b>Items</b>   | <b>Frequencies</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| Clothes, food stuffs, domestic appliances, healthcare for the family | 1722(96.90)        | 97.41      |
| Gift items for relatives and friends                                 | 9(0.51)            |            |
| Personal Clothing  | 20(1.13)           | 2.59       |
| Savings for children, expenses on children's education               | 12(0.68)           |            |
| Jewellery for own self, personal savings, medicines and home loans   | 14 (0.79)          |            |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1777</b>        | <b>100</b> |

The figures in parenthesis indicate the percentage

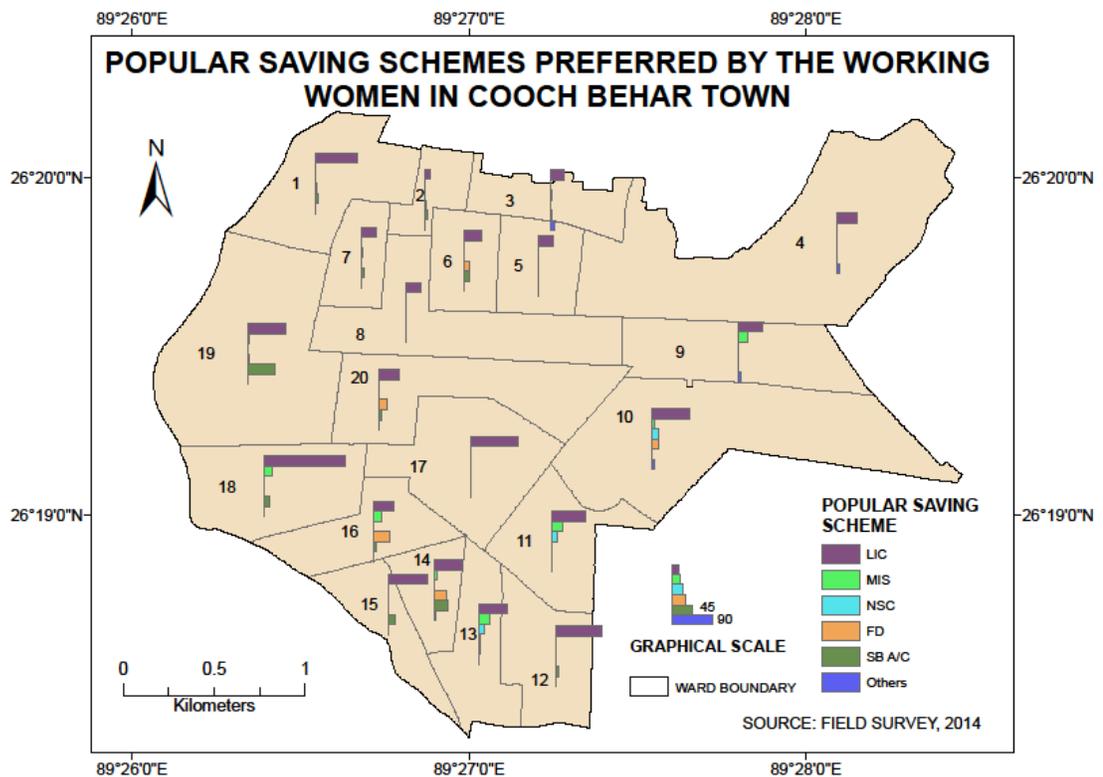
Source: Field Survey, 2014

greater extent as majority of them spends mostly in buying household items or items for common needs of the family. Only an inconsequential proportion of the respondents spend on personal items and children. Although they opine that they feel free to spend on whatever they wanted, but they actually expend on the household requirements. The way round, it seems to be a kind of ceiling on to their desires.

**4.B.4.1.6 Freedom for Savings by the Respondents:** Majority of the working women (82.95%) have the freedom to save their money either for their children or for themselves in various deposit schemes. The saving habits of the respondents have been shown in Map no. 4.29 which contains clear depiction of the wards where the respondents save or do not save their earnings. Some of working women under study belonging to ward nos. 1 – 10, 12 and 19 do not save their money at all; those make a proportion of 17.05% of the respondents. They were cross questioned about their reluctance for savings. These working women (residing in ward nos. 1, 4, 9, 12 and 19) answered that they usually spend all the earned money and there remains no money for savings.



**Map No. 4.29**



**Map No. 4.30**

The most popular saving schemes among the respondents are found to be LIC, MIS, Recurring Deposits and Fixed Deposits. The popular saving schemes among the respondents have been shown in a ward wise map of CBT (Map no.4.30), it is observed from the map that LIC is the most popular among all such schemes and is unanimously accepted in almost every ward. Some of the respondents also reported that they were not encouraged to save their income by their in-laws and husbands. Therefore, a small proportion of the respondents remain underprivileged of saving their own income posing hindrance to their freedom to manage material resources.

**4.B.4.1.7 Freedom of Addressing to Own Needs:** Now the most pertinent question arises that whether the respondents are able to satisfy their own needs and requirements or simply they compromise with that of the family expenses. The respondents were asked to convey the proportion of their income expended upon themselves. The findings are thus listed below in Table no. 4.14. The Table shows that majority of the respondents (about 30%) spend less than 10% of their income to satisfy their own requirements as evident in Map no. 4.29, which displays that the respondents hardly spends for their own selves. The researcher feels that this is a very low proportion that the

**Table: 4.14 Income Spent On Own self**

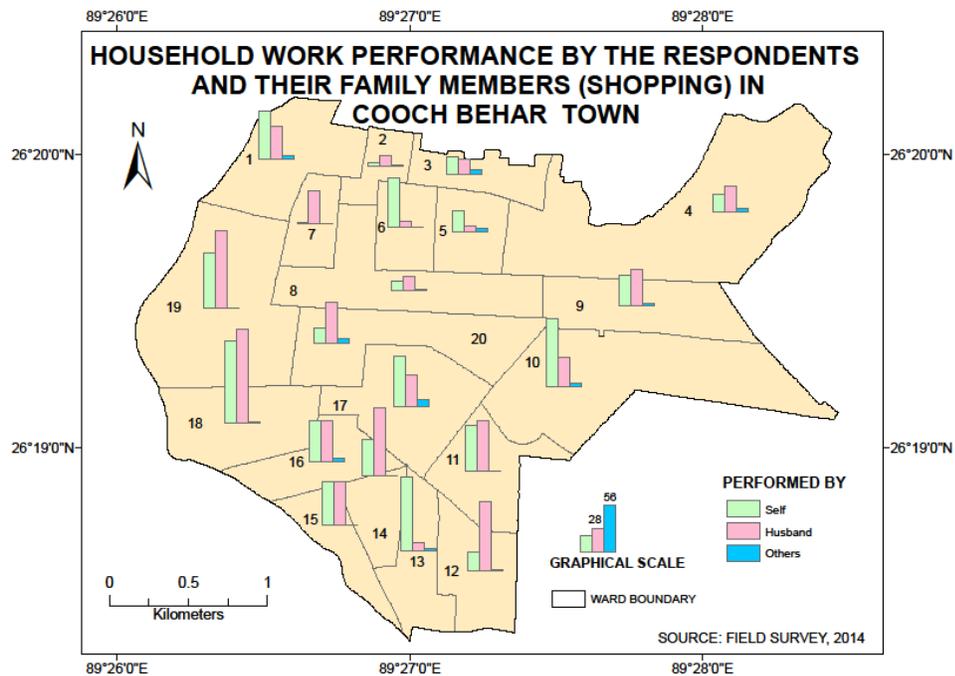
| Proportion of Income (%) | Frequencies | % of Respondents | Ward wise Occurrence  |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| ≤10                      | 534         | 30               | 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 13 |
| 11-20                    | 451         | 25               | 2, 4, 17, 18          |
| 21-40                    | 208         | 12               | 14, 18                |
| 41- 50                   | 249         | 14               | 10                    |
| ≥51                      | 335         | 19               | 3, 8, 12, 14, 15, 20  |
| Total                    | 1777        | 100              |                       |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

respondents are spending on their own selves especially at the backdrop of rise in the market prices. Such respondents are found to be present in the ward nos. of 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 11 and 13. Keeping in mind the Land-Value Map (Map no. 4.19) and that of the Economic Profile (Map no. 4.18) of the CBT, these above mentioned wards mostly belong to the lower income and middle income group of urbanites and hence they might face problem of spending more money on themselves rather to meet their family requirements. About 25% of the sample spends upto 20% of their income on themselves and are found to be present in ward nos. 2, 4, 17 and 18. 21 – 40% of the income is expended by 12 % of the respondents adhered in ward nos. 14 and 18. 14 % of

the respondents in ward no. 10 opined that they spent about 41-50% of their salary on personal requirements. 19% of the working women of the study area were found to spend about  $\geq 51\%$  of their monthly income on their own needs. These respondents reside in ward nos. 3, 8, 12, 14, 15 and 20. It may be summed up that almost one-half of the working women (30+25=55%) afford to spend upto 20% of their salary for their own needs and necessities and they are generous enough to spare themselves. The rest 45% of the respondents might be regarded to have a congenial position in the family where they can freely cater to their wants. So, employment to these 45% of respondents has enhanced their status in terms of freedom as an important component of equality.

**4.B.4.1.8 Spending on Shopping During Festivals:** The working woman by virtue of her employment faces certain stress on her salary especially during the festive shopping. Traditionally, people of Bengal spend a lot during the ‘Pujas’ by buying clothes and valuables and also by exchanging gifts among friends and relatives. The study area is no exception to this. Moreover, the respondents are expected to buy things to her family, friends and relatives. The respondents were asked the question: ‘Who does the festive shopping?’ in order to reach the desired goal of finding out that if the respondents were pressurized to spend their money since they are employed.



**Map No. 4.31**

About 48.51% of the respondents said that they spend their money in such shopping. Almost equal proportion (48.62%) said that their husbands along with them remain involved in the said purpose. A small proportion of them (2.87%) stated that other persons (like the in-laws, mother, father, sisters, brothers etc) had contributed for shopping. Thus, it is found that about one-half of the respondents did spend during the festivals satisfying the expectation of their friends and families. The contribution of the respondents to Shopping has been shown in Map no. 4.31 which is self explanatory.

**4.B.4.2 DECISION MAKING IN THE FAMILY:** Decision making in the family is an important facet in determining the status of its family members since it involves the allotment of material resources in a family; it also embraces the distributive and functional roles of the family members especially that of the women. Some writers like Dixit, Ross, Heer and others are of opinion that a shift in the authority from patriarchal to egalitarian (including both the parents) is taking place with the increasing economic autonomy of the working women. The wife being educated and employed one has been found to play the role of a co-decision maker in the family especially in the urban setups (Singhal, 2003: 100-101). The husbands of the emergent neo-joint and nuclear families cannot undermine the wives' financial contribution to the family income and hence consult them in every important decision.

The respondents were asked this question that acts as an indicator facilitating the researcher to infer about the status of the working women in the study area. According to the respondents, about 79.90% confirmed that they take decisions of their families; 12.89% said that they remain detached from taking any decision in the family; while 7.21% of the respondents take the decisions but jointly after discussion with their husbands. So, if the former and the latter groups are added, it would indicate that independently and jointly the respondents take part in the decision making process in the family with prominence ( $79.90\% + 7.21\% = 87.11\%$ ).

The decision-making may be parted into three categories as per the study conducted by Singhal (2003). These may revolve round: Money, Children and others related to visiting relatives (as in case of neo-joint families). In the present study the working women of the CBT area were found to involve themselves mostly in the former two areas i.e. decision making related to Money-centric matters and Children-centric matters.

**4.B.4.2.1 MONEY-CENTRIC DECISION MAKING** can be reflected by recognizing the contribution of the working women in shopping during festivals, purchase of consumer articles and purchase of real estate for the family.

**4.B.4.2.1.a Contribution of the Working Women in Shopping:** In the previous unit of analysis (Freedom enjoyed by the working women in the family), this has already been dealt with but with a different view. The findings of the study show that about 48.51% of the respondents do contribute in the Festive Shopping alone and their contribution might be earmarked with significance as almost a similar share (48.62%) of the respondents contribute to it jointly with their spouses. The rest 2.87% were put in by the in-laws, parents and other relatives. Therefore, with regard to the question of decision-making, an impressive proportion of the respondents enjoy the autonomy of buying and exchanging gifts during the festivals. (reference to Map no. 4.30).

**4.B.4.2.1.b Purchase of Consumer Articles:** The working women of the study area are found to be extremely generous of throwing in their income for procuring the consumer articles for the family. Almost 96.90% i.e. 1722 respondents out of 1777 expend their income for buying consumer articles including Clothes, food stuffs, domestic appliances etc. needed by their families (as evident from Table no. 4.13). So, another area of contentment regarding the decision-making ability of the respondents of the study area finds its expression.

**4.B.4.2.1.c Purchase of Real Estate:** The respondents were enquired about their consultancy during buying and selling of property. The result found shows an interesting trend. About 30.48% of the sample said in affirmation that they were being consulted in case of buying and selling of properties. On the other hand, 47.86% of the respondents did not contribute in the decision related to the purchase of real estate. A proportion of 21.66% of the respondents have reported that they jointly with their husbands and in-laws take the decision. So, directly or indirectly about 78.34% (adding 30.48% and 21.66%) of the working women remain involved with the decision-making in property matters. This is a positive trend for the working women of the study area to have a firm footing in the decision-making.

**4.B.4.2.1.d Saving Investment and Loan Repayment:** It has already been seen that saving investment is popular among the working women of the study area. Almost 82.95% of the respondents save a portion of their income in diverse deposit schemes. The popular deposit

schemes as per the preferences of the working women are listed below in the following Table (Table no. 4.15). It is

**Table: 4.15 Saving Investment by the Respondents**

| <b>Preferred Deposit Schemes</b> | <b>Frequencies</b> | <b>% of Respondents</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| LIC                              | 1301               | 73.21                   |
| MIS                              | 119                | 6.70                    |
| NSC                              | 41                 | 2.30                    |
| FD                               | 119                | 6.70                    |
| Savings a/c & Recurring Deposits | 197                | 11.09                   |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>1777</b>        | <b>100</b>              |

Source: Field Survey,2014

evident from the table that the LIC is mostly accepted (73.21%) as the saving schemes by the working women of the study area. The next most reliable way of saving investment of the target group is through the banks (i.e. 11.09%). Contrary to this a proportion of 17.05% of the respondents did not save owing to either incurrance of huge expenses or little / no encouragement from the rest of the family members in investment savings. With regard to repayment of loans, some of the respondents are found indebted to banks for house building loans. The percentage might be insignificant (0.79% as mentioned in Table no. 4.13) but such an observation in the study area gives a boosting to the confidence level of the working women for taking such a decisive role in handling material resources of the family.

**4.B.4.2.2 CHILDREN-CENTRIC DECISION MAKING** is evident in the matters related to child bearing, family planning and children's admission to schools.

**4.B.4.2.2.a Child Bearing and Family Planning:** Women remains deeply associated with child bearing and rearing activities in all societies. This procreative role has brought in both glorification and derogation to women. In the former case, this may be held high in the sense that women (without caring for their bodily distortions and physical handicap) brings new life to the world and enjoys the experience called 'motherhood'. The derogatory value is sometimes associated as she is viewed as a medium of sexual pleasure and a machinery of procreation. Women in the present-day world have now mastered the usage of technical knowledge which is concerned with the 'equality in the sphere of sexual relations and with women's control over reproduction and their own bodies' (Menon, 2008:219).

Working women with the dual strength of education and employment can become more decisive in child bearing and family planning. In the study area, the working women have been found to have 2-3 children on an average. They were asked about their intension of having more children. Only 4.39% of the respondents opined in affirmation; about 36.07% of them confirmed in negation; whereas 59.54% of the respondents said that they take the decision jointly with their husbands regarding this. This reflects that though a small proportion yet a handful of the women have taken a firm decision like that of child bearing. It is upon their discretion whether they wanted more children or not.

Another important area of exerting an articulation for the working women of the study area is with regard to Family Planning. 98.14% of the respondents were found to be aware of family planning. 96.96% of the working wife and their husbands have adopted various birth control measures like that of operation, use of contraceptives, birth controlling pills etc. 1.18% of the couples were found to be motivated with the ideology and would shortly adopt such measures; while 1.86% of the respondents discarded the idea.

**4.B.4.2.2.b Decision-making related to Children’s Admission to Schools:** There are some matters which may appear trivial, but may be considered as important indicator to find the extent to which the working women exercise their authority. One such issue may be treated significant to the present study that concerns with the children’s admission to schools. The working women were asked about the medium of instruction in schools to which their children were admitted.

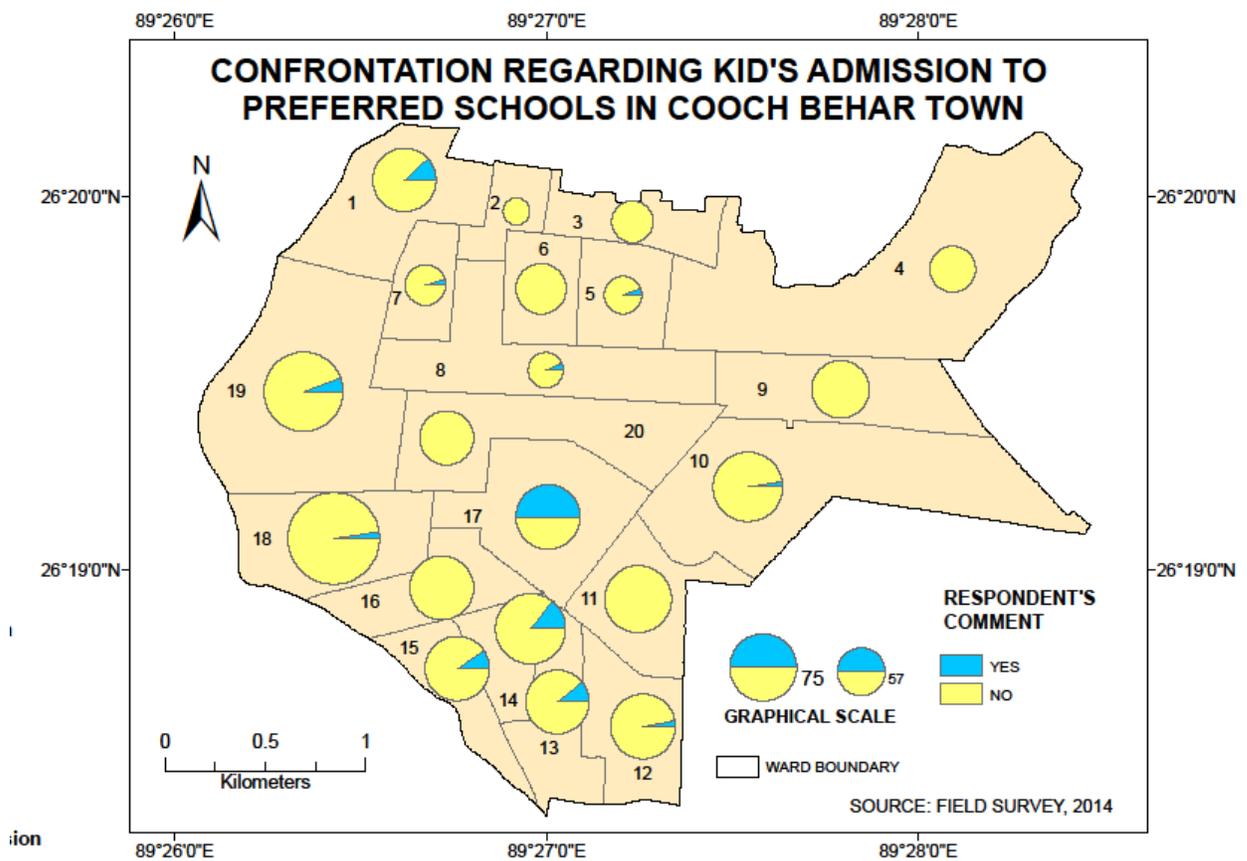
The following table (Table no. 4.16) displays the detail. It is found that most of the respondents (63.25%) admitted their children to the Bengali Medium Schools; it is followed by the English Medium Schools (33.60%) and by the Hindi Medium Schools (1.24%) respectively. A smaller percentage (1.91%) of the working women did not have any preference and they belong to not mentioned group.

**Table: 4.16 Popularity for Medium of Instruction in Schools**

| <b>Categories</b>      | <b>Frequencies</b> | <b>% of Respondents</b> |
|------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Bengali Medium Schools | 1124               | 63.25                   |
| English Medium Schools | 597                | 33.60                   |
| Hindi Medium Schools   | 22                 | 1.24                    |
| Not Mentioned          | 34                 | 1.91                    |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>1777</b>        | <b>100</b>              |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Whatever be the choice, the focus of study was to know about whether the working women face any confrontation with the family members (husbands and in-laws) regarding the admission of the children to schools. A percentage among the respondents, though small (7.26%) is found who have faced disagreement from their family members regarding this issue. The rest 92.74% of the respondents could admit their kids to the schools freely according to their choice. Map no. 4.32 reflects the confrontation faced by the respondents in admitting their children to schools. Therefore it is seen that, most of the working women of the study area are capable to take decisions regarding their admission to schools.



**Map no. 4.32**

**4.B.4.3 SHARING OF DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY:** Traditionally, the division of labour between both the sexes has remained pronounced in patriarchal social structure. Men were associated with strenuous work both in the domestic arena and outside. Women were assigned to duties like cooking, serving of food,

washing and cleaning of clothes and utensils etc. With the advent of industrialization and urbanization the traditional family structure started to wither away. New arenas of occupation and career opened up. Women gradually stepped into the so-called 'masculine' professions. Subsequently, it was followed by a steady increase in the white collar jobs for women.

While analyzing the data collected after the survey, Cooch Behar Town has been found with no exception to this trend. Already it was mentioned earlier that it shows an increasing drift of white collar jobs among the respondents wherein 41.14% are found to be Advocates, Judges, Professors, Doctors, Bank employees, Government Service person, Police officers, School Teachers etc. by profession (Table 4.3); it becomes now essential to know about the kind of work load the working women bears and the extent to which they get support from their family members in their household performances.

**4.B.4.3.1 Working Women Bearing School Expenses:** Almost 99.10% of the respondents send their children to schools. The necessity of education is undeniable and the respondents have been able to generate willingness for education among the kids. The respondents were also asked the question that 'Who bears the school expenses for the kids?' to know the contribution of them as well as their family members towards the education of the children. About 40.57% of the working women of the study area bear the education related expenses of the children. 54.76% of the respondents told that their husbands took this responsibility. A small proportion (4.67%) of the respondent stated that their in-laws and other family members like father, mother, own brother and elder sisters provided the school expenses for the children. Therefore, it is seen that a significant proportion of the working women of the study area bears the school expenses of their kids and the rest 59.43% of the respondents receive their family backing regarding this.

**4.B.4.3.2 Expenses during Child Birth & Illness of the Family Members:** The responsibility towards the family members can be considered by analyzing the dependability of the same during illness and at times of sheer necessity. The respondents were being questioned to know about the person(s) who bore the medical expenses during the birth of the children in the family. About 90.71% spoke of their husbands who paid all the medical bills during their child birth. 8.67% respondents were found steady enough to take their own responsibility. The rest 0.62% of the respondents got the support from the other family mates (in-laws, mother, father etc.) in this regard.

When any of the family members fall ill, most of the husbands (i.e. according to 96.57% of the respondents) take the responsibility of medical treatment given to them. Only 2.59% of the working women expended for this purpose, while 0.84% of other family members (in-laws, mother, father, own brother & sister etc.).

Therefore, analyzing the findings of both the cases it may be inferred that on medical expenses the working women of the study area gets a firm support from their husbands. The husbands of more than 90% of the respondents bear the medical expenses of the sick family members as well as the expecting respondents during their child birth.

**4.B.4.3.3 Looking After Children in Working Women’s Absence:** The working women of the study area are found to be mostly (61.11%) associated with the organized services or salaried employment as already envisaged in the preceding portion of this chapter; on the other hand, the remaining 34.22% of the surveyed group belonged to the un-organized or non-salaried group. The salaried group requires leaving their houses at fixed time of the day and remaining in their respective work places for 6-7 hours daily. The un-organized group however stays outside for a lesser period of time than the former one. Whatever be the nature of the job, the working women have to go outside leaving their children as well.

She now requires the assistance of the family members for taking good care of the children. If she lives in a nuclear family, she opts for maid servants or baby sitters for this purpose. The Respondents

**Table: 4.17 Caring Children in Working Women’s Absence**

| <b>Persons Taking Care of Children</b> | <b>Frequencies</b> | <b>% of Respondents</b> |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Husbands                               | 1083               | 60.97                   |
| Mother-in-laws                         | 227                | 12.77                   |
| Maids                                  | 355                | 19.98                   |
| Others                                 | 112                | 6.30                    |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>1777</b>        | <b>100</b>              |

Source: Field Survey,2014

were asked the question ‘who takes care of your children when you go out?’ and majority (60.97%) of them stated that their Husbands take care of their children in their absence (Table no. 4.17). The respondents are found to rely on the Maids (19.98%) after their husbands. The Mothers-in-law secures the next position according to 12.77% respondents. The other family

members including the Fathers-in-law, brothers, sisters, own parents etc. also take care of the little ones as per 6.30% of the working women. So, it is clear that the working women organize the support systems at her home for going out to suffice her employment. If she does not get one, then she goes for maids or baby sitters.

**4.B.4.3.4 Household Performances by the Respondents and the Family Members:** The following table (Table no. 4.18) reveals the relative proportion of the working women who opined about their performances in domestic chores and about sharing of the tasks by the family members. Seven areas of household activities have been recognized as indicators, these are: Cooking, Marketing (grocery and green grocery), Cleaning & Washing of utensils and clothes, taking care of the aged persons of the family, taking care of the Children, Dropping the children to schools and Paying of different Bills (such as electric, telephone, cooking gas etc.). Here, the work performances of the respondents, their husbands and other persons (including in-laws, own parents, brothers or sisters, sons and maids) in these mentioned areas have been compared to decide upon the degree of responsibilities taken up by any of the family members. This would throw light upon the respondents' domestic work load also.

To begin with, **Cooking** for the family might be considered wherein it is found that majority (83.23%) of the working women engage themselves to it; other persons (here, Mothers-in-law and Maids) are found as supporters (16.32%) to the respondents. **Marketing** included grocery and green grocery

**Table: 4.18 Comparison of Household Tasks between the Respondents & the Family Members**

| Household Work Performances By | Cooking     |              | Marketing   |              | Cleaning & Washing |              | Caring Aged |              | Caring Children |              | Dropping Children to School |              | Paying of Bills |              |
|--------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
|                                | f           | %            | f           | %            | f                  | %            | f           | %            | f               | %            | f                           | %            | f               | %            |
| <b>Respondents</b>             | 1479        | <b>83.23</b> | 636         | <b>35.79</b> | 1096               | <b>61.68</b> | 1391        | <b>78.28</b> | 1228            | <b>69.11</b> | 1021                        | <b>57.46</b> | 477             | <b>26.84</b> |
| <b>Husbands</b>                | 8           | <b>0.45</b>  | 992         | <b>55.82</b> | 69                 | <b>3.88</b>  | 290         | <b>16.32</b> | 459             | <b>25.83</b> | 639                         | <b>35.96</b> | 1208            | <b>67.98</b> |
| <b>Others</b>                  | 290         | <b>16.32</b> | 149         | <b>8.39</b>  | 611                | <b>34.38</b> | 96          | <b>5.40</b>  | 90              | <b>5.06</b>  | 117                         | <b>6.58</b>  | 92              | <b>5.18</b>  |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>1777</b> | <b>100</b>   | <b>1777</b> | <b>100</b>   | <b>1777</b>        | <b>100</b>   | <b>1777</b> | <b>100</b>   | <b>1777</b>     | <b>100</b>   | <b>1777</b>                 | <b>100</b>   | <b>1777</b>     | <b>100</b>   |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

items for the family and as expected, the husbands were found to be the highest contenders (55.82%); nevertheless, the respondents have also become remarkably significant (35.79%). With regard to **Cleaning & Washing** of utensils and clothes, the highest labour is contributed by the respondents (61.68%) and it is followed by others (including Mothers-in-laws, Daughters, Maids) contributing to it according to 34.38% of the respondents. **Caring of the aged persons** of the family is the next area of study. The respondents excel in this work tremendously with contribution from 78.28 % working women. The husbands also come forward having an involvement of 16.32% as per the respondents. While taking **Care of the Children**, the respondents contribute 69.11% and are followed by their better halves by 25.83%. 57.46% of the respondents also **drop their children to schools** and a proportion of 35.96% according to the respondents has been maintained by the husbands. The **Paying of Bills** to avail different amenities to civic life is the next area to be taken into consideration, where the Husbands contributed the most (67.98%), 26.84% of the working women was also found to engage themselves in this.

**4.B.4.4 POSITION OF WORKING WOMEN IN THEIR FAMILIES:** The working women in their families pertaining to the study area till now have shown their responsibility and performances. It is found that the working women have relentlessly performed the household duties; even they have stepped outside for giving a firm financial support to their families. At this juncture, time has come to find out the position of the working women in their families. Certain points of view elaborate their status in their families.

**4.B.4.4.1 Materialistic Position of the Respondents:** The material benefit from the working women is very clearly seen in a family. They not only provide regular flow of funds but also engage themselves in the daily household chores. The respondents were enquired about their possession of property. In spite of their vibrancy in all spheres of activities, the respondents possess only 2.14% of property singly; 1.46% of them possess property jointly either with their husbands or with their in-laws; on the contrary, 96.40% of the respondents have stated that the property belonged to their husbands and in-laws. Thus, material position is not so prominent for the respondents.

**4.B.4.4.2 Attitude of the Family Members Towards the Respondents:** The respondents were inquired about the attitude that the family members possess towards themselves. Almost

97.69% of the respondents admitted that their household members had a helping attitude towards them. They tried to assist the working women whenever and wherever it is required. Easy and mutual co-operative relationship works as boosters to the respondents so that they also look after the family's benefit. Only 2.31% of the respondents reported that their family members had non co-operative attitude.

**4.B.4.4.3 Co-operation Received from the Family Members:** Family life is a team work. The home maker's success in organizing and orienting the family members lies in the mutual understanding and co-operation among them. Though majority of the respondents said that their family members had a helping attitude, but actually 54.59% of them receive co-operation from them. About 40.68% admitted that their family members did not co-operated with them. The rest 4.73% did not mentioned their choice.

**4.B.4.4.4 Harassment in the Family:** The experience of the brides in our country has not been smooth and peaceful at their in-laws' place for everyone. Their adjustments often get soured and sometimes confrontation leads to harassments. This becomes painful for those women who do not have economic autonomy. The target group in this inquiry is employed and thus it might bring a relief to the researcher in the question of being harassed at their households. With this expectation they were asked about domestic harassment and 84.02% of the respondents stated that there was no such irritation for them in their households. Contrary to this, 6.42% of the respondents were not satisfied with the conduct of their family members and reported to have experienced verbal abuse.

**4.B.5 THE ROLE OF THE RESPONDENTS IN THEIR WORK PLACES:** The 'work places' are those places where 'groups of people work together to achieve a common goal, it denotes a structure of duties and activities necessary for the conduct of business' (Astige, 2006: 159). The working women till now were subjected to the challenge of going out of the four walls of the houses to add to the financial support of their families. They succeeded in doing so. Now the new goal for the working women has come up i.e. to face the outer world and to establish a firm footing in their work places also. Following Astige, the working women have to face several problems in their workplaces:

- Since they have to play the dual role of mother/wife and that of an employee simultaneously, the 'private' and the 'public' lives are likely to be in conflict.

- Secondly, the ‘Work Place’ continues to be a domain of men, so they might face problems working in the men’s world.
- The work places have their own structures, duties and functions; they have a definite culture of their own besides the employment related activities. The working women need to adjust themselves with the ‘office-culture’ and socialize with their colleagues by attending office-functions, get-togethers etc.

The present study has delved into these thoughts and some questions were asked to know about the official personality of the working women as well.

**4.B.5.1 Respondents in Services:** It is already seen (Table no. 4.3) in the initial part of this chapter that most of the respondents (41.14%) are engaged into services of high status i.e. they are either Advocates and Judges; or they may be Professors, Assistant Professors & Librarian in Colleges and Universities; or Bank employees and Financial advisors; or Government Service Holders; or Police officers and Constables; Doctors, Engineers, Journalists and WBCS Officers or even Principals or Head Mistress and School Teachers. The rest of the proportion of the sample is found distributed among moderate and low status services.

Comparing the occupational structures of the respondents and that of their husbands (Table 4.3 & 4.6) it may be said that the proportion of workers in white collar jobs of high occupational status among the respondents proliferate than that of their spouses. The adjacent table (Table: 4.19) reveals that even if majority of the respondents are found engaged to white collar jobs, professionally their scope of making decisions remain restricted. Considering the occupancy of the respondents in professions

**Table: 4.19 Respondents in Jobs related to Decision Making**

| Occupation Categories          | Frequency | %    |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------|
| Advocates & Judges             | 9         | 1.46 |
| Financial advisor              | 1         |      |
| W.B.C.S. Officers              | 2         |      |
| Principals and Head Mistresses | 4         |      |
| Councilors in Municipality     | 10        |      |

Source: Field Survey, 2014

related to decision making it is found in almost a negligible proportion. In other words, 1.46% of the sample is either Advocates & Judges, Financial advisors, W.B.C.S. Officers, Principals and

Head Mistresses or Councilors in Municipality etc. The husbands remain associated with moderate job status belonging to middle income group, so this might be the driving force behind the respondents to go for employment in order to support the family income.

With regard to permanency of the jobs of the respondents, it may be said (fig. no 4.e) that little more than one-half of the respondents (56.73%) are permanent in their services. About 37.31% of the working women are engaged to Temporary and Part-time jobs. An insignificant proportion of them are Self employed (3.15%) and Contractual workers (0.17%). 2.59 % of the respondents did not commented on their status of job and hence they are referred to as the 'not mentioned' group.

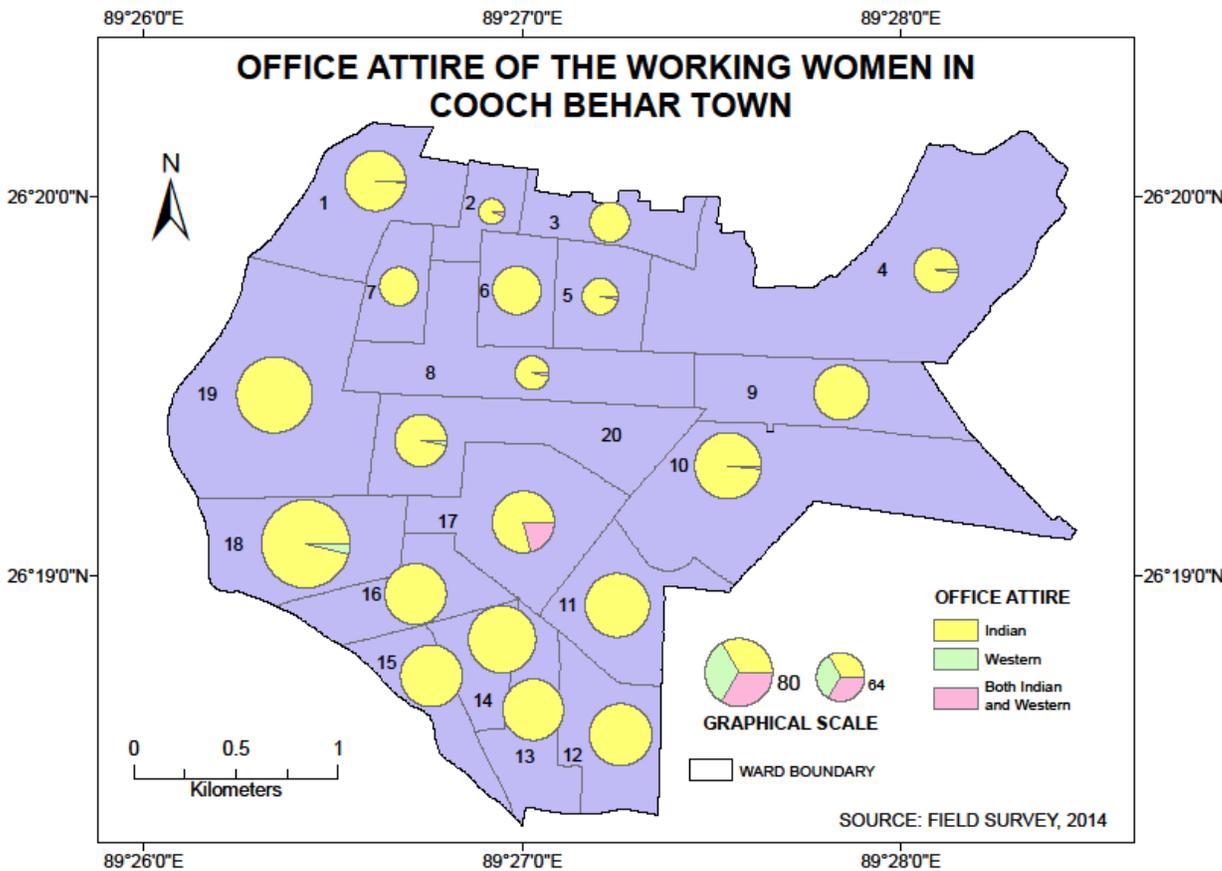
**4.B.5.2 Decision & Reasons to Get Employed:** The respondents were asked a couple of questions in this connection; firstly, they were enquired about their decision for jobs and overwhelmingly 96.96% of the sample said that it was their own decision to get employed. The remaining 3.04% stated that they came into service getting encouragement either from their father, husband or mother as the cases were.

The next question asked was to identify the reasons that drove the respondents to get employed. Most of the respondents (86.89%) answered that it was the financial inadequacy which acted as the stimulant. About 9.90% of the respondents reported that they got into services to attain a social position. While 3.21% of the working women admitted that it was because of their family tradition and also to occupy time they had taken up jobs. So, financial crisis is attributed as the chief cause behind female employment in the study area.

**4.B.5.3 Job Satisfaction:** It is clear that employment of the respondents have enabled them to shoulder monetary responsibilities of the families. Furthermore, it has also been observed that most of the respondents professionally belong to the High income group associated mostly with the white collar jobs. Therefore, it was thought that the working women under study would also remain satisfied with their work and work related matters. The study conducted in this concern shows congruency with the presupposition. 89.53% of the respondents reported that they were satisfied with their jobs. Only 10.47% of the respondents told that they were not satisfied with their jobs.

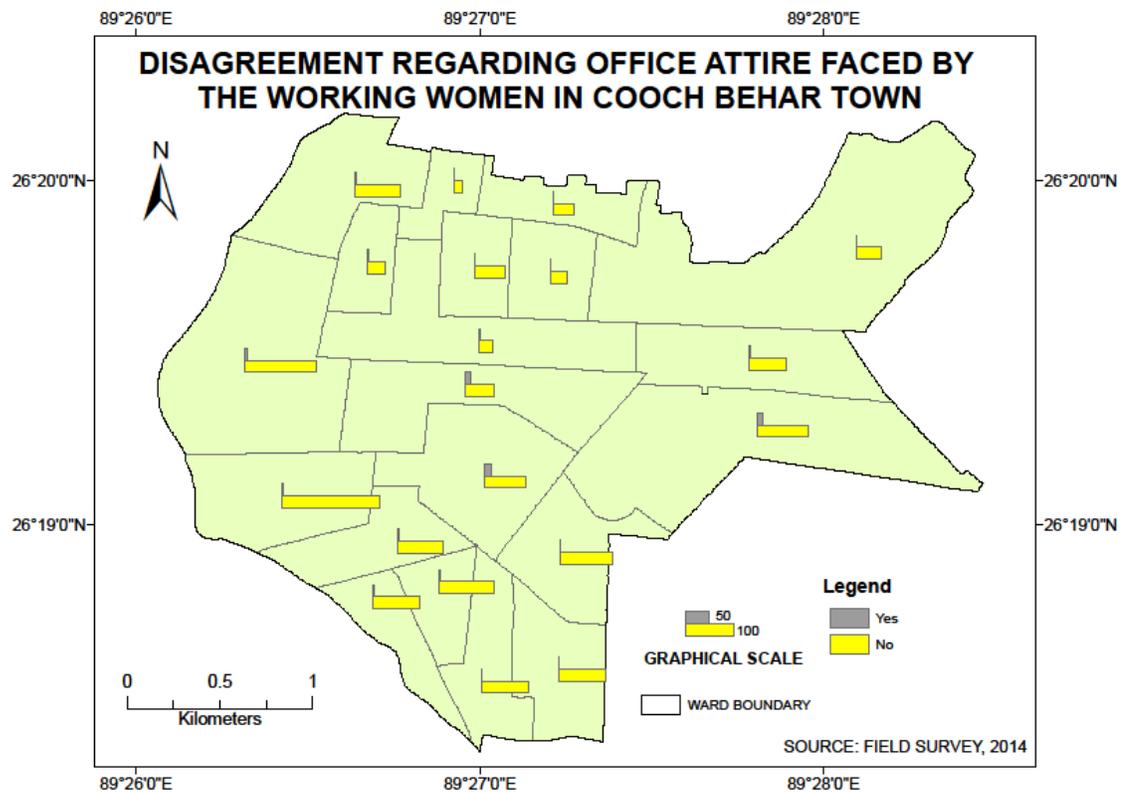
**4.B.5.4 Office Attire:** Women's entry into services is of more recent phenomena than that of the men's especially in the third world countries like India. The respondents are gradually adjusting

themselves with the office-culture, work load, decorum and discipline of the work places. Office attire might work as an indicator to know about the degree of freeness enjoyed by the employer. For an instance, Advocates and Police personnel must wear their uniforms as per their designation. While employees of private farms may select the office-wardrobe according to their taste, comfort level and affordability. So, the respondents were asked to convey their office attire so that the researcher could justify the freedom experienced by them. Almost 97.69% of the working women wear Indian Dresses in their work places (found in Map no. 4.33). Only a skimpy section (0.73%) of them dresses in western wears. 1.58% of the respondents wear both Indian and western dresses in the office. So, most of the respondents show traditional mind set and tries to remain formal in their offices with regard to dressing.



**Map No. 4.33**

**4.B.5.5 Confrontation Regarding Dressing in the Office:** It is not a good practice to experience criticism regarding attire in the work places especially in a civilized society. A worker is an adult and he/she must have the modesty in selection of the dresses. In spite of all, sometimes the employer or colleagues do become inquisitive and a critique for their wardrobe especially in case of a female colleague.



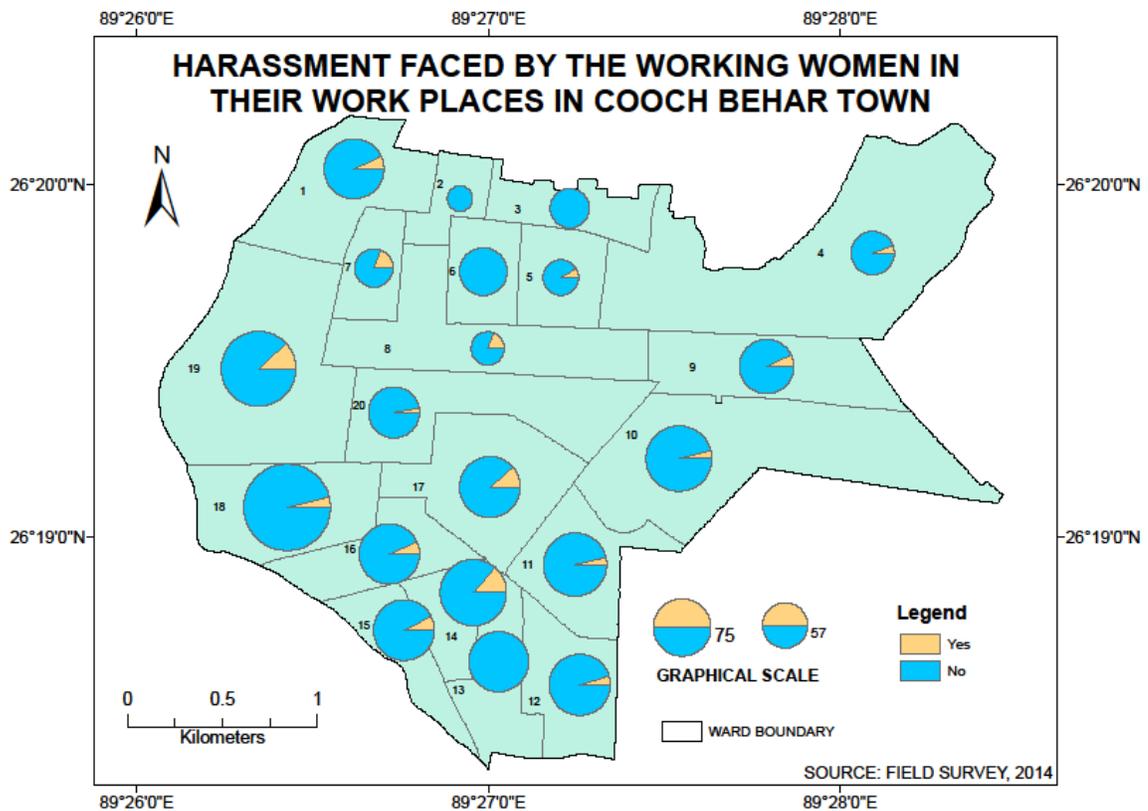
**Map no. 4.34**

About 3.94% of the respondents (who stays in ward nos. 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 19 and 20) faced altercation regarding their dresses in their work places (shown in Map no.4.34). A *Saree* is regarded as the most modest dress for the females as formal wear. Some respondents prefer *Kurtis* as well. These respondents also faced criticism for wearing Salwar- Kurtis especially in schools where the distance travelled by the employee and the ease or comfort are not considered.

**4.B.5.6 Harassment in Office & Steps for Eradication:** Not all the time things remain congenial for the working women at their work places. The working women sometimes develop enmity as colleagues especially reaching certain targets benefitting their services. They face

mental torture, verbal abuses, physical and sexual harassments, political pressure and the like. These evils are a part of the outside-world vices which are like unwanted guests and are resultant professional hazards.

The respondents of the study area do face harassments but in a smaller proportion as a whole (shown in Map no. 4.35). About 6.81% of the respondents (121 in number) complained about the harassments in their work places endangering their mental peace and ease of service. Of all the categories mentioned in Table no. 4.20, work related problems bother most (38.01%) to the working women of the study area. In this issue the respondents have reported that they face infrastructural problems like non-availability of ladies' toilets in their work places; some health workers have reported that that they have to tolerate the hostile behaviour of the patient-party; some of them have complained that the



Map No. 4.35

**Table: 4.20 The Respondent's Experience of Harassment at their Workplaces**

| <b>Harassment at Workplaces</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>%</b>   |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| Work-related Inconveniences     | 46               | 38.01      |
| Political Pressure              | 40               | 35.06      |
| Verbal Abuse and Mental Torture | 29               | 23.97      |
| Sexual and Physical Harassment  | 3                | 4.96       |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>121</b>       | <b>100</b> |

Source: Field Survey

co-workers do not co-operate with them and they find difficulty in completing their work. Next come the issue of Political Pressure (35.06%) which hampers the normal activities in the work places. Verbal abuse resulting to mental torture is experienced by 23.97% of the respondents; while 4.96% are the victims of sexual and physical harassments as well.

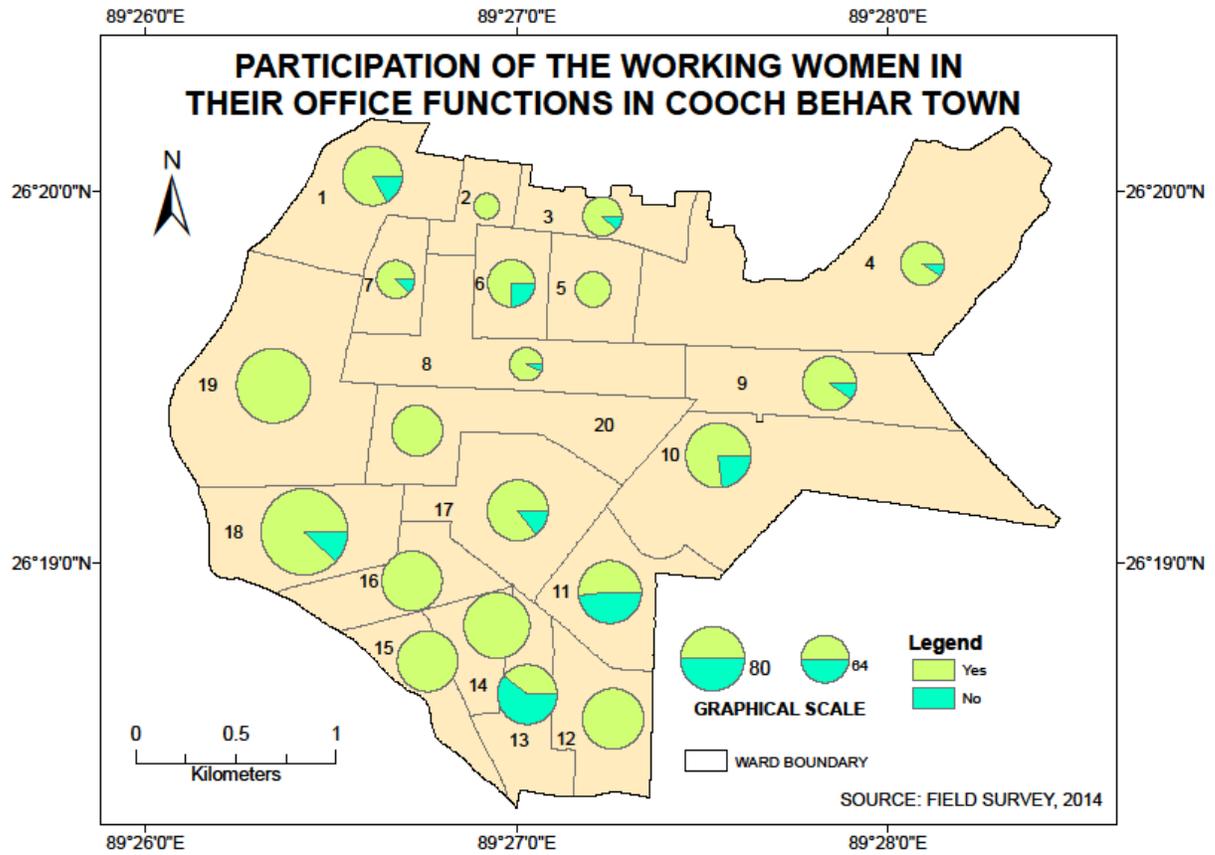
When the respondents were asked 'If they had taken any steps for eradication of harassment in your office; 18.23% of the sample responded in affirmation while the rest 81.20% did not raised their voices. Some respondents have told that they have lodged complaints to the higher authority against sexual harassment. Some of them have given in writing to improve the infrastructural facilities in their offices.

**4.B.5.7 Modification Intended in the Office:** Since the dissatisfaction level for both job (10.47% of the respondents) and workplace (6.81% of the respondents) related issues are small in proportion, it is expected that the target group would be having least concern about modification in their work places. It was only about 7.03% of the respondents who wanted a change in their offices. The rest 90.77% did not wanted alteration and 2.10% of them remained silent about their choice.

- Respondents serving in Schools primarily wanted infrastructural improvement for their workplaces such as increased number of rooms, proper playgrounds for the students, increased number of teaching staffs, library facility, proper boundary wall, drinking water facility and ladies' toilets. Few of them even reported that they were not satisfied with the work environment. A respondent serving at a school complained about the distance she has to cover every day to reach her destination and she wanted a mutual transfer with any colleague working at any school convenient for her.

- Respondents serving at Colleges did report for ladies' toilets and general infrastructure of their workplace.
- Some of the respondents owning garment shops and beauty parlours have expressed their desire to increase their shop size.
- A respondent working at a government co-operative store (Samavaika) stated that she did not have a fixed working time. She is either called for duty in the morning (10 am to 4 pm) or in the afternoon (2 pm to 7 pm).
- Health workers especially the nursing staffs at the M.J.N. Hospital have grievances towards the security of the female staffs during night. They have experienced molestation and find extreme difficulty in delivering their duties at night. This undesired problem worries the researcher the most, since the one who takes care of the sick and unable person is thought of as a medium of sexual pleasure! This kind of behaviour is detrimental for the society. This mindset should be changed for the sake of healthy living in a healthy social structure.

**4.B.5.8 Participation in Office Functions:** The office-culture also involves certain non-official formally informal celebrations involving cultural functions, treats, parties, reception etc. Like the male-colleagues, the working women have to get acquainted with all these and take part in the same so as to maintain good relationship with the colleagues. These functions also help to make the official relations more at ease so that the employee gets a free environment. The respondents of the study area were enquired about their participation in the office functions and 86.44% of them confirmed their participation. 13.56% of the respondents however remained aloof from the socialization owing to their own reservations. Map no. 4.36 displays the participation of the respondents in office functions in ward wise representation.



**Map No. 4.36**

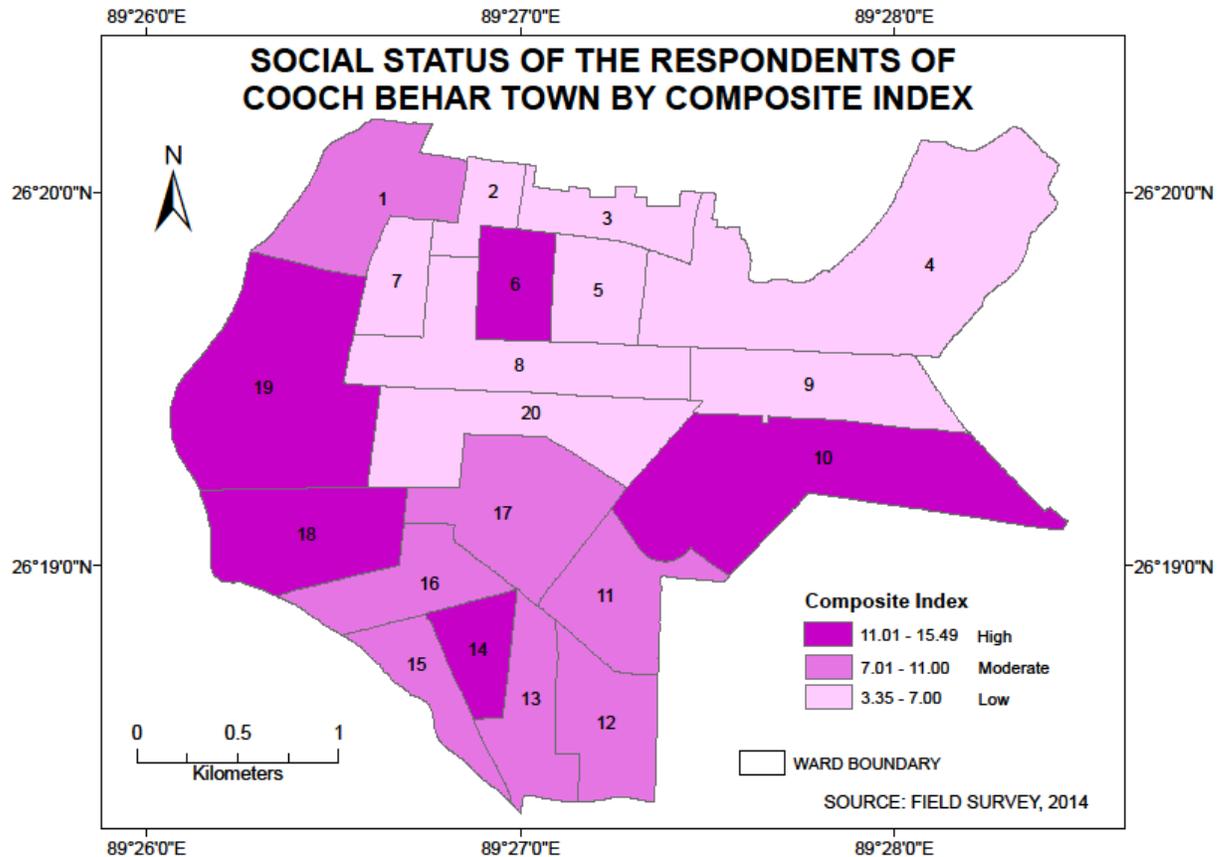
**4.B.5.9 Employment and the Family Life of the Respondents:** Employment brings emancipation to women but it fetches certain undesirable problems along with it as well. They might develop a guilt feeling as they spent maximum hours doing employment related works outside. Compensating that, the working women might find a problem in adjusting with the family life and the working life and they try to take up maximum workload of the household also. Keeping this presupposition in mind, the respondents were asked several questions and the following points were studied:

- **Employment Posing Hindrance to Family Life:** Almost 93% of the respondents felt that their employment is a boon to them rather than a curse. They seemed happy with their family life and it never bothered them to have posed hindrance to the normal familial life and living. The rest 7% remained dissatisfied with their employment as they thought it to lie between them and their families.

- **Husband-Wife Relation:** The respondents were further asked that whether they felt distanced with their husbands or not while pursuing their employment. About 93.30% answered in negation. They opined that their relation with their husbands remained usual. Only 6.70% of the respondents reported that they have felt that employment have made them occupied so much that they lack quality time towards their conjugal life. This might result in the differences of opinion on various issues related to family.
- **Inattention to Children:** About 11.09% of the respondents told that they felt to have neglected their children as they are employed and remain outside for a considerable period of time each day. But majority of them (88.91% of the respondents) said that they remain careful in the upbringing of their children.
- **Feeling of Fatigue:** 79.46% of the respondents stated that they did not feel fatigued in doing the household works as they believe that they are doing them for their own family, so they can extend their co-operation to any limit. On the other hand, 20.54% of the working women felt fatigued in doing all the chores so, they have resorted to take the assistance of domestic help.

Astige (2006) studied the working women of the Gulbarga City (Karnataka) and found that the husbands of the respondents had grievances against their wives on the issues of not contributing sufficient amount of their salary to the families, not paying attention to the needs of their husbands, neglecting family interests and children. On the contrary, the present study conducted in the CBM area show a different and a more open-mindedness towards the respondents.

**4.B.6 SOCIAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS OF THE STUDY AREA:** When some single parameters become insufficient to portray complex characteristics of any analysis, then all the related parameters may be taken up together to get the composite picture. A **Composite Index** is therefore chosen to represent the properly selected variables. The computation of Composite Index involves the recognition of a host of variables which may be designated as  $X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_n$ . These variables on the first hand are made value free to remove the biasness of scale.



**Map No. 4.37**

Composite Index method has been employed in this inquiry to assess the social status of the working women of the study area. The variables chosen for the computation of the Composite Index for the present study are No. of Working women under study, Literacy, Average monthly income, Family Co-operation received, Respondents spending own income, interference in money handling, Amount of Savings by the respondents and participation in the professional arena. Here the observations have been divided by their respective Mean values, so that their scale effect gets neutralized; this new transformation retains the relative variability of the original variable. Then the results are added row-wise. The sum of these figures is then put in the last column and it is known as the Composite Index Score. The higher value of the Composite Index Score indicates the higher degree of Social Status. Then these are spatially represented by employing choropleth method for visual representation (Map No. 4.37).

The adjacent map (Map No. 4.37) displays the quantified version of the qualitative data which is the chief finding of the study. The working women under study have diversified representation

of their social and economic backgrounds; yet the basic framework of the social structure being patriarchy gives limited authorization to their livability. Considering all the above mentioned parameters and the calculation procedure it is found that the working women residing in ward nos. 5, 10, 14, 18 and 19 enjoy High Social Status compared to the rest of the sample having the Composite Index Score 11.01 – 15.49. Moderate Social Status working women resides in ward nos. 1, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17. The Composite Index Score for these wards vary within 7.01-11.00. The last category has been accorded with Low Social Status with Composite Index Score value of 3.35 – 7.00. The ward nos. of 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 20 falls in this category.

As the researcher explored throughout the study area during the field survey, it has been revealed that the socio-economic condition exactly matches with the social status groups thus formed by computing the Composite Index Scores. For instance, the *Bandher Paar* region bordering ward no. 1; the areas adjacent to the Burning Ghat in ward no. 9 and 10; portions of ward no 3 along the Binpatty Road and the Burial ground; portions of ward no. 4 especially juxtaposed to the airport region; the area settled by the Prostitutes at Kalabagan in ward no.6; *Harijan Mohalla* of ward no. 8 and 20 are some of the examples where working women with low social status resides. Contrary to these, the relatively high-class residential have been accorded with greater status and financial affordability. This picture corroborates with the economic mapping and the land value map of the CBT area.

Therefore, the areas accorded with moderate and low social statuses are the areas of concern. From the developmental point of view, problems pertaining to these areas should be properly identified and social, economic, sectoral planning would be ensured to address those problems adequately.

#### **4.B.7 THE POSITION OF THE NON-WORKING WOMEN IN THEIR FAMILIES IN**

**CBT:** The study on the working women remains incomplete without analyzing the opinion of the non-working women of the study area. In order to understand and comprehend the status and to appreciate the achievement of the working women pertaining to the study area, it becomes necessary to know about that of the non-working group also. Therefore, a handful of non-working women from the study area were also surveyed and their opinion and experiences were recorded as a control group.

Following that of the working women, the non-working women were asked similar questions that would lead to infer about their position in their families. The aspects of study included:

- 1. Freedom enjoyed by the non-working women in the family**
- 2. Decision making ability of the non-working women in the family**
- 3. Sharing of domestic responsibilities by other members of the family**
- 4. Position of non-working women in their families**

**4.B.7.1 FREEDOM ENJOYED BY THE NON-WORKING WOMEN IN THEIR FAMILY:** While opining about their **household attire**, 70% of the group said that they wear Indian dresses including *Sarees* and *Kurtis*, only 6.67% stated that they wore Western garments; 23.33% of them wore both Indian and Western outfits. It was found that only 3.33% of this group of respondents faced confrontation with their families regarding dressing. Since the maximum proportion of the control group wear Indian outfits, hence there remains very little or no scope of differences in opinion with the inmates of the family in defying tradition.

With a view to the freedom in spending money on household items and requirements, **100% of the non-working women** reported that they had **no freedom** in this regard.

**4. B.7.2 DECISION MAKING ABILITY OF THE NON-WORKING WOMEN IN THEIR FAMILY:** The housewives were asked whether they take their **own decisions** or not. **41.67%** of them **said in affirmation**, while the rest 58.33% reported that their family members always has a say on matters related to them. In the matters concerning their families only 36.67% of the respondent-housewives were consulted while taking **household decisions**; the rest **63.33%** of the control group **were not consulted** in this regard.

While interrogating the control group about the **festive shopping**, **75%** of them told that **neither they were consulted nor they contributed** in this matter. 25% of the respondent-housewives said that they are consulted and taken to the shops for assisting the festive shopping.

**4. B.7.3 SHARING OF DOMESTIC RESPONSIBILITIES BY OTHER MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY:** There are a host of issues which could be dealt in order to justify the domestic responsibility of the non-working housewives: On the first hand, it was found that **100%** of the

respondent-housewives have stated that their **husbands bore all the school related expenses** of their children. **75% of the husbands expended during the child birth**, while 25% expenses in this regard have been expended by other relatives who included own father and father-in-laws of the housewives. **90%** of the respondent-housewives said that their **husbands take up** all the **responsibility of sick people** in their families and the rest 10% got assistance from the other family members. Table no. 4.21 shows a comparison of Household Tasks between the respondent-house wives & their family members. It is revealed that the non-working women mostly labour the

**Table: 4.21 Comparison of Household Tasks between the Respondent-Housewives & the Family Members**

| Household Work Performances By  | Cooking (%) | Marketing (%) | Cleaning & Washing (%) | Caring Aged (%) | Caring Children (%) | Dropping Children to School (%) | Paying of Bills (%) |
|---------------------------------|-------------|---------------|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Respondents (Non-working women) | 91.67       | 51.67         | 78.33                  | 81.67           | 71.67               | 33.33                           | 6.67                |
| Husbands                        | 0           | 43.33         | 0                      | 0               | 5                   | 33.33                           | 91.67               |
| Others                          | 8.33        | 5             | 21.67                  | 18.33           | 0                   | 23.33                           | 1.67                |
| <b>Total</b>                    | <b>100</b>  | <b>100</b>    | <b>100</b>             | <b>100</b>      | <b>76.67 #</b>      | <b>100</b>                      | <b>100</b>          |

# Here 23.33% of the respondents did not have children

Source: Field Survey, 2014

household chores except two areas i.e. dropping the children to schools and paying of bills to avail different amenities. The housewife does most of the tasks like: cooking, marketing (grocery and green grocery), cleaning utensils and washing clothes, caring aged in the family, caring children.

**4. B.7.4 POSITION OF NON-WORKING WOMEN IN THEIR FAMILIES:** The non-working respondents were also asked about their ownership in the property. It was found that only 3.33% of the housewives owned property. The rest 96.67% of the control group were refrained from holding any property. Probably because they did not have the firm footing of having employment they were not included in these matters.

Inspite of all these, 93.33% of the respondents of this group confirmed that their families have helping attitude towards them. Only 10% of the housewives told that they faced domestic harassment which was mostly verbal.

So, finally they were asked that whether they were satisfied with themselves of being the housewives. 83.33% of them answered in negation. They wanted to get some jobs and earn certain amount of money which could not only facilitate the family expenses but also would empower them to have confidence and economic autonomy. 86.67% of them admitted that the working women have better status in the family; as they earn they can spend money at their will; they have more liberty in taking important decisions related to their families and thus can lead a better life.

**4. B. 8 CONCLUSION:** This Chapter unfolds two essential aspects of the inquiry: the socio-economic background of the respondents and the status & role of the respondents in the family, society and work places. The socio-economic background has helped to understand the mindset of the target group, their desires and priorities of life. In short, it determines the type of the behaviour the respondents put forward in a given situation. The analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the respondents would assist the study of their status and role in their families and workplaces in particular and in the society in the broader sense.

Several indicators like the age profile, marital status, religious affiliation, caste diversity, social mobility, educational qualification, occupational diversity, job category, income levels (of respondents as well as that of their families), occupational status, family structure, dependency and health conditions of the target group were analyzed. This study confers a positive hint in some areas especially to education and to the consequential employment status. The trend of attainment of higher education amongst the general mass of population irrespective of sex is discernible. This probably has led to the incidence of higher education (51% of the sample are Graduates and Post-graduates) amongst the respondents. Likewise, their employment status also portrays incidence of prestigious jobs (41.14% of respondents) and high income levels (36.52% of the respondents earning 20,001 – 50,000 INR on a monthly basis). But the participation rate for the women workers in the study area like any other Indian city is appreciably low (i.e. 20.32% of female workers out of total workers as per Census 2011).

With regard to the role of the working women in the family, society and work places, some interesting results have arrived:

- The respondents under study play a significant role in their households by spending lion share of their salary (97.41% of the respondents) towards the procurement of the goods and services for their families.
- 40.57% of the respondents spend on school expenses for their children.
- 82.95 % of the respondents keep some amount of their salary as their savings and a meager proportion (0.79%) of them repays loan.
- An appreciable proportion of the target group (79.90%) reported that they take their family decisions.
- 98.14% of the respondents have told that they were aware of family planning and they remained involved in taking child bearing decisions independently and jointly with their husbands (59.54 + 4.39= 63.93%).
- A checklist of household activities in Table no. 4.17 shows that apart from doing the office work outside the premises of the household, the working women takes up a heavy work load on their shoulders. They cook (83.23% of the respondents) for their family; does marketing (55.82% of the respondents); they clean the utensils and wash clothes (61.68% of the respondents); they do care for the aged persons in the family (78.28% of the respondents); take care of the children (69.11% of the respondents); drop children to schools (57.46% of the respondents) and pay the electric, telephone etc. bills (67.98% of the respondents).

The thorough interview of the respondents revealed the status of the respondents under study. The working women think that their emancipation has brought about economic autonomy to them and by virtue of which they could control their livability conditions. About 90.88% of the respondents declared that they are free to spend their income according to their wish; but actually it was found that majority of their expenses (97.41% of the respondents) revolved round the household items to suffice the family needs and necessities. In the course of the fulfillment of the family requirements, their own needs and necessities remain unaddressed. Shrinkage in the fund allocation for this is noticed also (55% of the respondents spent less than 20% of their income on

their personal needs). So, the freedom of the working women in expending at their whims in this case remains as an eye-wash.

They remain involved mostly in shopping related decisions only (48.52% of the respondents contribute in festive shopping; 96.90% of them spend wholly on consumer goods). While a smaller proportion (30.48%) of the working women have been found to get themselves involved in the purchase of real estate. Thus, it may be said that the working women gets little involvement in important decisions. But there is no denying the fact that the respondents have showed more decisive role in the question of family planning and child bearing, which is a very important indicator in determining their status.

Although majority of the working women toil heavily for their families, yet their husbands are found in a helping attitude towards them. They take care of sick persons and pay the medical bills (according to 96.57% of the respondents); look after their children in the absence of the working women (according to 60.97% of the working women), spend largely during child births (90.71% of the respondents reported) and also spend for the children's education (54.76% of the respondents). So, the complementary role of the husbands towards their better halves work as a mental boosting for the respondents and they enjoy doing the domestic drudgery for their family without the feel of getting fatigued (79.46% of the respondents stated that they did not feel fatigued in doing the household works). Thus, the status of the respondents have not improved much, rather they still experience the malice of patriarchy in a new format; even some respondents have a guilt feeling of neglecting the household activities as it remain instilled in the thought that home is the primary responsibility of a woman.

Commenting on the position of the respondents in their families, it may be concluded that the working women of the CBT has a scant materialistic position when their property possession is considered (as only 2.14% of the sample holds property). Although the attitude of the family members towards them remains helping (as per 97.69% of the sample), yet actual receipt of co-operation is far from expectation (54.69% of the respondents). A positive aspect in this connection may be upheld here, that though there remains dissatisfaction and differences of opinion between the respondents and their family members, 84.02% of the respondents do not experience domestic violence and harassment. Only 6.42% of the respondents have a tough luck in this respect.

The working women's role in their work places are also of significance for the study so as to find out whether they are able to strike a balance between the house and the office. Majority of the respondents (86.89%) came to hunt jobs out of financial necessity. The proportion of permanent workers is found highest (56.73%) in the CBT. Socialization is an important aspect of office-culture. The respondents show excellent participation (86.44%) in the non-formal activities as well indicating that they have good relations with their colleagues. 89.53% of the respondents remain satisfied with their job. However, a small proportion (7.03%) of the working women has upheld dissatisfaction related to their workplaces and has demanded modification there upon. These mainly dealt with infrastructural inadequacies. Displeasure in office related issues have also been voiced by 6.81% of the working women of the study area wherein verbal abuse and consequent mental harassment top listed the discontent (explained in Table no. 4.19) among the sample. To sum up, it may be said that employment did not pose hindrance towards the family life and living of the respondents largely (93% of the sample). 93.30% of them felt to maintain usual conjugal relationship with their spouses. Majority of them (88.91% of the sample) never felt to have neglected their children while doing jobs. Thus, the working women seemed to have struck a balance between their house and their office.

From the analysis of the field data it may be concluded that the role and status of the working women in India has altered much from the traditional social framework. Although the working women of the study area have a much improved position (with high education and prestigious employment) but they have not yet achieved equal standing with their spouses. They are happy to strike a balance between their family and office but certain areas need to be addressed properly. The working women of the CBT should be more involved in decision making process in their families. The co-operation of the family members is inadequate to the respondents, so they should become more helping in their attitude. The working women of the CBT are overburdened with work; therefore they should reduce their household work load. The husbands were found co-operative and helpful to the respondents; they should maintain this in order to reach a more egalitarian status with their wives.

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