Theoretical Framework for Work-Family conflicts in Dual Career Couples

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Abstract- Combining marriage and career have been considered an advantage for men and a problem for women. Yet, today it is common picture in most of developed and developing countries like India that both the partners in the couple have high career goals. The proportion of dual-career couples is increasing virtually in all fields, and couples experience similar constraints regardless of career type. The researches show that the dual career couples face the problem of work family conflicts. The impact and form of work family conflicts may depend on so many factors; personal, marital or job based. The paper presents the ground work or theoretical framework done for the further study on "The study of variables affecting on work family conflicts in Dual Career Couples: An Indian Context".

I.   INTRODUCTION

Up to the 1960s, the male was often the sole bread winner in the family of India. The concept of "Working Woman" started in India somewhere in 1960s. The concept was limited to only "Working Woman" who was opting for a job only to fulfil family's economic needs. Her first priority was family only and she used to work average 36 hours per week. But now the things have changed. Over the past several decades, the definition of "family" and how a family covers its financial and relationship responsibilities has changed [13]. For a working woman in India, it is not just a job, but a career making job. She has her own ambitions towards her career. But combining marriage and career has traditionally been considered an advantage for men and a problem for women. So, now the scenario that both spouses in a couple have high career objective is increasing in India. Dual-career couples (DCC), defined as two people in a committed relationship each with a career [22]. It means the couple where both the spouses have their own high careers who do not wish to follow traditional career paths are called "Dual Career Couples" (DCC). The proportion of DCC is increasing in all fields and all couples experience similar constraint regardless of their job type. Research on employee values reflects a new trend with spouses often placing career interests above family and increasingly expecting employers to help them balance home and work demands. These changes have made it imperative for organizations to consider how their policies and procedures affect family life [15]. In such couples, role pressures from work and family can occur simultaneously in both directions. That is, excessive role demands from the work domain can result in work-to-family (W-F) conflict. Similarly, excessive role demands from the family domain can result in family-to-work conflict (F-W).

The statistics available for DCC motivated the researcher to make a literature survey of the work done regarding DCC and work family conflicts.

Statement of the Study-

The paper is written to present the literature survey done on DCC and work family conflicts between them. Paper also presents theoretical model for the same. While presenting the theoretical framework, the researchers do not consider the career type.

Type of the Study-

The study is an exploratory which means the researcher wants to gain the deeper understanding of the factor influencing on work family conflicts in DCC.

Data Collection-

The study is purely based on secondary data that is the research work done by different researchers and published in national and international journals, books etc.

Dual Career Couples and Work Family Conflicts- The Concept-

Dual-career couples (DCC), defined as two people in a committed relationship each with a career. In dual career couple, both partners work. They not only work to earn money but for achieving their own career objectives. Traditionally, in many countries like India which has vast history of culture and rituals, society has always been hierarchical where woman stands always at a status lower than that of man [27]. The status of woman underwent a major change as result of liberalism, social reforms and nationalism that emerged during the British rule. The changing status of women in modern India and their entry into the workforce changed the nature of Indian families and it is more going to be of nuclearization. As wife in the family works at both levels that is work and family, she undergoes stress. If she does not get support from her husband, the stress may convert into work family conflicts. In DCC, as both the partners have high career ambitions, the conflicts are influenced by or due to many reasons. Levner [18], wrote of the "three-career family"—with family life represented as the third career [8] speaking from an organizational perspective, asserted, "As leaders and managers, we need to devise ways

to make it possible for two advancing career professionals to thrive at work without sacrificing their personal relationships or their health".

A. *Work Family Conflicts- What is it?*

Greenhaus and Beautell defined work-family conflict as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" [10]. This definition in turn has been consistently used by many researchers in reference to work-family conflict [11], L.1991, [7], and [12]. Thus, following these researchers, the present study would also utilise the same definition in reference to the incompatible role demands between work and family. Greenhaus and Beutell identified three major *types* of work-family conflict: (a) time-based conflict, (b) strain-based conflict, and (c) behaviour-based conflict.

a. Time-based conflicts are those which arise from scarcity of time, energy in one domain due to utilisation of it in other.
b. Strain based conflicts are created due to the strain for the individual in the form of dissatisfaction, tension, anxiety, and fatigue
c. When certain patterns of in-role behaviour become incompatible with expectations regarding behaviour in another role, behaviour-based conflict is said to occur.

They further bifurcates the conflicts as work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts. When the excessive load at workplace affects family, it results in work-to-family conflict and excessive load at family affects work, it results in family-to-work conflicts. Here, we can consider work and family as domains of spouses where they utilise their time and energy, where they experience the strain and where the behaviour of one domain effects on the others.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR WORK-FAMILY CONFLICTS IN DCC

Thus, conflicts are based on time, strain and behavioural factors. The researches show that there are other factors also which can influence on work family conflicts in DCC. The major factors that affect the work family conflicts are [4].

A. Gender Equality
B. Hidden Power in Gender relationship
C. Sexism or Prejudice
D. Life role salience
E. Communication patterns

A. *Gender Equality-*

Gender equality, also known as sex equality or sexual equality, is the goal of the equality of the genders, stemming from a belief in the injustice of myriad forms of gender inequality. This goal includes making women's rights equal to men's and also making men's rights equal to women's. Feminist Theory aims to understand the nature of gender equality. Feminist theory says that the Gender Equality depends on women's social roles, experience, interests, and feminist politics in a variety of fields [19]. So, when we think of relationship between a couple, gender equality and woman status in that particular society matters a lot. According to Global Gender Gap Report 2012[21], India stands 105th in Gender Equality which is far behind the countries like China, Ghana and Italy. Marital Equality or Inequality starts from Gender Equality or Inequality. Despite the women's

liberation movement, entrance of women into the labor market on a large scale, and widespread goals of equality, research suggests that contemporary men and women find it difficult to construct equal relationships [2], [15], C. & Mahoney, A. R. 1996 and [24] and inequality persists as the norm in marital relationships [23]. Three factors repeated emerge in the literature as related to marital equality: (1) both partners are aware of and critical of gender injustices and note when assumptions are made based on gender [2] and [15]; (2) there is mutuality in terms of attention to relationship and family tasks, careers of both partners, and flexible allocation of household duties [2] and [15] and [24] and (3) partners engage in open dialogue regarding conflict and active negotiation including communication of emotions and negative reactions [2], [15], and [24].

B. *Hidden Power in Gender Relationship*

Hidden power in gender relationship may affect women's perceived marital satisfaction and psychological distress [16]. offers a theoretical perspective to analyze this hidden power. Her conception of power includes a theoretical distinction among manifest power, latent power, and invisible power. Manifest power is the ability to enforce one's will, even against resistance. Latent power is more subtle than manifest power, and it occurs when issues of conflict are not addressed directly. Typically, latent power exists when one partner learns the parameters of acceptable behaviour and functions within them. Conflict never arises because the needs and wishes of the more powerful are anticipated and met. Invisible power refers to the implicit values, beliefs, or preconceptions that precede behaviour. Such established ways of thinking prevent other options from even being considered and it overlaps the manifest and latent power.

C. *Sexism or Prejudice*

The dictionary defines sexism as "prejudice, stereotyping or discrimination typically against woman on the basis of sex". In attainment of marital equality, the awareness of partners regarding gender injustices is facilitated. It can be thought that one who is more sexist is less likely to be critical of gender injustices and is more likely to accept sex differences as expected and natural, rather than noting when assumptions are made based only on gender. Most empirical researchers identify sexism with hostility toward women, ignoring the corresponding tendency to place women on a pedestal. Across cultures, women, relative to men, are a disadvantaged group, as indicated by, for example, by differences in earnings, access to resources, and the low percentage of women in the most powerful roles in business and government [9]. Such prejudice affects the thinking of male in couple and also woman in a couple which may change the picture of marital inequality. Marital inequality changes the picture of work family conflicts of DCC.

D. *Life Role Salience*

It refers to an individual's "internalized beliefs and attitudes about (a) the personal relevance of a role, (b) the standards for performance of the role, and (c) the manner in which personal resources (i.e., time, money, and energy) are to be committed to performance of the role" [1]. In other words, Role salience reveals one's interest in and willingness to commit to a given role. Work Family conflict largely

depends on the husband's or wife's internalised beliefs and attitude about their role. As per the topology suggested by Peter Gahan and Lakmal Abeysekera couples and role salience can be correlated with each other in the way described in Figure 1. The DCC may fit in Modern 2 or 3. The other three moderns cannot be taken as the DCC. Rothbard and Edwards found a positive relationship between role salience and time invested in that particular role [20]. As such modern 2 couple invest balanced time as per their salience and modern 3 couples invest less time for family. As both have their own career paths and positive salience towards their work, the conflicts occurs. A married working person will have main three roles that s/he has to play- Work Role, Spouse Role and Parental Role. The internalized beliefs of a person or spouse in DCC regarding particular role matter significantly in work family conflicts of DCC.

Further, role salience particularly depends on the developmental stage of a person. Theories of male and female adult development give some focus on how career have differential impact on husbands and wives in DCC. Career growth of a man can be understood by Levinson's life stage theory [17] and that of woman is given by Bardwick's theory of female adult development [3]. The theories and how they affect on Life role salience and collectively on work family conflicts is discussed further in the paper.

E. Communication patterns

Another aspect of marital relationships that plays a significant role in marital satisfaction, and is likely related to marital equality is communication style. In light of the problems contemporary families have in adapting to women's participation in the workforce and the resulting need to share the second shift, communication may be especially important in terms of negotiating roles and expectations. Given the sex differences found in communication patterns, it seems to be yet another variable where the invisible power of gender may play a role. When differences arise, the partner with the most power is most likely to determine the manner in which conflict surfaces (or doesn't surface) and is addressed. Interest in marital communication has increased dramatically over the last 30 years, and studies have consistently shown that communication patterns play an important role in determining satisfaction in marriage [6]. How one communicates with one's partner is important in setting the overall tone of the relationship and gives rise to predictable patterns of behaviour, especially when attempting to solve the everyday problems and challenges that confront most couples [5].
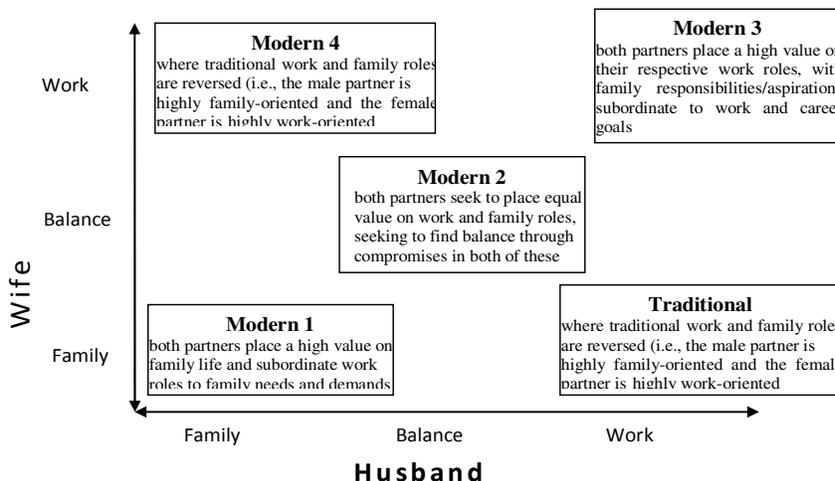

Fig.1: Role Salience Couples Typology

Adult Development Theories / Career Growth Theories

As mentioned above, the life role salience in influenced by the career growth phase of man or woman. [17], describes four basic period of stability- pre-adulthood (8-22), early adulthood (17-45), middle adulthood (40-65) and late adulthood (60-65). Alternating between the period of stability, there are four periods of change at 17-22, age of 30, 40-45 and 60-65. [3], identified four phases for women: early adult transition years (17-28), second adult phase (30-40), middle adulthood (40-45) and the age 50 and older phase. The precedence of career over family holds true for men up to their middle adulthood years. It is not until the age of 40-45, that men begin to experience and deal with family issues and

with conflicts between career and family in a significant way. Whereas the same age period in women that is second adult phase, is very different from men. This is the time when most women, even being successful in their career, experience great self-doubts and anxiety. But during this phase, men usually invest their most of time and energy in climbing up their career ladder. It appears that developmental process of woman is the mirror image that of men.

Focusing on DCCs as unit of analysis, [24] proposed a developmental framework for analysing the manner in which DCCs undergo the career transition. Figure 2 give the transition. The suggested transitions in men and women also change the salience towards a particular role.
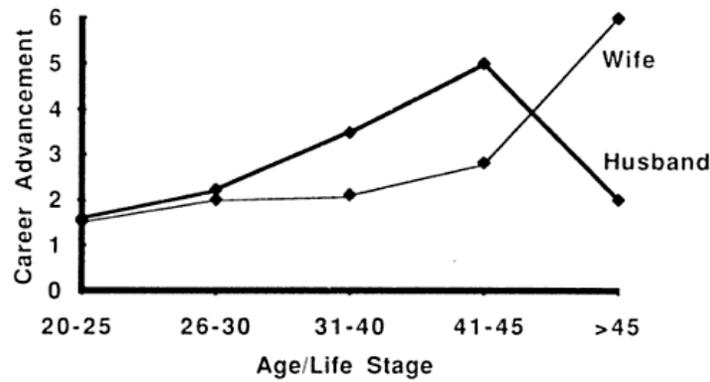
Figure 2- Career transitions of DCC
(Source- Sekaran & Hall, 1989)

Theoretical Model- Depending upon the reading of DCCs and work family conflict Figure 3 gives theoretical model to study and hypothesize the "Work Family Conflict in Dual Career Couples"
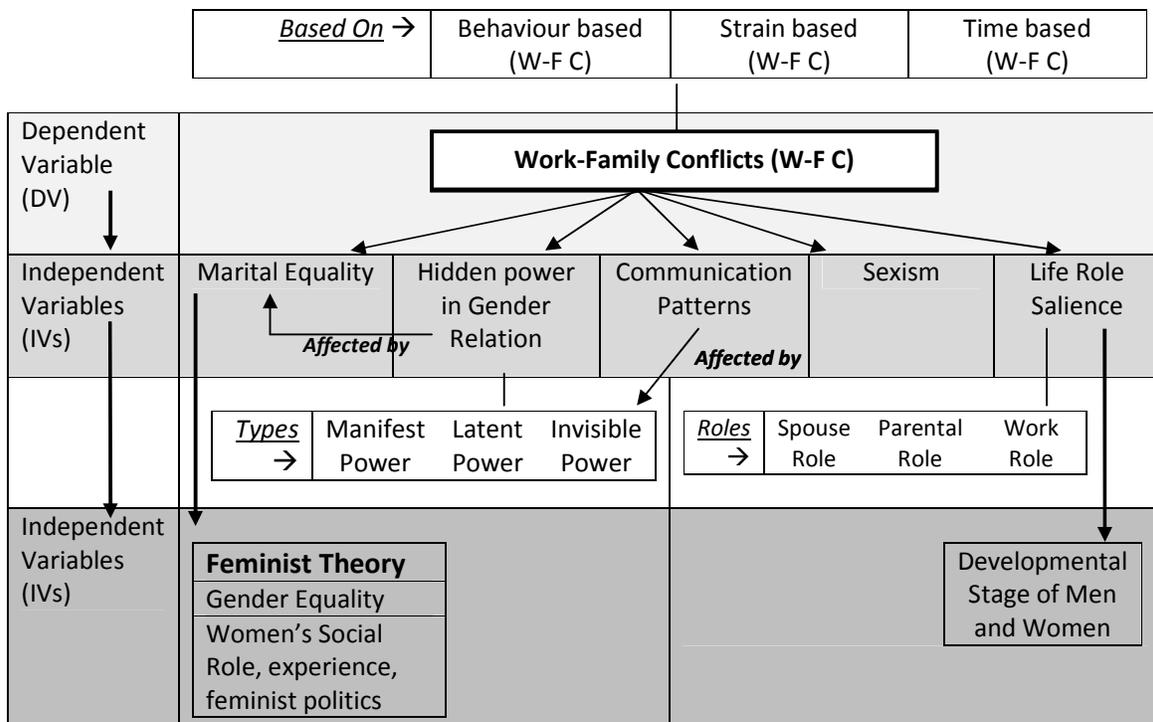

Fig. 3: Theoretical Model of Work Family conflicts in DCCs

III. CONCLUSION

The work family conflicts in Dual Career Couples are depending on so many personal factors in which Marital Equality, Hidden Power in Gender Relationships, Communication Patterns, Sexism and Life Role Salience have been studied by many researchers. Feminist Theory and Developmental Stage of men and women again affects on theses variable.

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