

## *CHAPTER VI:*

# *PERCEPTION OF THE WORKING WOMEN OF THE STUDY AREA TOWARDS EDUCATION, MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND EMPLOYMENT*

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# **PERCEPTION OF THE WORKING WOMEN OF THE STUDY AREA TOWARDS EDUCATION, MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND EMPLOYMENT**

**6.1 INTRODUCTION:** Formal education and life experience teaches one to have a different perspective to life and living. Astige (2006: 74) has rightly pointed out that ‘the role and status of the employed women depends on the extent to which she has become modern in her attitudes, values and out looks...’ The working women with education and employment develop diverse orientation towards the basic social issues viz. education, marriage, family and employment. Economic autonomy gradually imparts confidence among the working women and augments the living standards of the family also. The focus of this chapter is to illuminate the perception of the working women of the study area concerning education, marriage, family and employment since these can be regarded as the fundamental matters shaping one’s social and personal reality.

**6.2 PERCEPTION OF THE WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS EDUCATION:** The word ‘education’ has been derived from the Latin word ‘*educere*’ which means ‘to draw out’ i.e. to bring out the innate potentials or endowments which remains within an individual. To get education means to acquire knowledge and experiences as well as to develop skills, habits and attitudes those help a person to lead a full and worth-while living. Kundu and Bose (1995: 155) remarked that ‘Education is an endless process of becoming’ in other words, education is a lifelong process from birth to death. So, it is a process rather than an end that an individual goes through as he learns to cope with and adapt to his physical and social environment. In a broader sense, it refers to all the influences that have implication to one’s life and living; in a narrower sense it refers to the special influences organized and devised by instructors at different institutions.

Education in India has always been associated with a different philosophy from that of the Occident. It aimed at all round development of a person, his personality and attainment of spiritual enhancement. It has remained responsible for social transformation and progress in

India. The social revivalism was escorted by the educated handful and their inexorable efforts have led to the milestones in the chronological antecedents of our country. The educated people though in a limited number, in the pre-independent India made avenues for female education because they realized that educated wives and mothers would lead to better nurturing of children and prosperity of the society.

Literacy, is regarded as an important indicator of development (as seen in the computation of HDI, GDI etc.) particularly related to women's position in the society. Societies providing congenial and free environment for social progress also portrays high incidence of female education. Women along with men adhere for higher education and become contenders of white collar jobs. Higher education also enables women to analyze life experiences with a different perspective and develop her own identity. Astige (2006: 75) has summarized the consequential outcome of women's education in the form of:

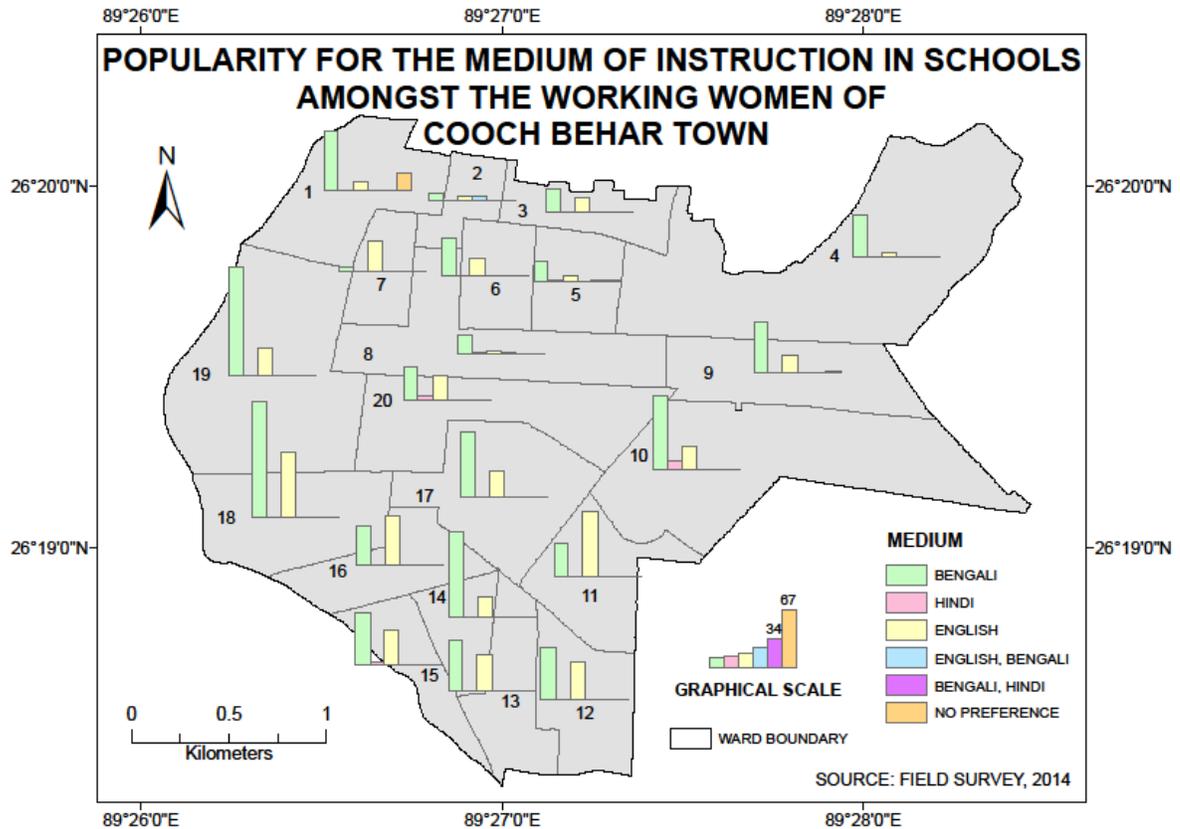
- a) Greater female work participation;
- b) Reduction in family size;
- c) Greater attention by mothers in child rearing in terms of health, character building, educational accomplishments and the like; and
- d) Enhancement in per-capita income and capital; ensuing better quality human capital. Astige further cites Joshi (Ibid: 76) and tried to account for the increasing trend of female students for higher education. She justifies the following reasons for such phenomena:
  - a) Since the average marriage age in India has been increased, the girls like to continue their education in this situation;
  - b) The educated boys prefer educated brides so, the girls intend for higher education as qualification of marriage;
  - c) Higher education paves the way for better jobs, so in order to become self supporting in life they go for higher education and
  - d) For attaining a better status in the society and for economic autonomy women prefer getting higher education.

The respondents were asked a number of education related questions whereby their attitude and perception towards education could be reflected. These might be represented as important indicators for the study concerned.

**6.2.1 ADHERENCE OF THE RESPONDENTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION:** The educational qualification of the respondents of the study area has been dealt in detail in Chapter IV. The primary data and the census data pertaining to 2011 have been tallied and similar kind of representation have been found. A general finding regarding the education and literacy level of the respondents of the study area is that it has an impressive percentage of female literacy having an average of >75% in most of the wards. The Map no. 4.11 of the chapter IV shows the level of education among the working women in the CBT and the diagram has been prepared on the basis of the primary data. The incidence of higher education (including Graduates, Post-graduates, Ph.D and M.Phil, Diploma holders) among the respondents is found the most (54%), 35% of the respondents have School Level Education (including primary, secondary, higher secondary levels); 3% could only sign their names; 4% were Illiterates and 4% did not mention about their educational qualification. Having a situation like this, the working women have been appropriately found to engage themselves mostly (41.14%) with white collar jobs. This might be treated as a positive attitude and an achievement for the respondents.

#### **6.2.2 RESPONDENTS' PREFERENCE FOR THE SCHOOLS:**

**The Popularity for the Medium of Instructions in Schools:** This has already been dealt with in Chapter IV, wherein it has been found that most of the working women (63.25%) send their children to the Bengali Medium Schools; 33.60% send their wards to English Medium Schools; 1.24% to Hindi Medium Schools and the rest 1.91 % belonged to the not mentioned category evident in Table 4.14 of Chapter IV. This is represented spatially in Map no 6.1 to detect the popularity of medium of instructions in schools among the respondents. The map reflects similar findings as that of CBT as a whole.



**Map No. 6.1**

**The Preference for the Medium of Instructions in Schools:** The respondents were further asked to indicate their preference for the medium of instructions in schools for their children. Surprisingly it has been found that about 81.04% of the respondents (i.e. 1440 in number) have preference for English Medium Schools while the rest 18.46% of them preferred Bengali Medium Schools. The reasons for such preference were also enquired and are displayed in the following table (Table no. 6.1).

**Table: 6.1 Preferences for English as the Medium of Instruction in Schools**

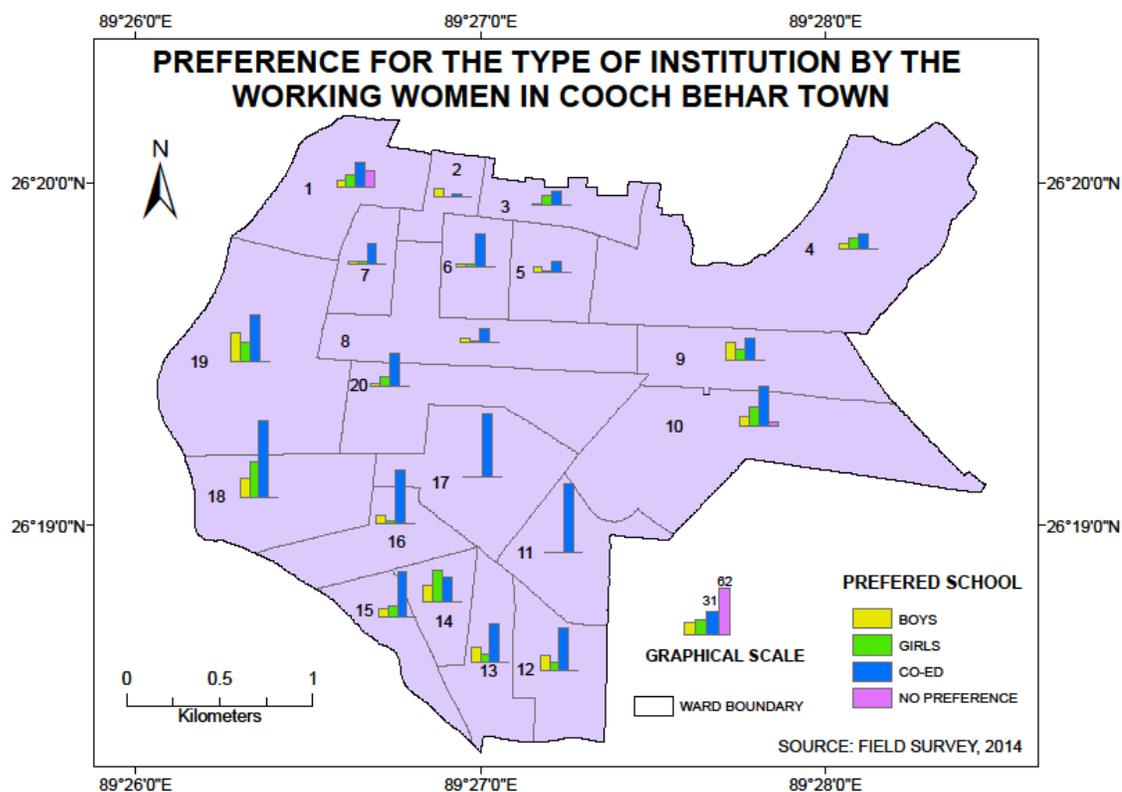
Reasons	Frequencies	% of Respondents
Facilitate Higher Education	261	18.13
Better Job opportunity	725	50.34
Universality of English language	181	12.55
Helpful for Competitive Exams	273	18.98
Total	1440	100

Source: Field Survey

It is evident from the above table that the respondents prefer English medium schools mostly (50.34%) because they think that it will fetch good jobs for their children; the next 18.98% of the respondents believe that it will remain helpful for appearing in Competitive Exams, almost equal proportion (18.13%) of the respondents stated that it would facilitate higher education since most of the good reference books are written in English. Only 12.55% showed their interest in learning English as a universal language leading to better comprehension.

Now the most pertinent question arises, that if 81.04% of the respondents prefer English to be the most useful language having a practical benefit, then why most of the respondents (63.25%) send their children in Bengali Medium Schools. The probable answers to this question are many: to some respondents, it has been their inability to cope up with the subject since they have been to Bengali Medium Schools; affordability to English Medium Schools cannot be an un-denying fact; insufficient number of English Medium Schools in the study area is yet another issue.

**Popularity of the types of Schools in the study area:** Preference of the respondents regarding the type of schools has been represented by simple cartographic technique in Map no. 6.2, where ward wise representation in this regard have been displayed.



Map No. 6.2

About 63.31% of the working women send their children to co-education schools of the study area (ward nos. 1, 3-13, 15 - 20). 18.40% of the respondents admitted their daughters to the Girls' (ward nos. 4, 9, 10, 14, 18 & 19) and 16.26% of them admitted their sons to the Boys' school (ward nos. 2, 9, 12, 13, 14, 18 & 19) respectively. However, 2.03% of the respondents did not have any preference as their children are yet to be born to them.

**6.2.3 NECESSITY OF EDUCATION & VIEWS OF THE RESPONDENTS REGARDING ITS IMPORTANCE:** When the respondents were asked about the necessity of education in their life and living almost everyone (99.66%) gave their consent in affirmation; however, 0.44% of the respondents did not mentioned anything.

The respondents were further inquired to elucidate their views regarding the importance of education and they were asked that 'why do you think that education is important?' The answer to this question shows some interesting findings:

- About 45% of the respondents told that education has given new impetus to their lives and living, they have been empowered to secure jobs and to lead a decent life.
- 25.47% of the respondents opined that education has given them social position and they have imbibed traditional values by virtue of it.
- The rest 29.53% of the respondents admitted that education has given them freedom and strengthened the decision making ability.

**6.2.4 SHOULD WOMEN GO FOR HIGHER EDUCATION?** There is no denying the fact that education in the contemporary world has become crucial for everyone irrespective of caste, creed, religion, sex, class, so on and so forth. Still it should be kept in mind that education itself gets affected by the social forces as well. The working women of the study area have already shown positive sign towards education. Literacy level among women is quite impressive. Out of the Total Female Population (38,921 women) of the CBT, the number of Female Literates are 32,350; representing 83.12% as per 2011 Census. About 92% of the working women under study in the CBM are literates. More than one-half section of the respondents (54%) has attained higher education (i.e. Graduates, Post-graduates, Ph. D, M. Phil, Diplomas etc.).

**Differences of opinion:** The respondents were asked that whether Women should go for Higher Education or not; the answer was quite predictable. Almost 90.21% of the working women under

study said in confirmation. On the contrary, 9.79% replied in negation. The reasons were further enquired and it led to the insight of the differences of opinion:

- Some of the respondents opined that though education has practical implication upon everyone's life yet, higher education imposes threat to simple living. In other words, a highly educated girl does not show willingness to marry a person having low educational qualification. It is sometimes seen that a Post-graduate woman stays single throughout her life.

The following table (Table 6.2) displays an interesting outcome of the survey. Out of the total number of the respondents the unmarried sample represents 16.38% (table no. 4.2 of Chapter IV). These unmarried respondents under study were classified according to their age groups and educational qualifications. It was revealed that the assumption just made above stands almost

**Table: 6.2 Educational Qualifications of the Unmarried Respondents of CBT**

Educational Qualifications	Young (18-28 years)		Matured (29-49 years)		Aged (50-65 years)		Unmarried Respondents of all Age Groups	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
<b>Can Sign</b>	1	0.53	18	20.45	0	0	19	6.53
<b>V-VIII Std.</b>	9	4.81	5	5.68	2	12.50	16	5.50
<b>X-XII Std.</b>	16	8.56	7	7.95	2	12.50	25	8.59
<b>Graduates &amp; P.G</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>42.78</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>38.64</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>62.50</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>42.61</b>
<b>Technical</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>37.97</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>27.27</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6.25</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>32.99</b>
<b>Others</b>	10	5.35	0	0	0	0	10	3.44
<b>Illiterates</b>	0	0	0	0	1	6.25	1	0.34
<b>Total</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>100</b>
Total no. of unmarried respondents = 291 working women								

Source: Field Survey, 2014

correct, as the proportion of the highly qualified respondents (42.61% of Graduates & Post-graduates and 32.99% of respondents having technical qualifications such as Advocacy, Medical, Engineering, Polytechnic etc.) outnumber all the other groups irrespective of age. Even if the Young Age Group is not considered (since they still have the chance of getting married), the proportion for the unmarried Graduates, Post-Graduates and Technically educated respondents are more.

- Some other respondents stated that highly educated women refrain themselves from household chores of cleaning, washing, cooking, even child bearing and parenting.
- A respondent also added that education empowers women to get job but sometimes the job demands the employed women to remain outside the house for long hours, this may sour the family relations.

#### **6.2.5 PERCEPTION OF THE NON-WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS EDUCATION:**

The perception of the non-working women in this regard complements the research inquiry. The different aspects of study can be summarized as follows:

- With regard to the Educational qualification of the non-working women, it may be said that the sample shows incidence of highly educated women like that of the working women of the study area. Among the non-working women, 58% of the sample has been represented by the Graduates and Post-graduates. 30% of this group has completed schooling of Classes X and XII levels. The rest 11.67% did not crossed the threshold of schools.
- The non-working women send their children to Bengali Medium Schools mostly (77.33%); on the other hand, the rest 26.67% of the group send their children to the English Medium Schools. So, there remains popularity of the Bengali Medium Schools for both the cases of the working and non-working women of the study area.
- While looking for the preference of the working women for the medium of instructions in schools, almost 90% of the non-working category voted for the English Medium Schools. While the rest of the lot prefers Bengali Medium Schools.
- The reasons for such preference was also asked to the house wives whereby they opined that they prefer English as the medium of instruction in schools because it facilitates higher studies (31.67%); it enables one to communicate properly (8.33%); it adds smartness to the personality (8.33%). About 51.67% of the housewives nominated for all the three options while 5% of them did not mention their choice.
- Most of the non-working women (83.33%) send their children to co-education schools of the study area. The 10% and 6.67% of the housewives send their children to the Boys' Schools and Girls' School respectively. The reflection on this issue also has similarity with that of the working women's family.

- Cent percent of the housewives felt the necessity of education in their life and living. About 53.33% of them summarized that it is necessary for getting a job; 45% felt that education helps in gaining knowledge, only 1.67% felt for both. In this respect, the working women portrays a more mature and pragmatic connotation of education than the non-working women.
- It is obvious that the non-working respondents would go for the necessity of higher education since they themselves are mostly educated with superior degrees. As per expectation, 98.33% of this group opined for the motion. A meager proportion (1.67%) of the sample did not support the idea.

**6.3 PERCEPTION OF THE WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS MARRIAGE:** The institution of Marriage is of utmost significance in a country like ours. The concept of ‘Marriage’ in the Indian society acts as a cementing factor complementing the basic social unit i.e. the Family. Of the various roles that are played by man, the economic roles and the marital roles are most significant to him. His entire life finds connotation by these two roles. The popular concept of marriage holds that it is a union between a man and a woman. It may be explained differently by different group of people: the anthropologists view it as the social sanction of the union; the sociologists think it to be a system of roles and primary relationships while some think it to be the *Dharma* (righteousness or the performance of duty). While explaining the concept of Marriage, Ahuja (2013: 118) opines that ‘Primary relation in marriage performs two important functions: one of need gratification and other of social control. It gratifies biological (sexual satisfaction), psychological (affection and sympathy) and economic (food, clothing and shelter) needs of the individuals and also acts as a primary source of morality and ethics’.

**6.3.1 WHY MARRIAGES ARE CONSIDERED AS SACRAMENT?** Since 90.66% of the respondents are Hindus by religious affiliation, the philosophy of the Hindu marriage was delved into. The Hindu marriages are popularly considered as sacrament because of few reasons:

- a) Because it aimed at *Dharma* towards the fulfillment of the religious duties of an individual.
- b) Because it involved certain rituals and rites and considered to be religious in nature.
- c) Because the rites were being performed in front of the *Agni*, the sacred God of Fire of the Hindus symbolizing purity.

- d) Because the union between the man and the woman was considered as permanent and irrevocable throughout life and even beyond that.
- e) Because it was the only ritual that could be performed by women in her entire life unlike their spouses, is considered to be of utmost importance.
- f) Because marriage has been considered to be a 'social duty' rather than individual aspiration and interest.

**6.3.2 THE CHANGE IN THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE:** The traditional society has seen marriages undertaken to solve certain practical problems also apart from there being love and companionship between spouses: people wanted children for economic reasons; they wanted more women to work on fields so they under took marriage (polygamy in some cases). As of now, the traditional society having been transformed into modern, those practical reasons for marriage have been reduced in importance. Marriages are conceived as an escape from loneliness, rather going for 'companionship' or 'comradeship'. That does not exclude the object of sex- gratification from its scope (Ibid: 120). The need gratification in today's concept of marriage comes secondary to companionship.

Thus, the basic premises of marriage are found to have changed: 1) Marriages are no longer thought to be a sacrament rather a companionship; the hierarchical relationship between the husband and wife are transforming into egalitarian ones and 2) Marital relations no longer remain irrevocable, divorce is sought as the last resort when marital obligations are not fulfilled. 3) Widow re-marriage has become sanctioned but it still remains as uncommon practice. 4) Freedom of mate selection has trickled in the contemporary society, but it does not destroy the stability of marriage.

A new trend in the process of mate selection especially in the urban society among educated youths belonging to middle and upper economic classes has set in. The parents select the partners for their children and they are permitted to meet before marriage in order to know each other. The process of interaction helps them to perceive about the personality, choice, tolerance, joviality, attitude towards family etc. and this helps them to take decision for undergoing marriage with him/her. The more they interact, the more they become confident about their future married life.

Thus the concept of marriage has been found to get transformed through time. A woman's role and status are integrally connected with marriage and family. Changes in the structure and organization of marriage and family will have a deep and lasting influence on the changing role and status of woman (Astige, 2006: 94). With the commencement of urbanization and modernity the livelihood of the women, their exposure and interaction to the outer world, their gainful employments have contributed to develop an entity of their own. So, the researcher wanted to examine the perception of the working women of the study area regarding the institution of marriage through their experiences.

**6.3.3 MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS:** The sample under consideration when classified as per the marital statuses show the preponderance of the Married respondents (72.93%) as evident in Table no. 4.2 in Chapter IV. 19.59% of the respondents are singly living working women in the study area. This group is composed of the unmarried, widowed and divorced working women representing 16.38%, 2.70% and 0.51% of the sample respectively. However, a proportion of 7.48% of the respondents have been designated as the Not Mentioned group which includes Sex Workers representing 2.53% of the sample.

Since the married respondents represent the lion share of the sample under study, it may be inferred that the working women of the CBT prefers a stable married life and kin relations. The presence of singly residing working women, though found to occur in small proportion (19.59%), point towards the independent living of the working women in the study area.

**6.3.4 AGE AT MARRIAGE:** The age at which women gets married may be designated as one of the major indicator for the present study. Early marriages in the Third World socio-cultural setup lead to maximum number of child births; subsequently it escorts the family to critical living standards and finally upto the 'Vicious Cycle of Poverty'. In India, though the government has endorsed the marriage age for the females at 18 years and 21 years for the males, there are defiance found at places. This ratification of the age of marriages is important to have a hold on to the fertility and population growth. Generally in towns, it is seen that women after the completion of their education enters into employment. After financial establishment they go into marriages and family. In pursuance of education and employment, the women reach almost in late twenties in age. Moreover, the working women owing to her occupation prefer less number

of children. Therefore, on the whole, population growth becomes reduced as a contribution from the urban educated working women.

Since the whole of the universe represents the working women only, the proportion of the sample entering early family life constituted by 24.31% of working women of  $\leq 18$  years reveals the aspiration of the women to supplement their family income and augment their living standards. It

**Table: 6.3 Marriage Age of the Respondents**

Sl. No.	Age at Marriage ( in Years)	Frequency	%	Remarks
1	$\leq 18$	432	24.31	Early Marriage
2	<b>19-24</b>	<b>572</b>	<b>32.19</b>	<b>Optimum Age of Marriage</b>
3	<b>25-30</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>33.77</b>	
4	31-36	72	4.05	Late Marriage
5	$\geq 37$	16	0.90	
6	Could not tell	85	4.78	-
Total		1777	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2014

also reflects their mind-set of sharing the financial responsibility of the family complementing with that of their spouses. Table 6.3 shows that majority of the sample (65.96%) of the working women entered into married life between 19-30 years of age which may be referred to as the optimum age of marriage for the women. This age group also denotes that the respondents are economically active. Since the majority of the respondents initiate their conjugal life at the optimum age, it may be deduced that the respondents under study are able to take right decision at right time which help them to strike balance between career and personal life. Dr. Singhal (2003: 25) remarked in her study that ‘in urban society, majority of educated women try to get gainful employment immediately after completing their education. Nowadays, more and more women with higher education are trying to get paid employment’, it corroborates with the present study as well. The present study however, does not confirm with the statement of Dr. Singhal that many of the working women discontinue their jobs after getting married; which might be true for metropolises. Late marriages however are infrequently represented by 4.95% of the sample in the study area.

**6.3.5 TYPE OF MARRIAGE UNDERGONE:** Out of the total sample, 76.13% of the respondents got married. Of this proportion, 1296 working women were found currently married; 09 were found divorced and 48 of them were widows.

Before going into the analysis, the terms ‘Arranged Marriage’ and ‘Marriage by Own Selection’ or ‘Love Marriage’ needs to be clarified. Here, mention may be made by the connotation given by Dr. Astige in her work (2006). She explains that Arranged Marriages are negotiated and approved by the parents and guardians or kin members of the bride and the groom without their consultation. On the other hand ‘Love Marriage is a form of marriage in which the boy and the girl interact with each other and develop a relationship on the basis of personal likes, common interests and finally decide to marry without considering the desires and wishes of the parents or guardians, sometimes much against the will of the parents’ (Astige, 2006: 99). The researcher during the field survey revealed that both the types of marriages have undergone metamorphosis in their character. The ‘Arranged Marriage’ has now become more malleable as the parents/guardians or kin members finds a match and they are allowed to interact before marriage. Through several meetings and interactions both the bride-groom get to know each other and they get married subsequently. Here, one thing must be kept in mind that the parents finalize the marriage on the first hand and then only the interaction between the would-be couple could be allowed. On the other hand, ‘Marriage by Own Selection’ has also undergone certain modifications; a boy and a girl develop a relationship by interacting with each other, when they decide to get married, they inform their parents about their choices. The parents of both the bride and the groom come together for the social marriage.

The respondents were asked to point out the marriage type they had undergone. The result of the question has been shown in Table 6.4 which is as follows:

**Table: 6.4 Type of Marriage of the Respondents**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Type of Marriage</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>% (Out of Total Married)</b>
Married	1296	1353 (76.13%)	Arranged	979	72.36
Divorced	09		Own Selection	374	27.64
Widowed	48				
Unmarried	291	424 (23.87%)	<b>Total Married</b>	<b>1353</b>	<b>100</b>
Mutually Separated	133				
<b>Total</b>	<b>1777</b>				

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Coming on to the results of the field study, it was found that 72.36% of the married category of respondents stated that they had undergone Arranged Marriage, whereby their parents negotiated their marriage. The rest 27.64% of the married group reported that they had undergone marriage by their own selection. This shows that despite the respondents are highly educated and employed; they have greater reliance on their families on account of mate selection. Only 27.64% of the respondents have selected their life partners of their own.

**6.3.6 PREFERENCE FOR MARRIAGE TYPE:** Dr. Astige is of opinion that modern youth tend to prefer love marriage as against arranged marriage (2006: 98). She had cited the works of Giriraj Khanna (1978), Kapur (1970) and Giriraj Gupta (1976) who had similar findings. However, the present study differs in the opinion. In this study area concerned, when the respondents were asked about their preference regarding the marriage type, a little more than half of the respondents (53.91%) voted for Arranged Marriage (Table 6.5).

**Table: 6.5 Preference regarding the Marriage Type by the Respondents**

<b>Preference Categories</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Arranged Marriage	958	53.91
Marriage by Own Selection	585	32.92
Both	197	11.09
No Preference	37	2.08
<b>Total</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey

The next group representing 32.92% of the sample preferred ‘Marriages by Own Selection’. 11.09% of the respondents preferred both the marriage types while 2.08% of the sample did not mention their choice. The fact must not be forgotten that 60% of the respondents belong to the Matured Age group of 29-49 years of age. So, the choice is attributed to the experiences of the respondents and was not stated casually.

**6.3.6.1 Reasons for Such Preference:** While the respondents were requested to clarify the reasons for such choices, they had their own points of view for their answers. The respondents who preferred marriages by own selection summarized that they had realized that in this case, the couple gets scope to know each other properly while interacting. Moreover, as they interact, they

come to know about the likings, disliking, personality, choice, tolerance, and attitude towards different situations etc. of each other which paves way for better understanding for the future.

The respondents in support of arranged marriages accounted that both the individuals having lack of experience remain unable to make proper mate selection. They strongly believe that these marriages by own selection does not last long. Moreover, they added that when the parents select the match, they support them throughout their life in all situations. So, in order to insure parental support they were in favour of arranged marriages. Some of the respondents were also of opinion that for the sake of social status and family status they prefer arranged marriages.

**6.3.7 THE ISSUE OF DOWRY AT MARRIAGES:** The practice of dowry is very own to the Indian society and culture. In an ordinary sense, dowry refers to money, gifts, goods or estate that wife brings to her husband in marriage (Ahuja, 2013: 200). It is different from *Kanyadan* (whereby the bride is given as a gift to the groom) and *Stridhan* (the gifts that the bride gets from her natal kin or by her husband at or after the wedding). The amount of dowry depends on a number of factors such as: the social and economic status of the groom and his family, social and economic status of the bride's family, educational qualification of the bridegroom etc. The aspiration to marry in high status and rich family, the non-avoidance of dowry as a social custom, hypergamous marriage (marriage of the bride belonging to a low caste family into a higher caste family) sometimes act as motivations behind dowry. Apart from the dowry, lavish hospitality must be offered to the bride's in-laws from time to time; decoration at the wedding and dinner expenses are all borne by the bride's parents.

Generally, it is believed that educated and employed women are against the practice of dowry (Astige, 2006:101). But there are differences in opinion also. Some researchers have found that in reality when the bride is highly qualified, in order to find a suitable match to ensure a higher standard of living, dowry is encouraged. Therefore, the researcher wanted to know that since the respondents in the study area are highly educated and employed, whether the search for their grooms might promote the practice of dowry.

#### **6.3.7.1 VIEWS REGARDING DOWRY:**

**6.3.7.1.1 Whether the Family of the Respondents had Taken Dowry:** From the above discussion, it may be said that dowry is a social ill but it has become an unavoidable menace which is advertently or inadvertently observed in the society. Though not always it leads to

brutal act of bride-burning, but it instigates lust and greed for money or assets and failing to supply that showers ill-treatment and harassment to the bride. The respondents were asked about whether their in-laws had demanded for dowry during their marriage. About 54.36% of the respondents said that their family did not take dowry at their marriage. 10.58% of the working women admitted that their in-laws had accepted dowry in the form of gadgets and cash during their marriage. 35.06% of the respondent however did not mention their choice. This might be because of some reasons: a) 16.38% of the respondents are unmarried. b) 2.53% of the respondents are sex workers and hence the possibility of dowry does not arise here. c) The rest might not want to divulge about their families taking dowry as it indicates a derogatory practice.

**6.3.7.1.2 Should Dowry be Discouraged?** The next most pertinent question arises. The answer to this question corroborates with the hypothesis that educated and employed working women rejects the practice of dowry. Almost 85.42% of the respondents unanimously discarded the practice of dowry, while 14.58% still favoured it. The group favouring the practice of dowry opined that in order to maintain the family status of the bride-groom dowry should be offered and accepted.

**6.3.7.1.3 Families of the Respondents Supporting Dowry:** The respondents were further enquired about their family's choice in support of dowry. 85.03% of the working women stated that their families did not support the practice of dowry. On the contrary, 14.97% admitted in affirmation as they did not find anything wrong about it

Therefore, this leads the researcher to opine that educated and employed working women in the area under study do not prefer the social evil of dowry. Though the proportion of the respondent's family disregarding it is not an impressive figure (i.e. 54.36%), it may be inferred that in due course of time, when these working women (i.e. 85.42% of the respondents who rejected dowry system) would become the family heads, they would summarily reject this social ill.

**6.3.8 PERCEPTION OF THE NON-WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS MARRIAGE:** The non-working women were also interviewed to exchange their views regarding marriage. They are as follows:

- The marital status of the non-working women shows that they are largely married (98.33%) and their predominance indicate similar kind of findings as that of the working women i.e. they are stable in their marital and kin relations.
- Negligible proportion (1.67%) of this group stays single. These women are unmarried who live with their parents and depend entirely on them for various requirements.
- A small proportion (15%) of the non-working women experienced early marriage ( $\leq 18$  years); maximum proportion of women (81.67%) under this category gets married at their optimum age of marriage ranging between 19 to 30 years; while late marriage (31-36 years) is very rare i.e 1.67% of the sample and the same proportion of the sample were found unmarried. Thus, in short, majority of the non-working women gets married at their optimum age. The urban environment (higher education) might have instigated for getting married at proper age.
- Although the findings show that majority (55%) of the group underwent 'Arranged Marriage' and the rest got married by selecting their life partners by themselves. The difference between the two categories is not so prominent and this may indicate the prevalence and popularity of 'Marriage by Own Selection' as well.
- While comparing the preferences of the non-working women, the proportion favouring 'Marriage by Own Selection' (33%) exceeds that of 'Marriage by Negotiation' (18%). However, 49% of the non-working women did not possess any preference. The sample of the working women and that of the non-working women differs quietly on the ground of marriage preference. The economically autonomous groups showed their reliance upon their parents solely while the dependent group prefers deciding for their own. When they were asked to justify, they unanimously replied that better understanding results from 'Marriage by Own Selection'.
- Coming on to the issue of Dowry, the non-working group overwhelmingly (92%) confirmed the non-receipt of dowry by their in-laws during their marriage.

They (97%) further explained their view that it should be discouraged whole heartedly. The rest 3% were supportive of Dowry. 95% of their families also voted for its abolition.

## **6.4 PERCEPTION OF THE WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS FAMILY:**

**6.4.1 CONCEPT OF FAMILY:** The concept of Family in our country holds the idea of great cohesion and permanence. Even if the members have to leave the family for job or education, they remain in touch with their parents. Ahuja (2013: 24) has defined the Family as a social unit, constituted by a group of persons of both sexes, related by marriage, blood or adoption, performing roles based on age, sex and relationship, and socially distinguished as making up a single household. Ross (1961) sees family as a group of people usually related as some particular type of kindred, who may live in one household, and whose unity resides in a patterning of rights and duties, sentiments and authority. She further makes distinction between four sub-structures of family: a) ecological sub-structures (indicating towards the size of the household and the type of the family), i.e. spatial arrangement of family members and their households, or how relatives or how relatives live geographically close to each other. b) Sub-structure of rights and duties, i.e. division of labour within the household. c) Sub-structure of power and authority, i.e. control over the actions of others. d) Sub-structure of sentiment, i.e. relationship between different sets of members, for e.g. parents and children, husband and wife, siblings and siblings. So, this definition includes the physical, social, economic and psychological attributes of family life and living. Singhal (2003: 3) opines that the structural and functional approaches to family complement each other. The structural approach looks into the family statuses while the functional approach deals with the roles performed by its members.

**6.4.2 THE CHANGES IN THE FAMILY STRUCTURE:** The Joint family system has always existed in India. Karve has recognized five characteristics of traditional joint families like common residence, common kitchen, common property, common family worship and some common kinship relations. It has been found through time the traditional joint family especially in the urban areas have become rarer now. The reasons for such a change may be attributed to two causes; firstly, the change in the structure of the family and secondly, the change in the inter-personal relations of the family members. As a result, the Joint Families have given way to the formation of Nuclear Families or even Neo-Joint Families (explained in Chapter IV). The Neo-Joint Family is of recent origin and is common in all urban areas. In the study area the presence of Neo-Joint Families has also been found the most (see Table no. 6.8). Irrespective of the structure of the family, the family fulfills some basic functions always and the substitution of

family has not yet been possible especially in the country like India. These irreplaceable functions are: economic, sexual, reproductive and educational.

Therefore, it becomes important to analyze the functional aspects of the families in the study area and also to adjudge the efficiency of the working women in performing the household duties. This search would lead to build up the perception of the working women towards the institution of family (the seat for socialization and transference of culture to the generations to come) in the study area. Three functional aspects of family have been earmarked in order to understand the respondents' perception regarding their life experiences.

#### **6.4.3 IN REFERENCE TO FAMILY BUILDING:**

**6.4.3.1 Age at 1<sup>st</sup> Pregnancy:** Age at first Pregnancy is significant in all the studies related to demography and development especially related to the women. This is very important since one may get an idea about the socio-economic stratum (where the food, nutrition etc. of the expecting mother matters), the physiological conditions, the level of education attained and outlook to life reflecting the society and culture to which she belongs.

From the findings of Table no. 6.3 it has been found that the working women mostly (65.96% of the respondents) marry at their optimum age i.e. between 19-30 years. This may lead one to infer that the respondents under study first ensure their career and employment and then go for marriage and family. In due course of the completion of their education and their entry into gainful employment they reach the optimum age of marriage.

The respondents were asked to recall their age at first pregnancy which revealed almost expected results. The following Table (Table 6.3) displays the findings in this regard. As most of the respondents are highly educated and are engaged in white collar jobs mostly, they (61% of the respondents) have entered into pregnancy at the right age between 19-30 years. Late (10.01%) and Over Delayed (6.30%) Pregnancies are found in the study area which may be the

**Table: 6.6 Age of the Respondents at their First Pregnancy**

<b>Age at 1<sup>st</sup> Pregnancy ( in Years)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
≤18	286	16.09	Early Pregnancy
19-30	1084	61	Optimum time of Pregnancy
31-36	178	10.01	Late Pregnancy
≥37	37	2.08	Over Delayed Pregnancy
No Children	112	6.30	-
Total	1777	100	-

Source: Field Survey, 2014

consequence of the careerist attitude of the respondents to whom getting married and settling for the family is not the only goal of life. On the contrary, 16.09% of the working women were found plunged into early pregnancy at less than 18 years of age. This group has been represented by the socio-economically subjugated group. Thus, in this respect, the working women has portrayed matured decision making.

Delay in marriage would lead to lowering of per capita child bearing and fewer children. In this present study, it is found (Table: 6.7) that 39.28% of the respondents have single child; 21.50% have 2 children, 4.73% of them have 3 children; 1.01% of the working women have 4 children

**Table: 6.7 Numbers of Children to the Respondents**

<b>Number of Children</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
1	698	39.28
2	382	21.50
3	84	4.73
4	18	1.01
≥5	5	0.28
No Children	350	19.70
Not yet planned	173	9.74
Total	1777	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

and 0.28% of them have ≥5 children. Some respondents (19.70%) did not have any children and about 9.74% of the respondents did not plan for children during enumeration. Prevalence of single child to the respondents indicates low birth rate of the study area. The per capita child bearing comes to 1 for the study area on the basis of the surveyed data. This confirms the popular notion of ‘delayed marriage and fewer children’.

**6.4.3.2 Intension for more Children and Planned Parenthood:** Another area deserving mention is the intension of the working women for more Children. The respondents of substantial proportion (36.07%) responded in negation. A feeble affirmation was put forward by 4.39% of the working women under consideration. This might be represented partly by those having no children as yet. The rest 59.54% admitted to take the decision jointly.

With regard to family planning awareness, 98.14% of the respondents admitted that they have developed awareness. 96.96% of the respondents have already taken up for birth control measures like that of pills, contraceptives, NSV and even have undergone operation.

This shows that the respondents have significant contribution to planned pregnancy and birth control. Already cited earlier, the words of Menon that can be relevantly applicable as ‘equality in the sphere of sexual relations and with women’s control over reproduction and their own bodies’ goes without saying for the study area (2008:219).

**6.4.3.3 Preference for the Male Child:** Indian society is characterized by patriarchal structure wherein property rights and inheritance are guided by it. Male heir of the family is held high from time immemorial. Mothers giving birth to male child were conferred with added stature while those giving birth to girl child were treated with negligence. The preference for the male child is the root cause behind female infanticide, pre-natal sex determination and forced abortion of the female foetus, bride burning, divorce and so on leading to a lopsided sex ratio. Keeping all these in mind, the respondents were enquired about their preference for the sex of the child (if any). The answers to this question was quantified and found that majority of the respondents (62.46%) has no gender preference for their off-springs (Table 6.8). They said that ‘it was no difference to them in bearing and rearing a girl or a boy since upbringing both is their natural parental duty.’ They remain unbiased in doing so by providing good education, ethical values

**Table: 6.8 Respondents preferring Boys or Girls**

Preference for	Frequency	%
Boys	121	6.81
Girls	545	30.66
No Preference	1110	62.46
Total	1777	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

and culture to them irrespective of their sex. An opposite picture has been revealed rather as almost 30.66% of the working women prefer girl child rather than the boys. These respondents held the view that it is the girls rather than the boys who takes care of the parents at their old age. So, disbelieving in the girls was not right. Only a smaller proportion of 6.81% of the respondents relied upon the traditional belief of inheritance and maintenance of the family lineage by preferring the boys.

Opinion of the husbands and the in-laws in this respect were also noted down. The husbands were found overwhelmingly supporting (91.05%) the respondents in their view regarding this. Contrary to this, their in-laws were found to be less congruent (45.86%) with their daughter-in-laws' ideology. There were some cases of confrontation though meager (1.41% of the respondents), regarding this 'boy-girl' issue between the respondents and their in-laws, which resulted in divorce also. The differences of opinion are probably due to generation gap and outlook of the respondents with that of their in-laws.

**6.4.3.4 Preference for the Type of Family:** The joint family as a predominant form of family existed in India since the ancient times. The closeness of the family members, mutuality in the interests and common familial goal are the salient features of the Joint Families in our country. The status of women in this type of families has remained low. Nuclear Families are of recent in origin and chiefly characterize urban landscapes. Women in the Nuclear Families are seen to enjoy more power and autonomy. According to Dr. Astige, sociologists have been found to differ greatly on the issue of Joint vs. Nucleated families as the present trend in India. Some (Desai and Kapadia) are of opinion that 'the Joint Families has not undergone any basic changes under the impact of modernization' (Astige, 2006: 118). While sociologists like Ross and Goode opined that the joint families are giving way to nuclear families in the urban areas. The dichotomy between these two views remains unresolved since 'it is not clear as to what constitutes a joint or a nuclear family' (Ibid: 118). The concept of Joint family inferred in Astige's work holds significance to the present study. She writes that 'a joint family is a joint family in so far as married brothers live together in the same household. The moment they establish their separate households, the joint family ceases to be a joint family' (Astige, 2006: 119). Nuclear Families strictly composed of husband-wife along with their unmarried children only remain rare in India. Conversely, a nuclear family in Indian context may be composed of husband, wife, and their unmarried children; sometimes it may also include a parent or unmarried brother or sister. The

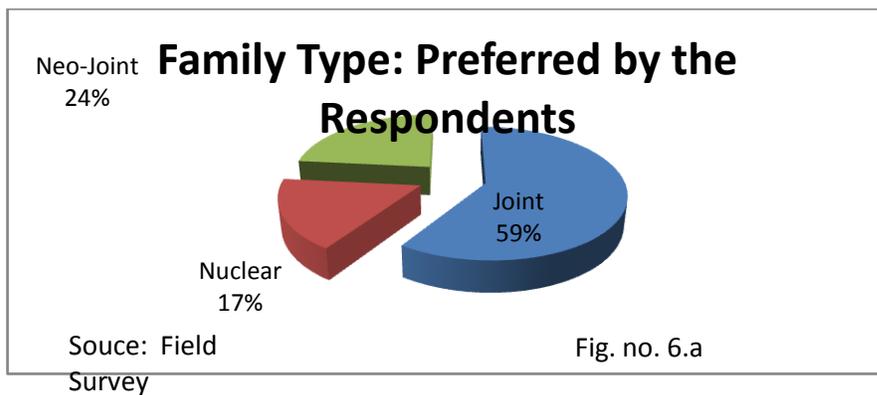
power and authority are usually vested on the husband (son). Even if the son with his wife and children live separately in a distant place, they remain united in kinship obligations especially seen during marriages in family or during medical treatment. So, this new type semi-nucleated yet joint to some extent families can referred to as Neo-Joint Families which now dominates the social structure of the urban areas in India.

**Table: 6.9 Types of Family of the Respondents**

Types of Family	Frequency	%
Joint	306	17.22
Nucleated	228	12.83
Neo- Joint	1119	62.97
Single Dwelling	81	4.56
No Family (Sex workers)	43	2.42
<b>Total</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2014

As evident from the Table 6.9, most of the respondents (62.97%) were found residing in the Neo-Joint Families (just mentioned above), while about 17.22% of the respondents were found staying in the Joint Families and Nucleated families were represented by 12.83% of the working women under study. These nucleated families are composed of only husbands and wives; who have started living seperately to avail residence within vicinity to their workplaces. 4.56% of the respondents lived singly in rented house for the same reason. However, 2.42% of the respondents did not have family as they are sex workers.



Preference of the working women regarding the family type has come up while interviewing them. As displayed in the Fig. no.6.a, it is clearly seen that about 59% of the respondents preferred staying in Joint Families. 24% of the representation voted for Neo-Joint Families and

the remaining 17% preferred Nuclear Families. The most significant finding in this respect is the preference of the working women (59%) for the Joint Family system. The respondents largely stay in the Neo-Joint Families where they can get more status and can exercise their autonomy regarding household decision making; despite this they wish for a Joint Family as they felt that the members of the joint family have a better eye on the children when the parents remain outside owing to their jobs. Moreover, the respondents could get assistance in the daily household chores. In short, they believed in the utility and benefits of the Joint Families.

**6.4.4 PERFORMANCE OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES:** Since time immemorial, gender-stereotyping for all the activities in every society was a common feature. The strenuous works were taken up by the males while cooking and serving of food, child bearing and rearing, caring for the sick and aged were the main concerns of the females. Slowly with the passage of time, the technological know-how increased and it led the civilizations to enter into a newer complicated world. Urbanization process modified the prevalent landscape. Population increased and migrated to better locations. The females started getting modern education and the new horizon of the job market opened before them. They started getting employment which facilitated the financial aspect of their families. Thus the women have been found to enter into the labour market which was monopolized by men. In spite of being employed, the women were never found dissociated from the household activities. Apart from the daily household chores now the women got themselves engaged in outside activities also mounting extra work load upon them. Now the working women started confronting dilemma for the public and the private lives; especially, when the child rearing issue comes to the fore front. They strive for assistance from their family members. Sometimes, they get co-operation of the family in performance of the domestic activities and sometimes they experience a harder luck. As Astige quotes Indiradevi (1987) in her work, ‘the employment of women creates a situation for the emergence of joint roles compared to the segregated roles’ (Astige, 2006: 143). Her assertiveness gets established in home management with her employment. But to what extent she gets an egalitarian sharing of household duties is a question to think upon.

The working women of the study area were interviewed in detail about their daily domestic activities. They were enquired about the assistance from other family members regarding their household works and the findings have been put up in a tabular form in Table 6.10.

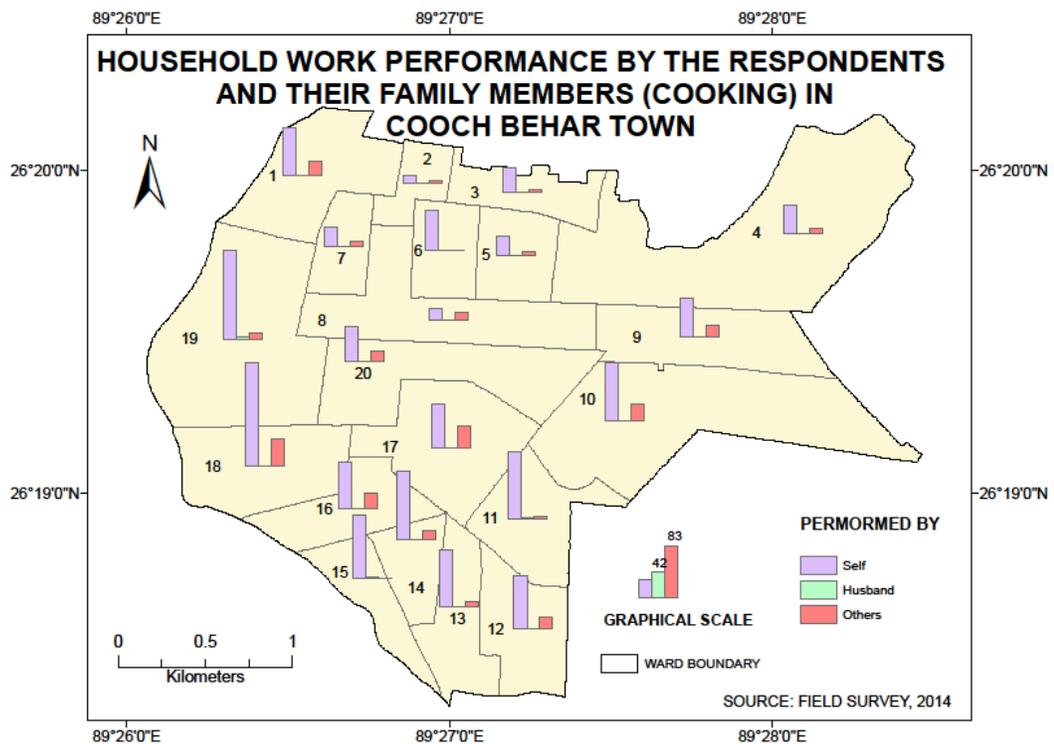
**Table: 6.10 Regular Domestic Chores showing relative comparison with the Respondents & Other Family Members**

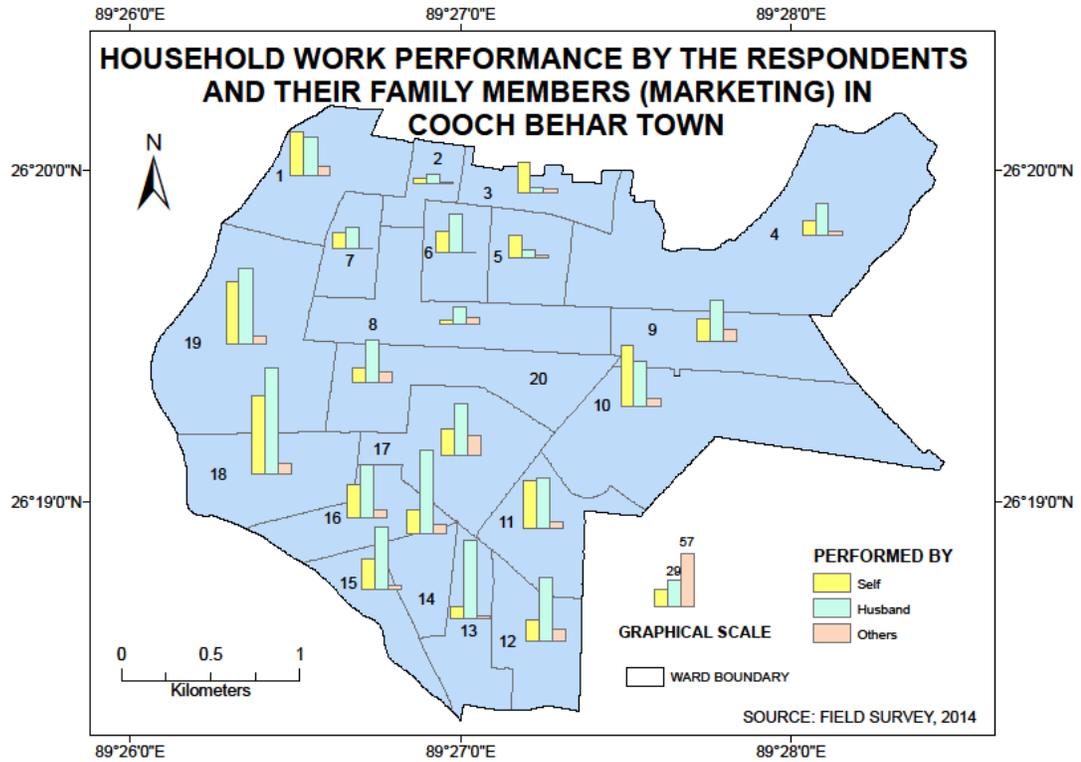
Domestic Chores	Respondents	Husbands	Others
Cooking	1479 (83.23)	8 (0.45)	290 (16.32)
Marketing	636 (35.79)	992 (55.82)	149 (8.39)
Cleaning & Washing	1096 (61.68)	69 (3.88)	611 (34.38)
Caring Aged	1391 (78.28)	290 (16.32)	96 (5.40)
Caring Children	1228 (69.11)	459 (25.83)	90 (5.06)
Dropping Children to School	1021(57.46)	639 (35.96)	117 (6.58)
Paying of Bills	477 (26.84)	1208 (67.98)	92 (5.18)

Note: The figures in parenthesis indicate the percentage

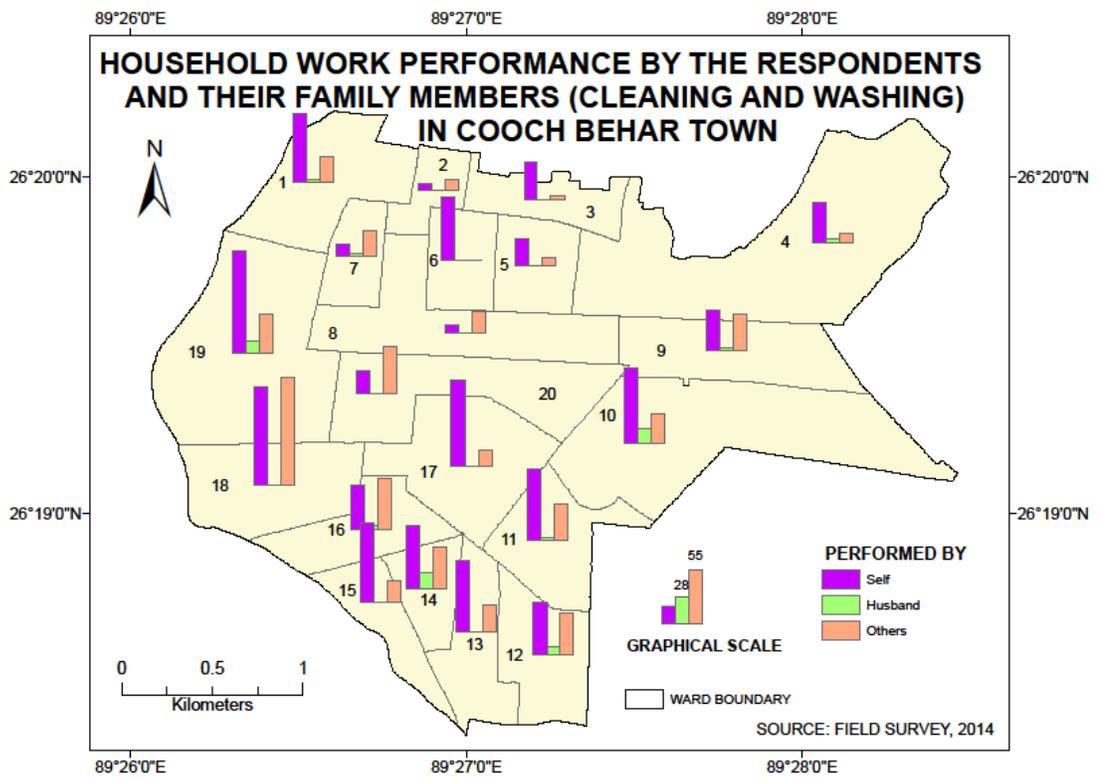
Source: Field Survey, 2014

Several categories of domestic works have been chosen for the study which included 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.). The table also helps in the comparison of the work performances of the respondents with that of their husbands and other family members (including in-laws, own parents, brothers or sisters, sons, daughters and maids). This would help one to know about the work load of the respondents apart from their services outside and the proportion of the work shared by the rest of the family members.

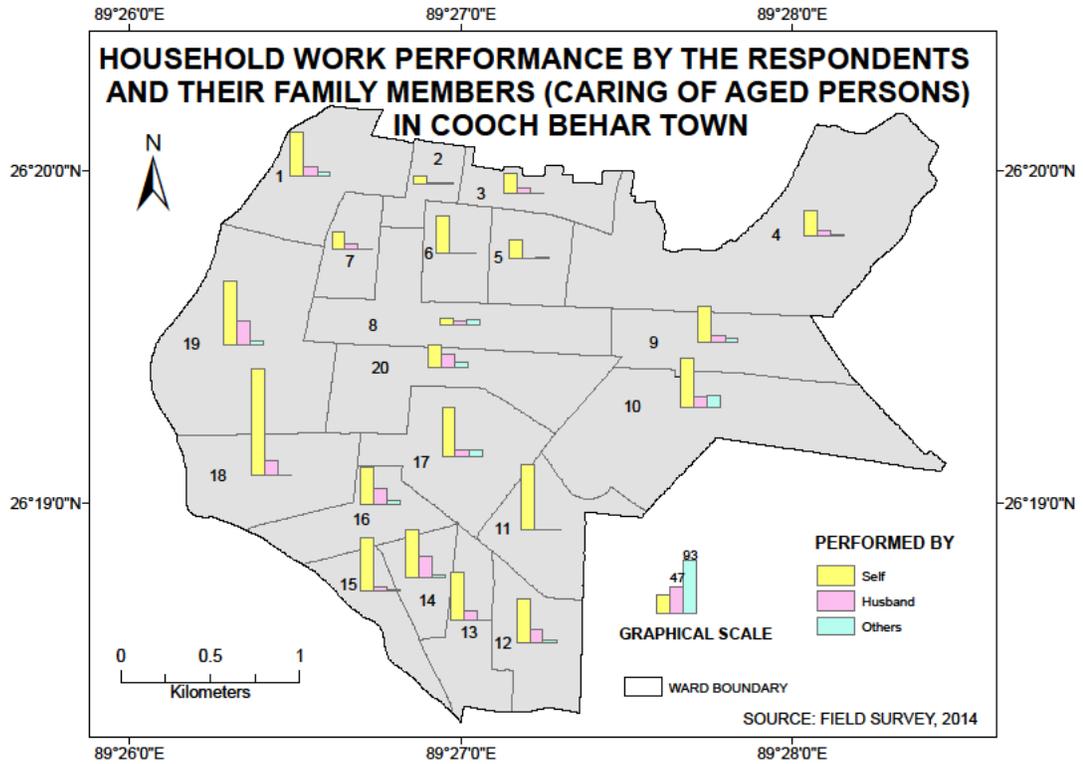




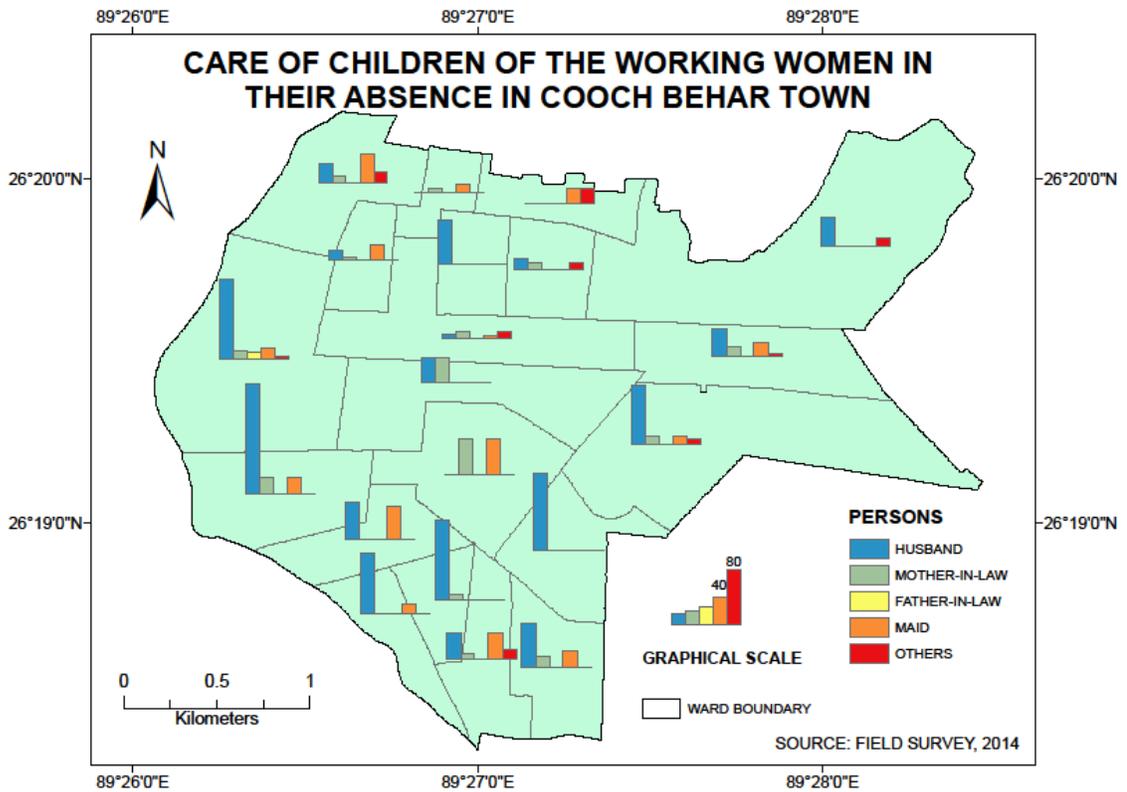
**Map No. 6.4**



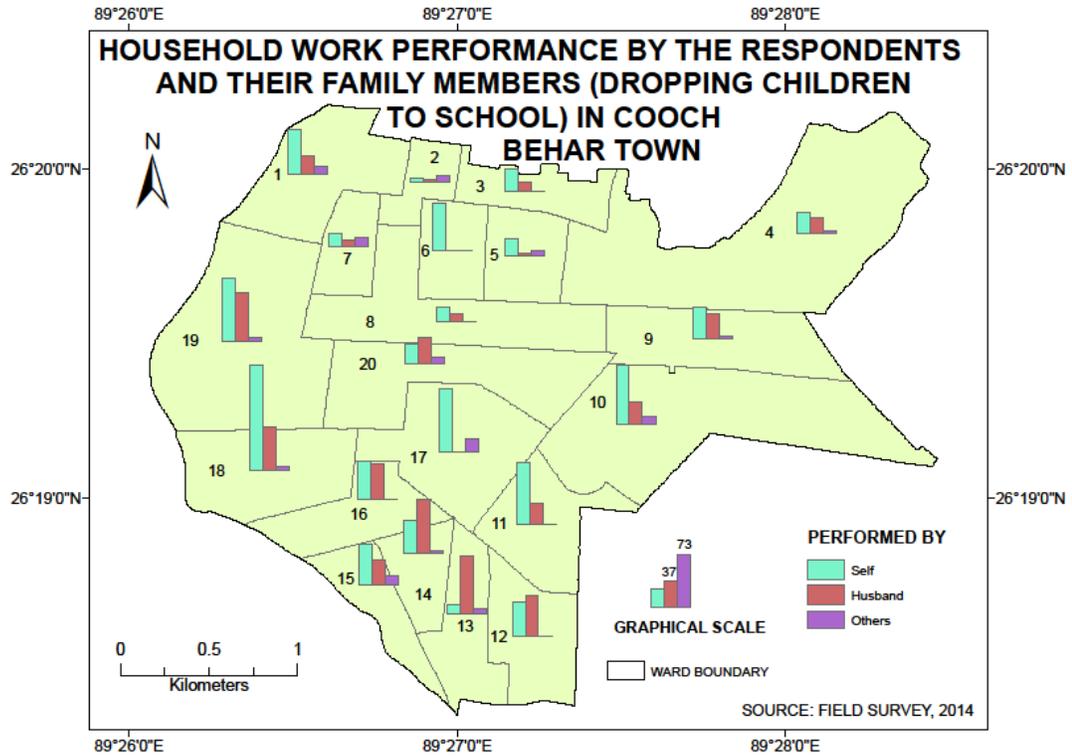
**Map No. 6.5**



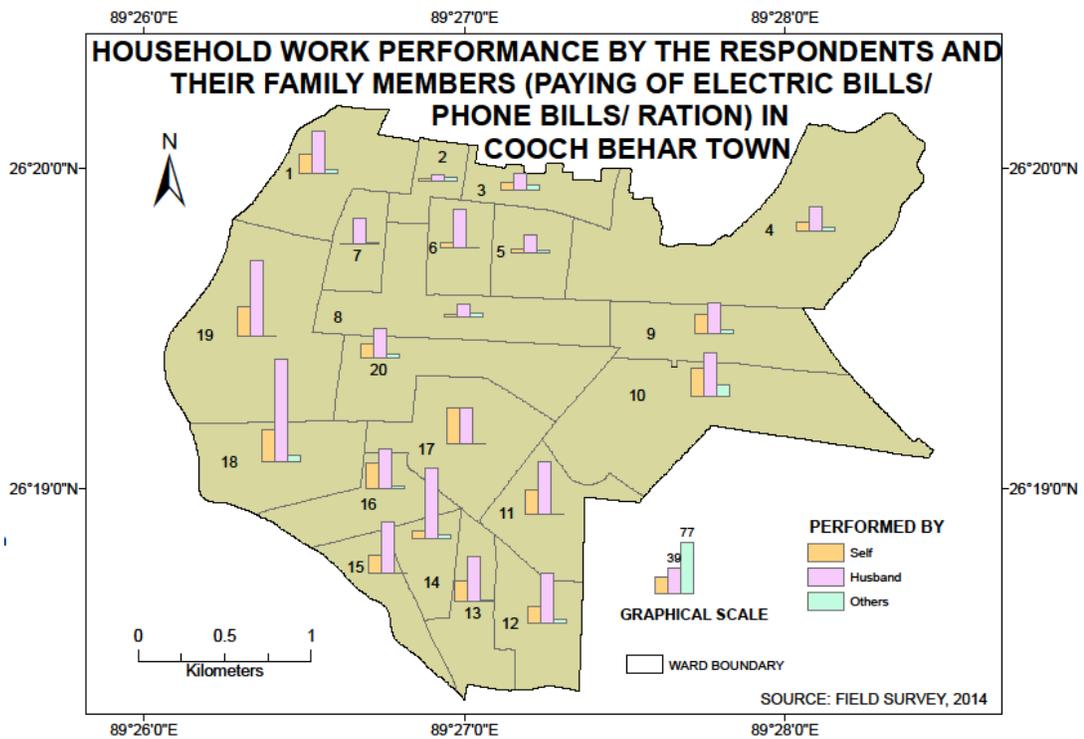
**Map No. 6.6**



**Map No. 6.7**



Map No. 6.8



Map No. 6.9

Performance of domestic chores by the respondents and their family members have been shown diagrammatically in Map nos. 6.3 to 6.9 which reveals the following finding. The working women of the study area dominates in the household activities like Cooking (83.23%), Cleaning of utensils and washing of clothes (61.68%), Caring of aged (78.28%), Care of children (69.11%) and even Dropping children to schools (57.46%). In these activities they receive assistance and support from their husbands, in-laws, own parents, son or daughters, brother or sisters, maids etc. The two areas where the husbands dominate the scene are daily marketing (55.82%) and Paying of different bills to avail civic amenities (67.98%). In case of cleaning and washing activities next to the respondents it is the support group (34.38%) whose assistance is worth mentioning.

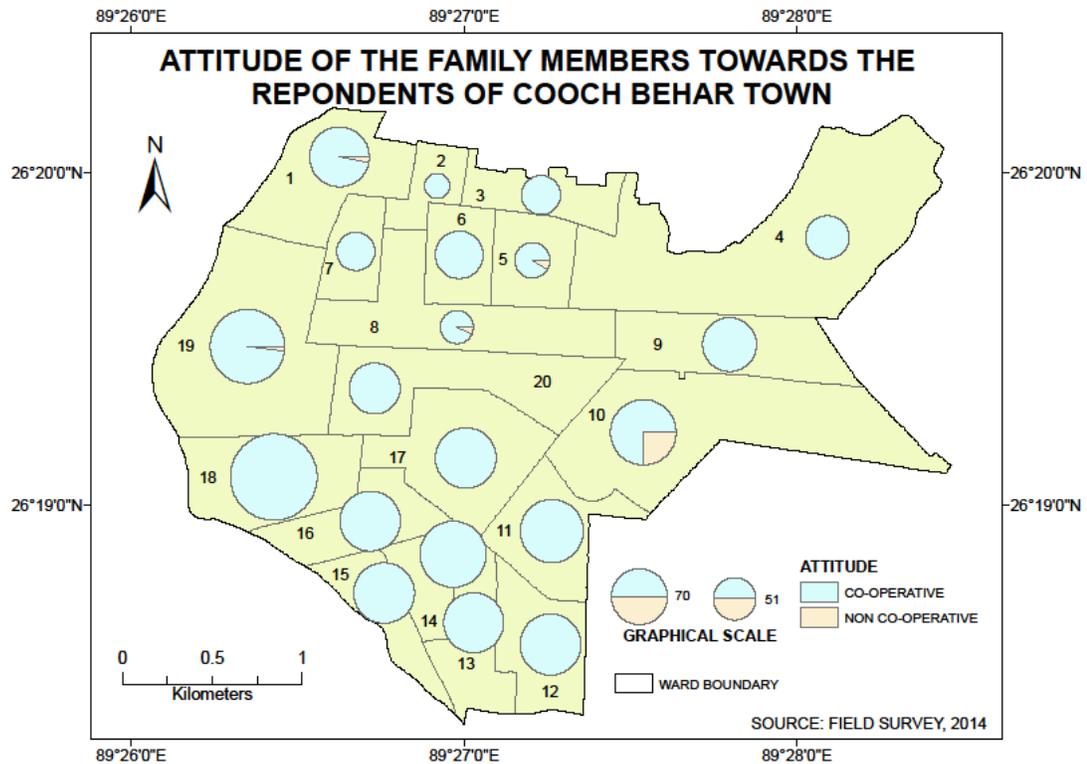
Therefore, a probe into the daily activities apart from the outside works may lead the researcher to conclude that the employment might have emancipated the working women of the study area, but they intensively work in the household as well. This might be a reason that made the respondents to picture about the joint family situation and develop a preference for that expecting more help and shouldering of familial responsibilities.

**6.4.4.1 Do the Respondents Feel Fatigued in doing the Household Chores?** The above finding portrays the tough daily work-out for the respondents; it might make the researcher to think employment (for these women) as a path leading to the inconsiderate division of labour, characterizing 'Patriarchy' squeezing all that could be taken out from them. At this juncture, the respondents were further asked whether they felt fatigued doing all the household activities and outside activities satisfying the dual role of the home maker and the service person. 79.46% of the respondents stated that they did not feel fatigued in doing these aforementioned works as they believe that they are doing for their own family, so they can extend their co-operation to any limit. 20.54% of the working women felt fatigued in doing all the chores so, they have resorted to take the assistance of domestic help.

**6.4.5 IN REFERENCE TO FAMILY RELATIONS:** The family experiences of the working women is intended in the present study to know about the state of mind, stresses or strains, weaknesses and strengths of them since those have implications on the behavioral pattern of the respondents under study. For this, the working women were asked several questions during the survey. The findings have been analyzed which are as follows:

**6.4.5.1 Family Attitude towards Working Women:** It was important to know about the attitude of the family members of the respondents towards the working women. In other words, since ‘working women’ in India is of recent in emergence, whether the family members have favourable attitude towards them reflects their acceptance also. So, the respondents were enquired about the attitude of their family members towards the phenomena of working women. Overwhelmingly, the respondents (96.45%) reported that their families possess helpful attitude towards the working women.

**6.4.5.2 Family Attitude towards the Respondents:** When they were asked about the attitude of their family members towards them as working women, almost equal response was recorded, as 97.69% of the respondents said that their families have accommodating attitude towards them which is evident from the spatial representation in Map no. 6.10. Almost every wards show co-operative attitude towards the respondents.



**Map No. 6.10**

**6.4.5.3 Expectations from the Respondents:** Although the family members have shown co-operative attitude towards the respondents, yet they have a wide range of expectations from them as well especially in doing the household activities. The following table (Table 6.11) depicts the anticipation of the family members towards the respondents. The findings clearly shows that the

**Table: 6.11 Expectations of the Family Members from the Respondents**

Views	Frequency	%	Total %
Respondents should do all household chores	77	4.33	96.06
Respondents should do all outside works	213	11.98	
Respondents should spend all the earnings for the family	52	2.33	
Respondents should bring up their children properly	57	3.21	
All the 4 views	1308	73.61	
Should not interfere with family matters	18	1.01	1.01
No expectations	52	2.93	2.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2014

Respondents' family members (96.06%) really want to see them as a super-human being expecting that they should do all household chores, all outside works, spend all the earnings for the family and bring up their children properly. 2.93% of the respondents told that their families did not have any expectation from them as they usually do whatever is required for their families. The category indicated that the respondents should not interfere with the family matters (!), some family members of the widowed respondents opined that they should remarry at the earliest.

The family members of the respondents are found to expect so much from them and this might be due to their radiant performance at the domestic duties as viewed in Table no. 6.10. The respondents' relentless efforts have raised the expectation level of their household members.

**6.4.5.4 Family Co-operation received by the Respondents:** As far as family co-operation is concerned (mentioned in Chapter IV), the respondents were enquired about it and 54.59% of them stated that they received co-operation from their families. Contrary to this the rest 40.68% said that their family members somehow did not co-operated with them. Here, the researcher

feels that since the respondents have shown their all round performance in the domestic field, the family members did not get the scope of extending their helping hand. However, 4.73% of the respondents did not mention their choice.

**6.4.5.5 Harassment of the Respondents in their Family:** Family life involves duties, expectations, responsibilities, obligations, indebtedness, emotional stress and strain, affection, involvement and bonding apart from the tangible resources. Family members interact continuously and in due course, they sometimes go through confrontation, differences of opinion and even sometimes harassments. The respondents were asked to talk freely about any kind of harassments they face in their households. 84.02% of the respondents said that there were no such cases for them. On the other hand, 6.42% were not satisfied with the behaviour of their family members and they felt they were being harassed experiencing verbal conflicts (mentioned earlier in Chapter IV).

They were further enquired about the steps they had taken for its eradication. Out of 114 respondents (facing harassment), 21% took steps for its eradication. Some of them went for negotiation with the family members, some of them changed their residence, some have stopped all kinds of transactions, some have gone elsewhere for few days etc. Two cases have been found who have filed divorce cases against their husbands.

**6.4.5.6 Family Preferring Working Women as Brides:** So far as the efficiency and responsibility are concerned, the respondents have scored their best. The most evitable question comes into the mind concerning about the working women's acceptability in the present day world and precisely to the study area. So, the respondents were asked about the preference of working women as brides in their families. 95.55% of them answered in affirmation. The reason behind their choice can be summarized as "since the working women remain entrusted to earn money for the family, they are preferred for their income as brides" (a family member of the respondent answered). The rest 4.45% said that their families were reluctant to accept working women as brides because they felt that "working women would only remain concerned with earning money and would be avoiding household activities; furthermore, they would remain outside the house for long hours that would hamper the family" (another working woman submitted).

**HYPOTHESIS 2: The 'private' and 'public' lives of the working women are likely to be in conflict**

Majority (83.23%) of the working women engage themselves to cooking for their families; Marketing including grocery and green grocery (35.79%); cleaning & washing of clothes and utensils (61.68%); the respondents also take care of the aged persons in the family (78.28 %); they contribute 69.11% in taking care of the children; 57.46% of the respondents also drop their children to schools and 26.84% of the working women engage themselves in paying of the bills. Therefore, it is observed that the household chores are mostly shouldered by the respondents and hence they remain as the most responsible in their families.

Employment has not posed hindrance to family life according to 92.91% of the respondents. Furthermore, 93.30% of the sample declared that they did not feel distanced from their husbands and their employment did not come in between their conjugal life. Even in matters of child rearing the respondents remain highly aware (88.91% of the sample) inspite of the pre-occupation by their jobs.

In their workplaces they show their prominence. 89.53% of the working women are satisfied with their job. 86.44% of them participate in the office related functions and recreational programmes. This reflects that they have a developed good relation and have a congenial work environment. However, a small proportion (7.03%) of the working women has upheld dissatisfaction related to their workplaces and has demanded modification there upon.

All the above findings clearly show that the working women under study take up huge workload in addition to their profession. They are found very much involved with family matters as they contribute their earnings to attain the common goals. Apart from working outside, they are found to shoulder much responsibilities especially concerning household duties and tasks. Their relentless efforts and continuous labour to keep both the household and workplace ever functioning are really praise worthy.

Although 97.69% of the working women reported that their families have helping attitude towards them but 54.59% of the sample reported that they have received actual co-operation from their families. However, the most commendable endeavor comes up from the findings which concern the husbands of the respondents. The husbands of the working women have

shown their co-operation and a helping attitude. So, the support from the husbands might help in the psyche of the working women and as a result they are found to get onto excessive work load in the family. Though it seems that the 'private' and the 'public' lives of the working women remain smooth sailing but actually the cost is paid by the working women by her inexorable efforts to maintain both ends. They seem to remain unaware of the herculean task they endure. So, it revealed that the 'private' and 'public' lives of the working women are likely to be in conflict.

**6.4.6 PERCEPTION OF THE NON-WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS FAMILY:** Family is the basic social unit in every society. It has a deep connotation to each and every social being as the socialization process is initiated in itself. The working women remains detached from their families for quite some time in a day owing to their jobs while the non-working women stays at home and spends more time with her family. So, the perception of the non-working group becomes equally important for the present study.

- It is already noted that the non-working women also possess higher education and this might have helped them to understand the relevance of getting married at the right age; so they are mostly (81.67%) found to enter the married life between 19-30 years. This has a sequential impact upon the child bearing also. 62% of the non-working group has been found to get pregnant for the first time at this age (between 19-30 years). Although early marriages leading to early pregnancies are found, but the proportion is very low i.e. only 7%. Late pregnancy of  $\geq 31$  years are also found among a handful (8%). About 25% of these women are yet to enter pregnancy and are found child less during the survey.
- Contrary to the working women, 65% of the non-working women showed enough boldness to submit that they did not want further children. 30% of them answered in affirmation. While only 5% admitted that they prefer taking decision jointly on this issue. The non-workers in this respect have been found to be more decisive than that of the working women under study.
- 82% of the category of non-working women reported that they do not possess any preference for the male-child. While 10% still believed on the family lineage and preferred boys. The rest 5% did not mention their choice. The large proportion of the non-working women therefore has been found to be progressive in their thinking.

- Neo-Joint families remain popular (80%) for the non-working women of the CBM also. While 15% of the sample reside in nucleated families. Joint families seem to be disappearing with only 3% of the present category of women staying in it. 2% of the sample stays singly.

The type of the family preferred mostly (90%) by the non-working women is Nuclear family. The women have least preference (8%) for Joint Families. 2% prefers both the types. This is again an opposite reflection possessed by the non-working women with that of the working group. The employed women stayed in Neo-Joint families but longed for Joint families. While the non-working group voted for nuclear families. As such Joint Families are diminishing day by day especially at the urban sites, but the inclination towards nuclear families by the non working group indicates that they might have been facing interference from any persons within the family and thus could not exercise their own will.

- Table 4.17 in Chapter IV displays the domestic duty performances by the family members of the non-working women. It was revealed that in cooking, marketing, cleaning and washing, caring for children they extend maximum effort. They share equal standing with that of their husbands with regard to dropping the children to schools. While the husbands mostly pays off the bills to avail different civic amenities.

The working women in all respects (except marketing) showed maximum contribution. Therefore, although employment has imparted economic autonomy to the working women but it has added extra work-load upon their shoulders. Assistance from other members of the family is seen but it is not enough to relieve the working women.

- On the issue of their household performance, the non-working women were asked that whether they felt fatigued on performing the household tasks. 25% confirmed it, 40% said in negation while the rest 35% did not mention.
- The non-working women mostly (93%) found their family members to possess helping attitude towards them even they had a non- working status. 7% of them only received non-cooperation from their family members.
- The families of the non-working women mostly (60%) expects that the housewives should do all household chores, should do all outside works, should spend all the earnings for the

family and should take care of the young, aged and sick persons. 37% of the families of this category prefers the second option i.e. the housewives should do all outside works also; the next two options have been the choice for 2% of the families for each. Thus, it may be inferred that either the women is a working or a non-working one, the family expects to do her all the works that could be done by her. So, employment is not making any difference here.

- Overwhelming co-operation (87%) as per the non-working women are received from their families. Only 13% of them opined a reversed story.
- There occurs almost no harassment (82%) in the households of the non-working women; 10% admitted that they are being harassed verbally by their family members. While 8% did not mention their choice.
- On the issue of preference for the working women as brides to the families, the non-working women said that 55% of the sample has the preference. 38% did not support the women to get employed and 7% did not mention their choice.

**6.5 PERCEPTION OF THE WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT:** Men and women both have always worked through the history of human civilizations but it differed in the area, nature, location, execution, performance, tools and techniques and so on. Women's work has always contributed to the national economy, but gender stereotyping of work might be attributed for all the confusion what so ever regarding its recognition. Singhal (2003:21) aptly stated that "Women workers play a necessary and important role in the economic structure of our country and have done so throughout its history but their efforts and accomplishments have not been recognized. They have been invisible workers." She further recognized three types of traditionally performed economically productive work done by women after Mathur (1992). These are: (1) home based production activities having exchange value in the market; (2) home based production for family consumption and (3) paid employment outside the home. As a consequence to the Industrial Revolution, proliferation of the third category has been noticed the most especially in the Occident. The structural changes in the family and in the social frame at large liberated women (though the patriarchal pattern prevailed) to adapt the modern lifestyle, to occupy jobs and to become economically independent to some extent. The colonial rule in India

ushered in modern education and general social awakening. Women were no exception to have experienced the changes taking place in the then society predominantly in the urban areas. Gradually, people became convinced about the necessity of education and employment for the women outside the residential premises.

**6.5.1 WORK DEFINED ACCORDING TO CENSUS 2011:** ‘Work’ may be designated as getting something in lieu of service. This something is related to pay, personal profit or family gain which a person requires for sustenance. The current Census has defined work and other key concepts related to it.

Work is defined in 2011 Census as ‘participation in any economically productive activity with or without compensation, wages or profit. Such participation may be physical and/or mental in nature. Work involves not only actual work but also includes effective supervision and direction of work. It even includes part time help or unpaid work on farm, family enterprise or in any economic activity. All persons (irrespective of age and sex) who participated in any economically productive activity for any length of time during the reference period are defined as workers. Normally, production for self-consumption is not treated as ‘economic activity’ ([http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/HLO/Metadata\\_Census\\_2011.pdf](http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/HLO/Metadata_Census_2011.pdf)). For the purpose of census a separate designation has been made in the case of persons who are engaged in growing of crops (except plantation crops), rearing of animals and milk production for self-consumption. These persons have been referred to as economic activity (16). ‘Reference period for determining a person as worker and non-worker is one year preceding the date of enumeration’ (Ibid).

Main Workers are those ‘who worked for more than 6 months (180 days) in the reference period are termed as Main Workers’ (Ibid).

Marginal Workers are those ‘who worked for less than six months (180 days) in the reference period are termed as Marginal Workers. Marginal workers are further bifurcated into two categories i.e. those who worked for 3 months or more but less than 6 months and those who worked for less than 3 months’ (Ibid).

Non Workers have been referred to ‘A person who did not work at all in any economically productive activity during the last one year preceding the date of enumeration was treated as non worker. This category includes students, persons engaged in household duties, dependents,

pensioners, beggars, etc. provided they were not engaged in any economically productive activity during the last one year preceding the date of enumeration' (Ibid).

**6.5.2 WHY DOES WOMEN SEEK WORK?** The respondents were asked to state the 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.

Natarajan (2013) recognizes two chief reasons for employment in her study with 400 samples of working women. She found that the Financial reasons for the job seekers revolved round some factors like Economic pressures, Other economic needs to help relatives and Attainment of a high standard of living. The Non-financial reasons behind female employment according to her findings were Personality Traits (equating themselves with the men to secure job), to occupy time and to get into the tradition of the family in a specific occupation. The Financial reasons came up with prominence in her study with 77.5% of respondents belonging to this category.

**HYPOTHESIS 1: Financial necessity is not the sole driving force behind female employment for all cases.**

The survey in the study area also included similar type of inquiry and the respondents were enquired about the reasons which forced them to go for employment. The answers have been tabulated in Table 6.12 which reveals that majority of the respondents (86.89%) went for jobs

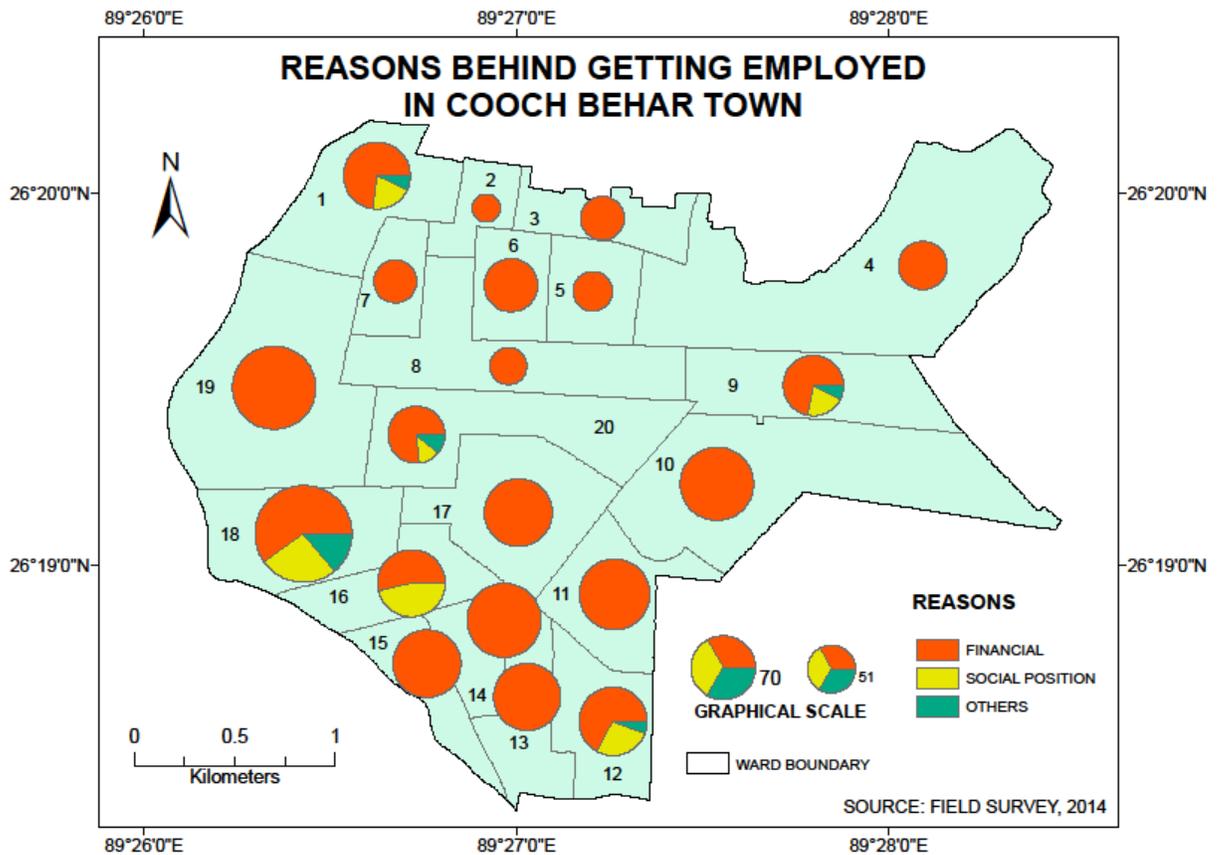
**Table: 6.12 Reasons to Get Employed**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Financial Inadequacy	1544	86.89
To attain Social Position	176	9.90
To follow Family Tradition	57	3.21
To Occupy Time		
<b>Total</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2014

because of the financial inadequacy in their families. About 9.90% of the respondents accounted that they got into services to attain a social position, as women with financial authority is held high in the society. While 3.21% of the working women disclosed that in order to get absorbed into professions related to their family tradition and also to occupy time they had taken up jobs.

The ward wise representation of this in Map no. 6.11 also reveals similar findings. So, financial necessity is attributed as the chief cause behind female employment in the study area. The respondents have stepped outside for supplementing the financial needs of their families. Natrajan (2013) conducted her study in Delhi and Mumbai and findings in this respect corroborates with that of the present study area of Koch Bihar, which was thought to remain secluded being a small urban unit far off from the influence of any big city but it has portrayed all India trend in this aspect.



**Map No. 6.11**

Therefore, from the above table (Table: 6.12) as well as from Map no. 6.11, it is found that though financial necessity largely contributed for the female employment; but it is not the sole reason which acted as the push factor for the same in the study area. Thus the first hypothesis of the study gets proved that *Financial necessity is not the sole driving force behind female employment for all cases.*

**6.5.3 THE SCENARIO OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT IN CBT:** With the census data of 2011, the Female Workers' Intensity Index has been prepared and represented spatially in the map of Cooch Behar Town area (Map no. 6.12). The variables used for the statistical analysis are ward wise number of Female Workers and ward wise Female Population of CBT for 2011. The Female Workers' Intensity Index has been computed by the following formula:

$$\text{Female Workers' Intensity Index} = \sqrt{\frac{x+y}{2}}$$

Where,

$$x = \frac{\text{No of Female Workers in each Ward} \times 100}{\text{Total no of Female Workers in CBT}}$$

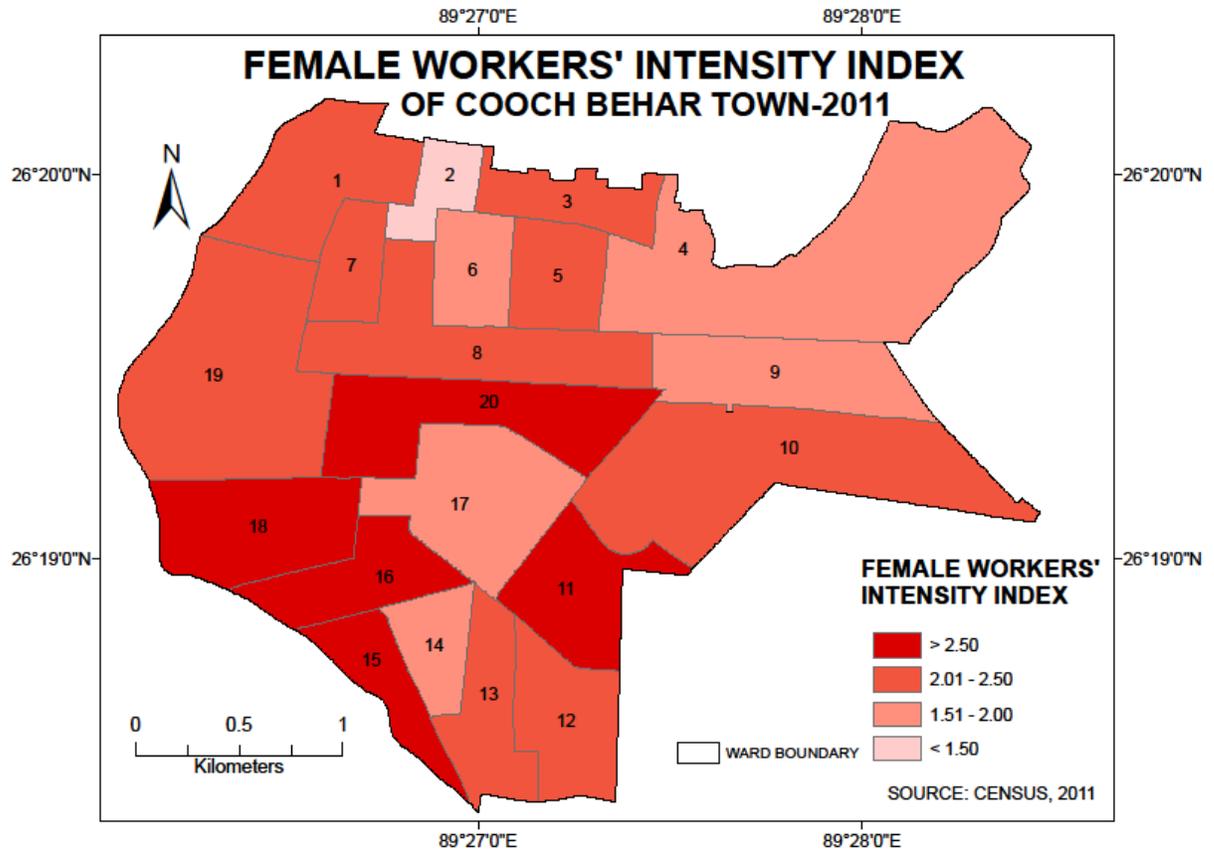
$$y = \frac{\text{No of Female Population in each Ward} \times 100}{\text{Total no of Female Population in CBT}}$$

Inspired by Mandal and Peters (1982: 322-327) in their work "Urbanization and Regional Development", where they have used Rural and Urban Intensity Indices to find out the inequalities in terms of nature and degree in the respective spatial connotations, the present study on Working Women in CBT might throw some light in measuring the inequalities in terms of nature and degree of work participation among the respondents. The scale of Female Workers' Intensity ranges may be tabulated as follows (Table 6.13):

**Table: 6.13 Female Workers' Intensity Score**

Scale of Female Workers' Intensity	Remarks	Ward wise Distribution
≤1.5	Very Low	2
1.51 – 2.00	Low	4, 6, 9, 14, 17
2.01 – 2.50	Moderate	1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 19
≥2.51	High	11, 16, 18, 20

Source: Computed by the investigator on the basis of Census data of 2011



**Map No. 6.12**

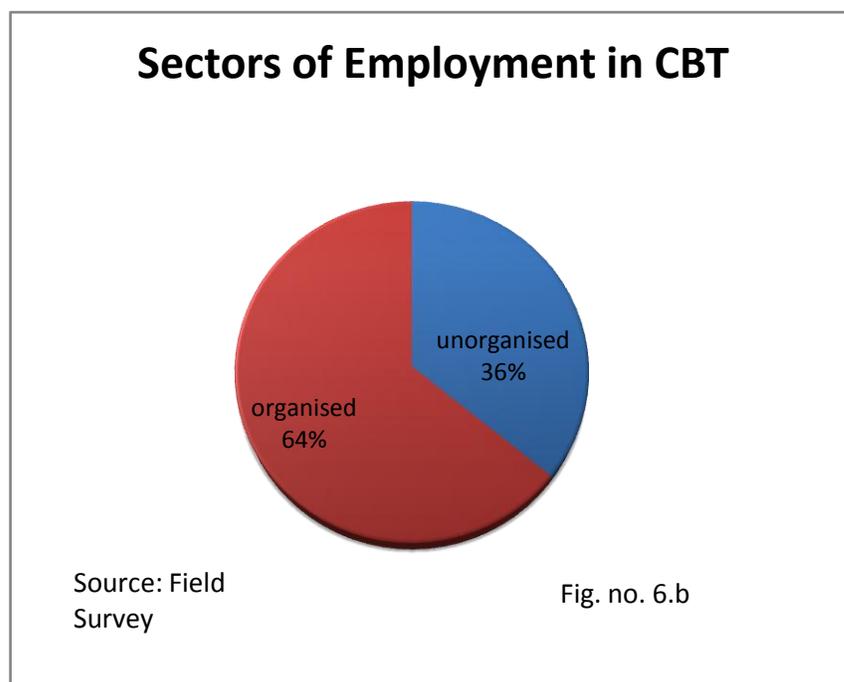
The Female Workers’ Intensity scores ranges from  $\leq 1.5$  to  $\geq 2.51$  and four levels of intensity may be recognized such as:  $\leq 1.5$ , 1.51 – 2.00, 2.01 – 2.50 and  $\geq 2.51$  which are designated as very low, low, moderate and high respectively. Very low level of Female Workers’ Intensity (FWI) is found in ward no. 2. Low FWI can be seen in ward nos. 4, 6, 9, 14 and 17. While Moderate FWI is viewed in ward nos. 1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13 and 19; High FWI is noticed in ward nos. 11, 16, 18 and 20. Therefore, moderate to high FWI is observed mostly in the study area.

To quote a report on female employment some insights might be found towards the inquiry: “The phenomenon of female economic activity and women's employment in each of the segments are main issues in the economy of all developing nations. The economic activity may be classified as organized and unorganized, each of which may be in the formal or informal sector. Participation of women in economic activities in formal sectors of industries, services and agricultural sector is measurable, but activities of women in informal sectors such as house

works, training and education of children, activities in agricultural sectors and household services are still not measurable”.

([http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/reports\\_and\\_publication/statistical\\_publication/social\\_statistics/Chapter\\_4.pdf](http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/reports_and_publication/statistical_publication/social_statistics/Chapter_4.pdf) accessed on 29.06.2018 at 1:34 am.)

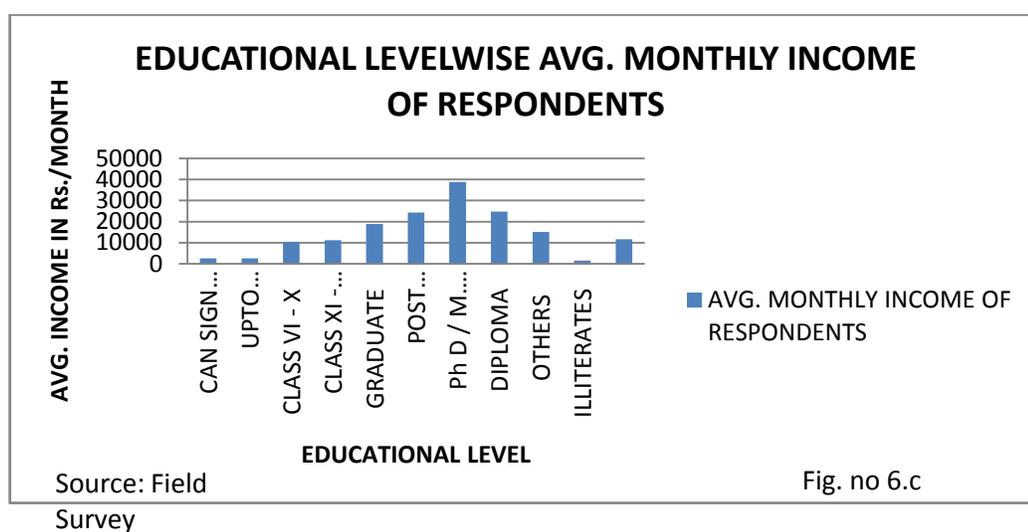
Two sectors of employment could be recognized in the study area the detail of which are discussed in Chapter IV whereby the names of organized and unorganized economic activities were used to designate the salaried and non-salaried employment respectively. The Domestic helpers, Bidi rollers, Self-employed & Part-time workers and the Sex workers are referred to as the Un-organized work force in the present study; while those who work in the Government Offices, Private Companies, Government-Aided sectors Government-undertaking organizations have been referred to as the Organized workers.



The Organized Working Women (61.11% of the respondents) outnumbers the Un-organized Working Women including the not mentioned group represents 38.89% of the respondents in the study area as evident in Fig. no. 6.b. The ward wise distribution of the employment sectors in which the target group has been engaged to are discussed and displayed in Map no. 4.14 in Chapter IV. It also reveals similar findings as that of the total picture in the above figure.

**6.5.4 RESPONDENTS' EDUCATIONAL LEVEL & INCOME:** Keeping pace with the emerging trend, the respondents were found to have inclination for higher education as evident in Fig no. 4.b (Chapter IV) portraying the educational level of the entire CBT area as well as in the ward wise scenario in Map no. 4.11 in Chapter IV. In both the representations, the respondents were found mostly to acquire Graduation and Post-graduation.

Turning the attention on to the monthly income of the respondents, they were sub-grouped under several categories according to their salary per month which can be seen in Table no. 4.5 of Chapter IV. The High (36.52% of the respondents having Rs. 20,001 – 50,000 INR as their monthly income) and Very High (0.73% of the respondents having  $\geq 50,001$  INR as their monthly income) Income Groups predominates the findings with 37.25% of the respondents jointly belonging to this category.



Co-relating the Level of Education and the Average Monthly Income of the respondents of the study area (shown in Fig no. 6.c) it may be inferred that high income ( Rupees 35,000 – 40, 000 INR) is discernible among the respondents having M.Phil and Ph.D as their educational qualification. On the other hand respondents having school level education i.e. upto XIIth Standard gets average monthly income upto a little higher than Rupees 10,000 INR. Moderate average monthly income of Rupees 15,000 - 25,000 is found to be received by Graduate & Post-graduate respondents and also included those having Diploma and other educational

quaifications. Therefore, it may be summed up that higher the level of education, the higher is the income level.

**6.5.5 WORK PARTICIPATION:** As per the mindset in patriarchy, the primary role of women is to look after the home and family, they try to remain associated with the household chores which are ‘uneconomic’ in their character and thus yield least significance in the labour market. As a consequence, the work participation of the women in India is very low. According to Census 2011, the work participation rate at the national level for the females is 25.51% against 53.26% for the males (Shown in Table 6.14). Rural sector has a slightly better picture of female workforce participation rate of 30.02% compared to that of the males 53.03% whereas in the urban sectors it is 15.4 % for the females and 53.76% for the males respectively. The Census figures for the state level data (i.e. for West Bengal) show a total work participation of 38.08% in

**Table: 6.14 Comparison of Work Participation at the National, Regional and Local Levels**

Area	Work Participation Rate (WPR) in %								
	Rural			Urban			Combined		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
<b>India</b>	30.0	53.0	41.8	15.4	53.76	35.31	25.51	53.26	39.79
<b>West Bengal</b>	19.4	57.2	38.7	15.4	56.84	36.89	18.08	57.07	38.08
<b>Koch Bihar</b>	21.43	58.42	40.51	14.17	56.61	35.68	20.70	58.24	40.01
<b>CBM</b>	-	-	-	20.32	78.93	49.63	20.32	78.93	49.63

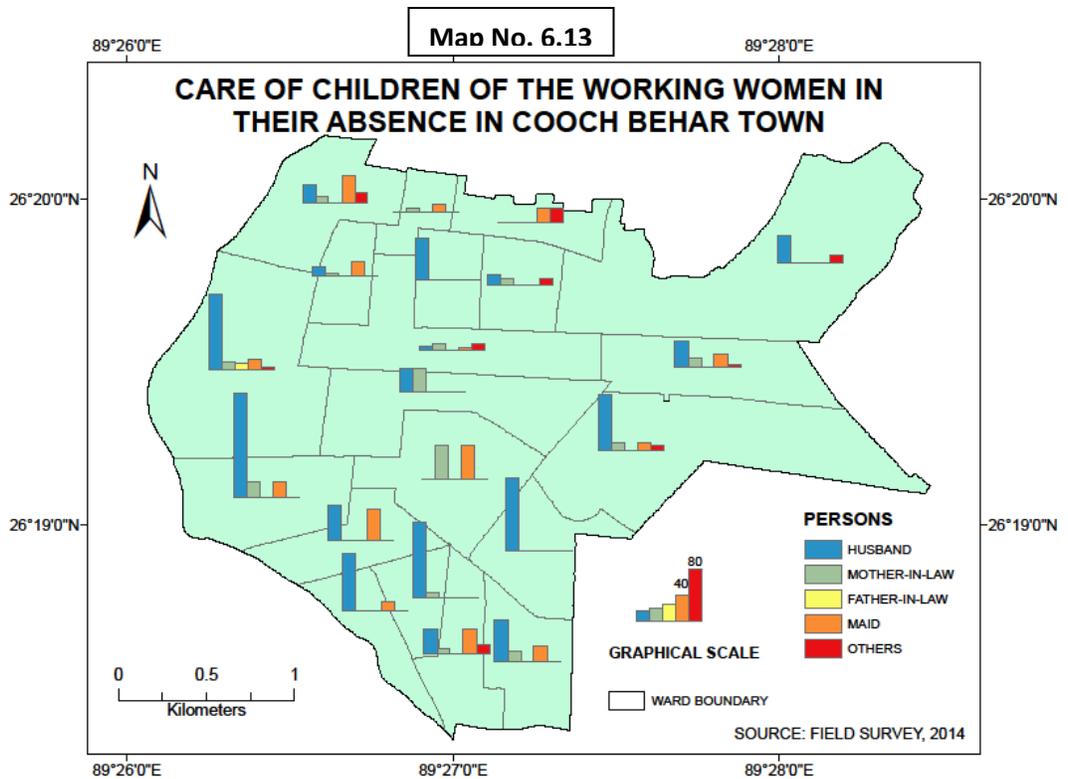
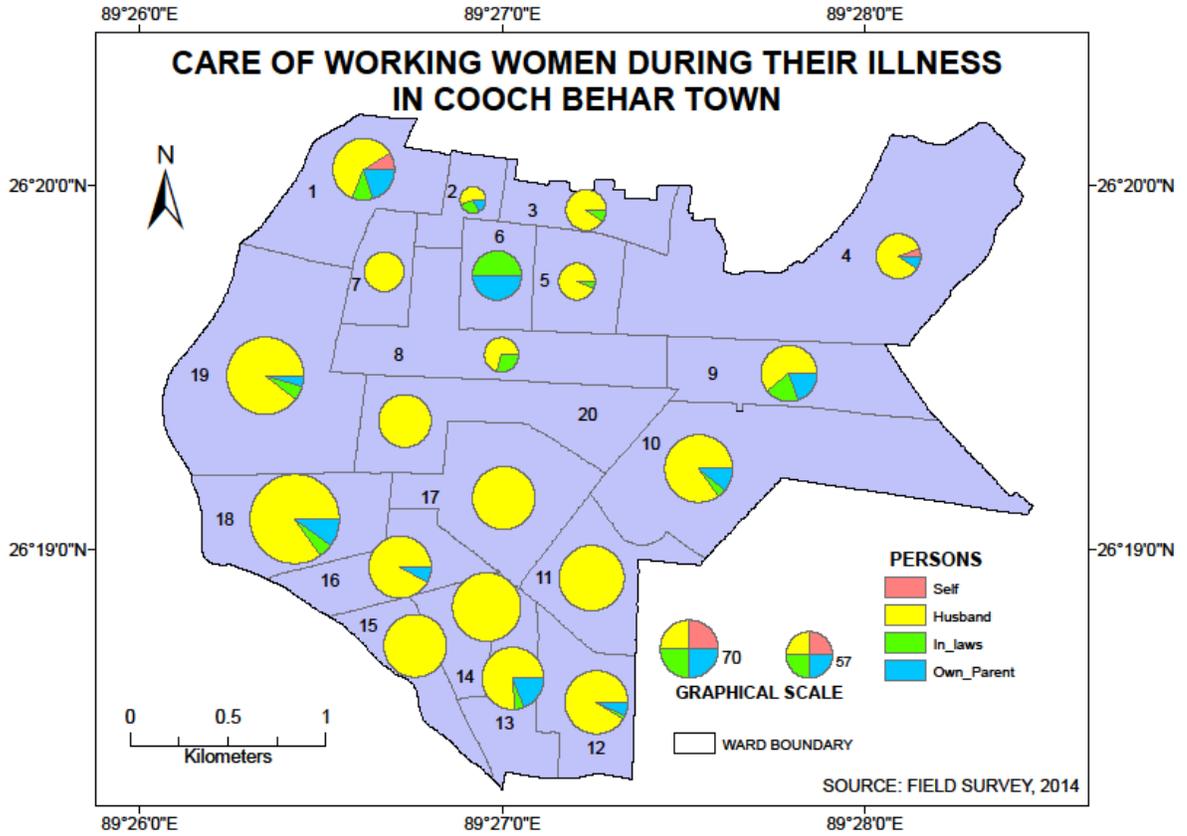
Source: Census 2011

2011; whereby 18.08% has been represented by the Females and 57.07% by the Males (higher % for Males than the national level). In the rural scenario, it is 19.4% for the Females and 57.2% for the Males. Keeping parity with the trend in the urban areas at the all India level, West Bengal portrays 15.4% (exactly matching with the national figure) for the Females and 56.84% for the Males. The WPR values for the district level are also not so impressive. The total WPR for the Koch Bihar district is 40.01%, constituted by 58.24% of Male WPR and 20.70% of Female WPR. The rural areas show higher WPR among the Males (58.42%) than those in the Urban set up (56.61%); while the same for the Rural Females remains high (21.43%) as expected than that of the Urban Females (14.17%).

Turning the attention to the CBT (the study area), relating to the number of female workers and the number of total workers of the CBT for 2011 data, the females have 20.32% share in comparison to the males who represents 78.93% (much higher than the national and the State level figures for Males). The urban females have better representation than the national, the state as well as the district level figures. The total WPR for the urban India, the urban West Bengal and that of Koch Bihar district remains appreciably low than the study area. This gives an optimistic view regarding the share of the FWPR at the study area compared to the district, the state and the national levels.

**6.5.6 JOB SATISFACTION:** The Table 4.4 of Chapter IV displays the employment structure along with employment status of the respondents. It is seen that mostly (41.14%) the respondents were engaged in high level of occupation with white collar jobs. So, the satisfaction level could be presumed for the respondents. Moreover, it has become clear that the respondents has taken up jobs out of financial necessity. So, job satisfaction would be an obvious outcome. The study conducted in this concern remains harmonious with the presupposition as 89.53% of the respondents submitted that they were satisfied with their jobs. Only 10.47% of the respondents told that they were dissatisfied with their jobs (the dissatisfaction revolved round the infrastructural issues mainly discussed in Chapter IV).

**6.5.7 EMPLOYED WOMEN - WORK Vs FAMILY LIFE:** Employment has imparted a positive implication upon the family life of the respondents in CBT area. Besides augmenting the family income, it has been able to convey a firm footing for the respondents towards decision making (79.90% of the respondents) in the family although they have to get more avenues in property and child centric matters. Thus employment has not posed hindrance to family life according to 92.91% of the respondents. 93.30% of the sample declared that they did not feel distanced from their husbands and their employment did not come in between their conjugal life. Even in matters of child rearing the respondents remain highly aware (88.91% of the respondents) inspite of the pre-occupation by their jobs.



**Map No. 6.14**

The working women of the study area reported that their families have helping attitude of according to 97.69% of them. But they are fortunate enough to have co-operation from 54.59% of the families. The most commendable endeavor which came up from the findings concern the husbands of the respondents. The husbands of the working women have shown their co-operation and a helping attitude wherever possible. They care for the respondents the most when they get ill (Map no. 6.13) and pay for the medical bills for the sick person in the family (according to 96.57% of the respondents); many of them take care of the children in the absence of the respondents (according to 60.97% of the working women) evident in Map no 6.14; some of them spend for the children's education (54.76% of the respondents). So, the support from the husbands helps in the psychological enhancement of the working women and as a result they are found to get onto excessive work load in the family.

**6.5.8 NECESSITY OF EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN & JOB PREFERENCE:** An answer to the evitable question: **Should women go for jobs?** Has a positive indication towards its affirmation. 90% of the respondents overwhelmingly opined that women should go for jobs. They were further asked to state the jobs they aspire for women in general (Table 6.15). The respondents were found to prefer teaching profession the most (45.98 %), this was followed by business (22.57%), Administrative jobs (11.93%) and Miscellaneous (3.15%) activities. About 16.38% of the working women did not have any specifications regarding jobs. The scenario is quite satisfying as most of the respondents prefer Teaching, which is considered to be the most suitable and acceptable profession individually as well as socially. To women teaching in schools, colleges and universities are remunerative and also it add to their status. The respondents chose for business next to the academics which is beyond expectation for having an enterprising attitude. Business requires skill of management and propagation. Women as

**Table: 6.15 Respondent's Preference for Jobs**

<b>Preferred Job Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
Academics	817	45.98
Business	401	22.57
Administration	212	11.93
Miscellaneous jobs (Doctors, Banks, Office, Health workers)	56	3.15
No Specific Preferences	291	16.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>1777</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2014

entrepreneurs in Cooch Behar Town are limited to shops of miscellaneous items, tailoring, garment boutiques, food stalls, beauty parlours etc. Though in limited proportion, yet some of the respondents showed their willingness towards administrative jobs. Other preferred jobs included Medical profession, Banking, Official services and Health services. These demand technical knowledge as well.

**6.5.9 PREFERENCE OF WORKING WOMEN AS BRIDES:** The working women of the study area have been found as extremely efficient in managing the household needs and necessities as well as their professional life. They are contributing to the family income, they are taking up enormous work load and spend almost whole of their salaries for procuring resources for the family and children. It was thus expected that the respondents would have been successful in creating a positive impression for themselves in the family. Likewise, they are found to have a wide acceptance (95.55% of the sample) in the family as brides. According to them, the working women are preferred because of their financial contribution to the family. However a handful of respondents (4.45%) perceived that their families have no preference for the working women as brides even considering their financial support. Conversely, they opined that working women spends a lot of time outside the domestic premises thereby giving lesser time to the family.

**6.5.10 PERCEPTION OF THE NON-WORKING WOMEN TOWARDS EMPLOYMENT:** Although the non-working women do not earn, they still have some perception regarding jobs or employment. Their views were recorded during the interview which reveals some important insights.

- As per their opinion, the surveyed non-working women of the study area are found to be dissatisfied largely (83%) from being just housewives. The non-working respondents are keen to get employed in order to augment the financial condition of their family as well as to gain economic autonomy and social position.
- Almost 87% believed that the employed women have better status in the family. They also feel that the working women contribute to the family financially as well as take important decisions therein.
- 98.33% of the non-working women felt the necessity of employment while only 1.67% believed that engagement in work takes away the freedom of living and doing things independently.

- 70% of the housewives stated that women should engage themselves in jobs related to academics. In addition to this, 25% of them desired for Miscellaneous jobs (such as Medical practice, Banking, Clerical services, Health workers etc.) 5% of the non-working respondents had no specific choice of services. This reveals the affinity of the women towards teaching profession.
- Since the non-working women spend all the time within the four walls of their houses, there remains no scope to ask whether they remained distanced with their husbands and family. But some of the women admitted that they neglected their children to some extent (25% of the non-working group) owing to cope up with the domestic drudgery. The 70% of the housewives stated that they never neglected their children. 5% of them did not mention their choice.
- Though the non-working sample felt the necessity of employment very strongly as mentioned above, yet some of them (38.33% of the sample) seemed reluctant to accept the working women as brides in their family. A little more than half of the non-working women aspire for the working women in their households. 6.67% did not speak about their opinion.

**HYPOTHESIS 3: Employed women are able to attain a better standard of living and financial autonomy.**

Perception to life and living of the working and the non-working women has also been marked during the interview. The sample of the non-working women are not engaged to gainful activity at all hence, their remains no scope of their personal financial resource. They are wholly dependent on the income of their spouses most of whom (83% of the family of the non-working women) earn a high level of family income (20,001- 50,000 INR per month).

The working women on the contrary, are mostly (61.11%) engaged to the organized employment and the proportion of women working in the unorganized sector belongs to 38.89%. Incidence of white collar jobs (41.14%) among the working women is higher than jobs of other statuses. There also remains a dominance of permanent job holders (56.73%) among the sample. As a consequence to this, about 37.25% of the sample shows a high level of monthly income (20,001- 50,000 and  $\geq 50,001$  INR) apart from the income of their spouses. In this connection it is to be kept in mind that the working women of the study area have an affinity towards attaining higher

education also. So, all these statistical findings pinpoint to a good standard of living for the majority of the working women of the study area.

87% of the non-working women believed that employed women enjoy better status in their family by taking financial decisions independently. 98.33% of them have opined that women should go for employment in order to attain a better living standard. So the second hypothesis of the study gets proved that *Employed women are able to attain a better standard of living and financial autonomy.*

**6.6 CONCLUSION:** The perception of the working women of the study area has been revealed in terms of Education, Marriage, Family and Employment. These four aspects outline the foundation of the life and living of the respondents.

With regard to **Education**, a proliferation of literacy (92% of the respondents) among the working women in the study area with a general trend towards attainment of higher education is found. About 99.66% of the sample conferred about the significance of education. 45% of the respondents admitted that it gave a new impetus to their lives. 30% of the working women under study admitted that education has given freedom and enhanced their ability for decision making. 25% of the respondents said that education has enabled them to get social position and helped them to imbibe traditional values as well. 90.21% of the respondents opined that women should go for higher education.

Only 9.79% of them held a difference in opinion about this in that they said that higher education sometimes pose hindrance to marriage; as highly educated women have been found reluctant to marry persons with low educational qualification. This remains true to some extent for the present study since the incidence of unmarried matured and aged working women (12.28% of the sample) representing 42.61% and 32.99% respectively of the total unmarried sample under consideration (i.e. out of 291 respondents) are found with higher education and technical knowledge. A few respondents remarked that highly educated women do not adhere to household works which is absolutely incorrect as per the findings of the present study.

**Marriage** is a significant indicator for the present study as well as for all studies related to women because life experiences changes with time and life-cycle events. Marriage for women is one of the most important life-cycle events especially in the context of Indian society as: it is indicative of women's mobility from parental abode to spouse's house; it relates to the change in

the control of women's life from parents to spouses and in-laws; it confers social and material status to women.

Most of the respondents in the sample (75.63%) are married (which includes married and widowed categories) representing stability in their lives and kin relations (refer to table no. 4.2 of Chapter IV). 65.96% of the respondents got married between 19-30 years (Table 6.3), which may be regarded as the optimum age of marriage. Maturity in age enables one to take up right decisions in their lives and by virtue of which the respondents are expected to strike a balance between home and office. The incidence of maximum number of respondents in the referred age group also indicate occurrence of economically active population at the same time. The present study also attempted to work out a relationship (Fig. 6.1) between the literacy and average age of marriage; which resulted into a positive finding with regard to both the indicators. This again confirms the earlier studies in urban areas that the women finishes off with their education and then only enters into family life. Education of the respondents has helped them to imbibe ethical values and to break away the futile social practices also. About 85.03% of the respondents voiced against dowry.

Most of the respondents (72.36%) have undergone arranged marriage while 27.64% of the sample experienced marriage by own selection. As it has been found that the respondents enters family life at matured age after getting educated, it was expected that the working women would have experienced marriages by own selection or they would have a strong preference for it. On the contrary, marriages by negotiation are preferred the most by majority (53.91%) of the working women of CBM; but with changed characteristics from that of the traditional arranged marriages. The working women preferred to meet the 'would- be groom' in order to build an idea of the likings, disliking and compatibility before marriage. The study thus unveiled the changing pattern of marriages.

In connection with the present study, **Family** of the working women is of tremendous significance as the women sets out for work outside to support the family's financial necessities. Moreover, all the members have their specific roles in the family and they also enjoy a position within it. Generally speaking, it is seen that working women have better status in their families in comparison to the non-working women and that the former ones enjoy financial autonomy and command over resources. The type of the family matters the most, especially when the status and

freedom of the daughter-in-laws are concerned. The prevalence of nucleated families is more than the traditional joint families in urban areas of our country. The working women enjoy more freedom and autonomy regarding financial matters in these families. The nuclear families have also experienced change in their composition presently. The study area is no exception to the popularity and proliferation of the neo-joint families. The composition of which includes husband, wife, their unmarried children and any one relative who has his/her family elsewhere but stays with this family for providing assistance to the working women. 62.97% of the sample resides in the Neo-joint families in the CBM, but the respondents (59%) prefer joint families to stay within.

Looking on to the procreating role of the families of the study area, it has been found that 98.14 % of the respondents are aware of family planning. It might be because of education, the respondents have developed matured decision making ability so that 61% of them entered into first pregnancy between 19 – 30 years. Incidence of late pregnancy and delayed pregnancy are also seen here. It is the effect of the delayed marriages that have occurred in the study area. 62.46% of the respondents do not possess any preference for a boy child as the heir of the family.

The respondents have opined that their families have a helpful attitude towards working women in general (96.45%) and the respondents in particular (97.69%). But the household works listed in Table 6.9 show that the respondents have a tough life in doing the household chores. Most of the working women does all the domestic works and might have raised the expectation of the families from they expect the working women to do all the chores, to spent all the income for family needs, to look after the children properly. Employment might have emancipated the working women of CBM, but the respondents work exhaustively at their households. This might led to develop a preference for Joint families in the view of getting assistance in household activities. The respondents also reported that 95.55% of their families prefer working women as brides for their earning. Most importantly, the respondents are fortunate to have co-operative husbands whose role and activities complements that of their betterhalves.

Perception of the working women towards **Employment** is very important for the present study. The reason for getting into employment for the respondents like every other study on women's work might be attributed largely (86.89%) to financial necessity. The working women are mostly (61.11%) found engaged to salaried jobs. The level of education has a positive influence on the

average monthly income of the respondents. Respondents with high educational qualification have high average monthly income. 89. 53% of the respondents are satisfied with their jobs while the rest complained about the infrastructural issues mainly.

To 92.91% of the working women, employment has not posed hindrance to their family life. 93.30% of the working women did not feel that they are distanced from their husbands. 88.31% of the respondents remain concerned with child rearing and related matters. Moreover, 90% of them are of opinion that women should go for jobs. The preference list of jobs begins with that of teaching (45.98% of respondents), it is followed by business (22.57%), then administrative jobs (11.93%) and miscellaneous jobs (3.15%).

Therefore, it may be concluded that the working women of the study area has a pragmatic vision to life and living.

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