

Role of Working and Non-Working Women as Housewives in the Dhaka City of Bangladesh

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Abstract: Women's first and foremost role in society is that they are mothers. The study mainly investigates the role of working and non-working women as housewives in Dhaka, the populous city of Bangladesh. From the inception of civilization, society has been functional, following various pathways. At the same time, both female and male mutually affirm their role in the development of the societal dynamics creating social glues and interconnectedness. Through interaction, our social gender can perceive and perform the functions that society expects from a female and male individual. Similarly, working and non-working women perform their traditional roles as mother, wife, and housewife. A total of 100 women were interviewed consisting of 50 working women and 50 non-working homemakers. The research adopted a mixed method in nature where a checklist and structured questionnaire were used to collect information entirely from the respondents of the study. The study found several contributions of women in a family, for instance, reproduction, taking care of children and husbands, cooking, cleaning, decision-making, and job performance. Although, compared to the role, non-working women had more chances to serve for household-related matters, working women needed to maintain household chores and job responsibilities. Finally, the study suggests several options regarding women's role in dignity and respect.

Keywords: Working women, non-working women, housewives, family, management, Dhaka

INTRODUCTION

In general, socially constructed gender always contributes to the advancement of society, while men and women follow several cultural traits from the early period to modern society. In Little's sense, gender refers to identity, socialization, institutional participation, and life chances which sociologists tend to regard as the core status of our society (Little, 2016). Additionally, any sort of work adds a meaningful sense to a person that helps to the identity and the satisfaction of this person within his territory and living community (Cheney et al., 2008). At the same time, working in something else attaches people to the greater welfare of society associated with mutual property and wellbeing in a typical environment in the current century. Although today exciting competition in the market and changing technological innovations, we find natural processes that create diversity in various workplaces (Rattani, 2015).

Earlier, housekeeping was considered one of the women's primary duties, and there was a saying that if women entered the job sector, it might hamper their reproduction capacities and household activities. In this sense, working homemakers are not so popular compared to non-working homemakers because they involve themselves with their official and outside activities and pretty unable to provide more time for their husband and child rearing (Poduval & Poduval, 2009). It is also thought that non-working women enjoy more happiness and relaxation in their conjugal life because they spend maximum time at home and spend more time with their family members, husband, children, and siblings (Paul, 1986). In the 21st century, few societies have successfully started such a notion where household chores are being shared between husband and wife (Geiger, 2016). Though many parts of the world still practice cultural ideology considering gender as determined by the norms and values cultivated from one generation to another, the basis of inequality is historically rooted in cultural and philosophical falsities that were not evidenced based but were used to justify oppression against women (Reeves & Baden, 2020). Since the permeability between family and work scopes produces work-family conflict, the unequal involvement in household chores is boldly associated with increased conflict in women and men, interpreting the results also from the knowledge that arises from gender studies (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018). With time, women engage in economic activity of earning a livelihood as much as men because women have unequal opportunities in both personal and career development through men still hold a critical attitude towards women's employment. So, women need to work more than men because women represent only 40 percent of the global labor force despite half of the world's population being women (Sommestad, 2019).

In Bangladesh, working and non-working women have played a vital role in family management and have been necessary as housewives since its independence. Hence, their contribution to the family and society is not valued as most of their work is considered household work (The Daily Star, 2016). Therefore, it is highly needed to overcome such prejudice and promote equal employment opportunities for women to accelerate the rapid development in Bangladesh. Even larger society wants to ensure women engage in every sphere of life to meet the increasing income inequality at home and outside of the home through their strong effort and consistency. Seemingly, working wives are vastly acknowledged in families now, and with the development of women's position, the wheel of society can be changed with positive thinking. A great effort of women involved in Government to hi-tech computer and military services is appreciable (Klugman et al., 2014). When working women contribute to companies, corporate offices, and industries, non-working women actively contribute to agricultural activities in rural areas and in livestock and horticulture. The fact that global gender inequality starts with the unequal work-life divide considering husbands as providers and breadwinners (who work mostly outside the home) and women and girls are chiefly responsible for reproductive aspects of family life, today women with efforts may be treated as the breadwinner in agriculture as wells as a housekeeper, nurture and care for the family (Cerrato & Cifre, 2018; Stein, 2014).

Therefore, the study's objectives were to investigate the role of working and non-working women as housewives in Dhaka. In addition, the adjustment capacities of homemakers to social and family life, role-playing capacity for their children, and decision-making capabilities were also viewed as roles of

working and non-working women. Finally, women's functional care work and their unquestionably vital life to live the social balance between working and non-working women attract the researchers to identify this topic to scrutinize the roles of working and non-working women as housewives in Dhaka city.

RATIONALE OF STUDY

From the historical period to nowadays, undoubtedly, women have played a vital role in the more excellent stability of society. However, managing the home, women work outside at a stretch to add income for family management, which situation demands in most cases of the world. That is why women's participation in outside work has brought a tremendous sociological change in social structure and functional labor force ratios.

In this study, the researchers have tried to find out the roles of working and non-working women as housewives in Dhaka city, focusing on the differences in their roles in the family, decision-making capability, and freedom at home and the workplace.

This study also tried to clarify what types of problems they face in managing both home and workplace, as well as how working and non-working women give time to the family. Lastly, the study findings will be helpful in decision-making policies and empowerment agencies with the potential for further research recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generally, patriarchal social hierarchy is mainly visible by gender discrimination, while women's status is also underpinned by the underprivileged and deprived of fundamental rights and responsibilities, creating multifarious poverty and limiting freedom of choice, across Bangladesh (Barman & Islam, 2020). In this section, we reviewed few literatures for the study from many types of research regarding women's roles.

Abdullah et al. (2008) conducted research where they found that women generally do almost all the domestic chores and get little leisure while men enjoy more time to get involved with other social activities.

Additionally, in terms of spending time on household management, women play a significant role because they spend more than 15 hours a day, including child nurturing and doing household activities. In the research, it is also discovered that women are coming out from their traditional role only as homemakers and housewives doing all the household chores; now, women are getting engaged in career development and willingly contributing to family management in identical spheres as men in society. They found that self-respect also inspires women to participate in social welfare and decision-making issues (Abdullah et al., 2008).

In a study, it was found that compared to other cities of the world, the women executives in Dhaka city experience very complexity in the workplace and the family. Even various trouble influences women's lives in the household and the workplace. The research also found that women primarily take care of their household affairs and try to fulfill the household demands that reflect their self-respect issues (Shindaini & Faruky, 2020). As a result, a double discrepancy is visible between workload and family responsibilities which sometimes creates mistrust (Matthews et al., 2012).

In a study, Greenhaus (2003), with other researchers, tried to demonstrate several distinct characteristics of work-family balance, defining the ways, namely advice to establish balance, acts or actions used to balance work and family life, or an already balanced life. They identified that the balance between work and family life could be restored by flexible work time, part-time job opportunities, a baby care center, leave policy, office transport, and at-home work facilities (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

A study was designed by Kumari (2015) to investigate emotional maturity among working and non-working women. The study defined emotional maturity as the most crucial factor in developing a comprehensive, mature personality while arguing that emotional maturity is an insight into an

individual's adjustment levels. The study is designed to measure the Emotional Maturity scale by Pal (1984), consisting of 40 items was administered to 120 (60 working and 60 non-working) women in the age range of 25-60 years of different villages and cities of Haryana. Interestingly, the study found no significant difference between working and non-working women regarding emotional maturity (Kumari, 2015).

Sultana et al. (2013) studied measuring empowerment between working and non-working women from a Malaysian perspective highlighting the decision-making capacities of working and non-working women in family life. They studied three residential areas and three academic institutions in the Gombak district in Malaysia. A total of 132 women while 66 working and 66 non-working women equally were selected for the study. They also found that working women enjoyed more power and freedom than non-working women (Sultana et al., 2013).

Hashmi et al. (2007) studied marital adjustment, stress, and depression among working and non-working married women to explore the relationship between marital adjustment, stress, and depression. They selected 150 working and non-working married women for their study of middle and high socioeconomic status. They discovered a highly significant relationship between marital adjustment, depression, and stress, especially in family management. In the study, they also found that many more complexities are being experienced by working married women (Hashmi et al., 2007).

In a study, Mankani and Yenagi (2012) assessed the mental health status of working and non-working women. They selected 180 women for their study using a random sampling of 90 workings and 90 non-working women from Dharwad district's rural and urban areas in Karnataka. Their study found no significant difference between working and non-working women, especially in terms of mental health influences (Mankani & Yenagi, 2012).

METHODOLOGY

In general, the capital city of Bangladesh, Dhaka, a megacity always experienced massive problems in terms of social characteristics compared to other megacities for decades (Hossain, 2006; Shahriar et al., 2021). The study area lies at 23° 45'50" North and 90°23'20" East in the capital city of Bangladesh.

Research Design

In this study, we used a mixed methods approach to find and explore the general and specific objectives. Because mixed method research not only refers to both qualitative and quantitative approaches but also helps in merging, integrating, linking, or embedding the two strands (Creswell, 2013). Even the qualitative method is used to collect more in-depth information regarding views and experiences of working and non-working women as housewives. Indeed, we also made an interview guide for managing interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). To conduct face-to-face interviews, we also constructed a well-structured questionnaire while a few reviews of the secondary data helped the researchers meet the research's rationality.

Selection of Study Area and Informants

For better information about the study area and informants, we have applied a range of sampling procedures; purposive sampling for area selection and simple random sampling for respondents. Seemingly, for the selection of area, we selected the Tikatuli and Kamalapur area, which is under Dhaka city and near Motijheel industrial region. Indeed, this area has been chosen for various reasons; for instance, the area is busy while both working and non-working women are available, and the nearest distance of researchers currently living place.

As previously noted, using simple random sampling, we have chosen 100 respondents of working and non-working women who usually play a significant role in household chores and outside household work, considered homemakers. Therefore, among 100 respondents, we have selected 45 respondents from Kamalapur and 55 respondents from the area of Tikatuli.

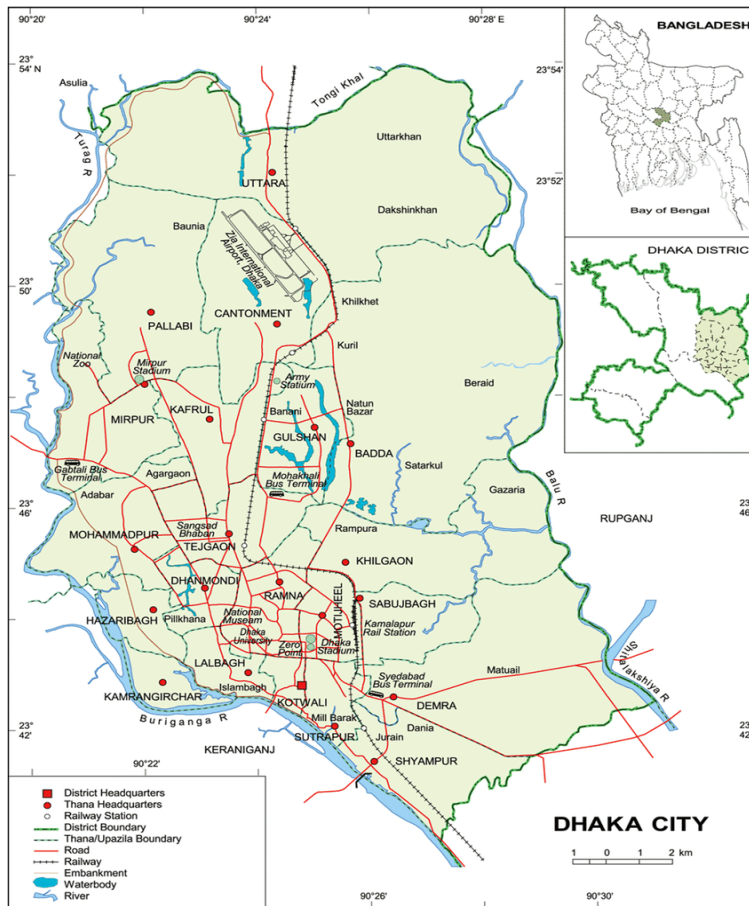


Figure 1. Location of the study region ($23^{\circ}45'50''N$ $90^{\circ}23'20''E$); Source: Swapan, et al., 2017

Structured Questionnaire and In-depth Interview

The researchers have used a mixed methods research strategy to collect and analyze the data. In the quantitative section, a well-structured questionnaire is distributed among randomly selected respondents following the survey method. Again, face-to-face interviews are also conducted by applying the structured questionnaire, while the principal researcher solely conducted these interviews after receiving oral consent from the respondents. In this regard, SPSS16 is utilized to examine and present the quantitative data, especially for the descriptive analysis. Lastly, the thematic analysis technique is also being undertaken for analyzing and presenting the qualitative data. The research was conducted from June to December 2021.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers strictly followed the ethical issues. Oral consent has been taken from the informants considering ethical standards before conducting face-to-face and in-depth interviews. The prospective participants were briefed about the study's intended purpose to secure their voluntary participation. In addition, a few questions and examples are also added for better clarification when it is required.

Limitations

Due to budget and time constraints, we selected 100 respondents for structured interviews and seven other people for in-depth interviews. Therefore, even the amount of collected information from respondents might not be sufficient to draw a definitive conclusion. However, the findings will guide

us for further research and policymakers regarding women's opinions on family decision-making and such related studies in Bangladesh.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows that 100 women were selected for the study, while 50 were working women, and 50 were non-working women. 44% of women are under the age group of 38-47 years, and 24% are under the age group of 28-37 years. In addition, the 58-67 age range represents only a few portions (14%). From the part of education, the table demonstrates that the majority of the respondents completed primary education (30%), while 24% has Secondary and 25% had a higher secondary certificate. Even 12 respondents who have bachelor's or higher degrees are also shown in the table (Table 1).

For the study area, 55 women were selected from Tikatuli and 45 women from Kamalapur for better and enriched information for the study purpose. When respondents were asked about their working station, about 44% responded that they work in the corporate office, while 24% of women work in the industrial firm. Of 50 working women, 9 of them work in the government office, and seven women are involved with non-government jobs. Regarding the monthly income of working women, most responded that they earn 21,000-30,000 Tk and the second highest income is 11,000-20,000 Tk representing 22% of 50 working women. Interestingly, very few respondents' monthly incomes are above 60,000 Tk.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Description	Respondents (%)
Category of Women	Working	50
	Non-working	50
Age of Respondent	28-37 years	24
	38-47 years	44
	48-57 years	18
	58-67 years	14
Education	Illiterate	9
	Primary	30
	Secondary	24
	H. Secondary	25
Study Area	Honors and above	12
	Tikatuli	55
	Kamalapur	45
Working Organization	Government job	18
	Non-Government job	14
	Corporate office	44
	Industrial Firm	24
Monthly Income	11,000-20,000 TK	22
	21,000-30,000 TK	34
	31,000-40,000 TK	18
	41,000-50,000 TK	12
	51,000-60,000 TK	8
	61,000-70,000 TK	6

Role of Working and Non-working Women as Housewives

Working and non-working women both play a significant role in their families. While working women must manage both their working place and home efficiently with a hectic schedule all day long, non-working women must do much work in their home with massive involvement in all family matters. Therefore, non-working women have huge responsibilities toward their husbands and children. In most

cases, their lives are confined to household chores. There is no variation in their lives. They do the same work almost every day.

On the other hand, working women do not get much time to spend with their families while remaining too busy with their work. They have many duties towards their workplace as well as family. Nevertheless, they are also mothers and wives to someone, and these labels are set in their minds. They want to fulfill all the desires of their families. Sometimes they become successful, sometimes not. Both working and non-working women try to do their bests for their families. In this regard, a non-working woman as a wife shared her story in such a way:

The real story begins after getting married. Life was, to some extent, stress-free and relatively more manageable before marriage. However, after getting married, the transition of roles and responsibilities makes them stuck in household chores, family matters, and responsibilities related to her in-laws (Married non-working, 47 years old, Kamalapur).

Below in table 2 is about how much time women spend on cooking and cleaning. The table shows that 66 % of working women spend 1-2 hours a day cooking and cleaning. On the contrary, most non-working women spend 3 to 4 hours on cooking and cleaning, which is 76%. In another sense, a working woman plays a dual role because, as a housewife, she does household chores, and after her working hours from her job, she manages the family by doing other essentials.

Table 2. Spending hours to cooking and cleaning

Cooking and cleaning hours in a day	Description	Respondents (%)
Working Women	1-2 hours	66
	3-4 hours	28
	5-6 hours	6
Non-Working Women	1-2 hours	20
	3-4 hours	76
	5-6 hours	4

Again, respondents have added an overall comparative idea about their role as housewives, mothers, and adjustment capabilities, their power or influence regarding the decision-making. To describe familial roles that women play, a working woman stated her roles;

Women are supposed to take care of the house and family members and fulfill their responsibilities even without being told. Despite doing a job, women are supposed to fulfill responsibilities well. For example, she said, I get up early in the morning, and according to my routine, I fulfill my responsibilities. I do most of the household chores, i.e., getting up very early in the morning, cooking food, having breakfast, preparation for lunch. After returning from the office, I must make dinner. While adjusting to them, you must sacrifice yourself to fulfill their needs. Completing household chores tends to be a woman's responsibility only (Married working woman, 38 years old, Tikatuli).

Notably, 62% of working women get support from their husbands for cooking, cleaning, taking, and picking up children from school, and teaching children, but another 38% are deprived of such support. That is why a woman addressed herself in this way;

Though the working women are also contributing a lot to the family, they may not be privileged to gain support and encouragement sometimes based on the perception of other members and culture. Thus culture, environment, and education are the major contributor to women's roles and responsibilities (Working woman, 32 years old, Kamalapur).

In addition, working women contribute as financial supporters towards their families. It has been observed that most of these women are from middle socioeconomic stratum who equally support family

bearing many responsibilities. About these issues, a woman from the middle socioeconomic stratum expressed her feelings;

My husband is a teacher. I have two children. I have completed my M.A. I wanted to do a job and my husband allowed me to do it. Now I can support my family financially. It's tough to manage a family on one's income in Dhaka. I am a big support for my children (Married working woman, 27 years old, Tikatuli).

Role of Working and Non-working Women to their Children

Based on the information gathered from the study, it is obvious and so common that both working and non-working women are conscious about their children. Both care for their children's health, education, and socialization. Working women get less time to spend with their children than non-working women, but they are conscious of their children. Therefore, working women have a much busier life than non-working women. They must maintain a hectic schedule. They must manage both the workplace and home. Sometimes they are stuck with adjustment problems with their husband or family, but they must manage it.

On the contrary, non-working women can give much time to their children and husband. As a result, they become happy with their family. Overall, they become more successful as housewives.

Table 3. Role of women to caring and schooling of children

Role of women	Description		Respondents (%)
Working Women	Ability to take pressure for caring children	Yes	96
		No	4
	Taking and picking up children from school	Yes	22
		No	78
Non-Working Women	Ability to take pressure for caring children	Yes	84
		No	16
	Taking and picking up children from school	Yes	72
		No	18

Table 3 shows that 96 % of working women can take pressure to care for children, but they have no opportunity to pick up their children from school (78%). On the contrary, most non-working women replied positively because they can pick up their children from school (72% of 100 respondents) but for managing pressure to care for children, their percentage is 84, which is comparatively less than working women. To describe the situation, we interviewed a working woman; she said;

My son is my world. I am doing a job, and I know why I am doing this. It's only for my son's future. I am working hard all day long. After returning from the office, when I saw his face, all my pains ran away (Working women, 40 years old, Tikatuli).

Findings say that working women don't get enough time to teach their children, only spend 1-2 hours a day. Again, 82% of non-working women are serious about their children's studies and spend 3 to 4 hours daily. While we also interviewed a non-working woman, she expressed her feelings in such way:

My daughter cannot do anything without me. I must drop her at school every day. I must make her favorite dish because she doesn't want to eat it properly. I am also playing a teacher's role. At the time of her exam, I must give almost all my time to her (A non-working woman of Kamalapur, 39 years old).

Adjustment Capacities to Social and Family Life

Several academic researchers demonstrated the importance of social adjustment, especially for peer relationships, academic performance, family and social relationships, happiness, and life satisfaction.

In addition, researchers found that children who display sociable and prosocial behavior are likely to achieve highly in academic areas (Armstrong-Carter et al., 2021; Safri, 2016). However, about 24% of working women get more pressure from their families to do jobs, and they cannot manage family properly. Another 76% of women enjoy their family and working life without pressure.

On the other hand, 64% of non-working women get unnecessary pressure from the family in many ways, whereas another 36% are free from such pressures. The study also found that most working women can cope with job and family pressure, but few working women, like 4%, are unable to manage properly. It is also one of the exciting findings that 84% of non-working women can manage their family pressure and try to pass their family life happily. Still, another 16 % of non-working women are unable.

Decision-making Capabilities of Working and Non-working Women

Regarding the decision-making ability to work women, it has been noted that working women get more decision-making power, and 92% of them can make decisions about their family matters, but unfortunately, 8 % are not. On the other hand, 68 % of non-working women cannot decide about eating out, buying household stuff, visiting out, and specific monthly income, whereas 32% of non-working women are lucky enough to make that decision. The current study also indicates that working women get decision-making power for family-related matters, which is 86%. On the contrary, non-working women are not independent in making decisions about monthly expenses, children's education, family outing, shopping, and visiting doctors. Only 28% of women are lucky enough to have it.

Table 4. Decision making capacity of women

Decision Making Ability	Description	Respondent (%)
Working Women	Yes	92
	No	8
Non-Working Women	Yes	32
	No	68

Another critical factor has been noted that 94% of non-working women are not approved to go shopping, get their own health facilities, attend community meetings, visit friends, go outside of Dhaka alone, and go to mosques or temples. Only 3% of non-working women are doing that willingly. The study shows that 56% of women got approval for shopping, getting their health facility, attending a community meeting, visiting friends, and going outside Dhaka on their own, but unfortunately, 44% of women do not have that authority. Encapsulating the whole scenario, about 92% of working women can participate in the decision making of family matters like monthly expenses, children's education, visiting, and buying household staff. Meanwhile, only 28% of non-working women have that power. From the percentage of approval calculation regarding shopping, getting health facilities, attending a community meeting, visiting friends, and going outside of Dhaka, it is seen that only 56% of working women are getting that permission, but only 6% of non-working women get that.

To sum up, the current study got a real scenario of working and non-working women fulfilling the role of homemakers. It has been a noteworthy observation that, all the working homemakers are passing hectic life compared to the non-working women (Shindaini & Akter, 2017). Most of them start to work after marriage, manage household chores, and care for husbands and children. In most cases, working homemakers got the privilege and can get a decision regarding their children's education, monthly expenses, shopping, outing, and meeting friends, On the other hand, non-working women invest more time in household chores, but in most cases, they are unable to get a decision like working women. It is also interesting that non-working women got more adjustment capability and working women got more decision-making capability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a society as well as family, women play a pivotal role, and their roles may be defined based on their cultural values and societal norms. As this study aimed to explore the roles of working and non-working women as housewives in Dhaka city, it has been noticed that homemakers play some fundamental roles regularly, which best supports the study's objective. Therefore, non-working homemakers look after their children, husband, and other family members. Cleaning, cooking, teaching, taking, picking up children from school, and shopping are almost mandatory for non-working women. Until today, most people believe that women only engage in household-related work. However, from the questionnaire analysis, non-working homemakers had less decision-making power in monthly expenses, children's education, visiting out, and having food in a restaurant.

Moreover, most non-working women cannot meet their friends and family, attend community meetings, and go outside their homes per their wishes. On the other hand, working women control both office and family work. Working homemakers are passing through a busy schedule. They must finish household chores like cleaning, cooking, taking care of children's education, and caring for husbands and other family members. Therefore, working homemakers are passing through hectic life. However, in the case of decision-making for monthly expenses, children's education, purchasing a necessary household, having food in the restaurant, or outing with family members, most working homemakers can take her on.

Moreover, most working homemakers can go out, meet friends and family, participate in some social activities, and get health care facilities independently. However, after the whole discussion, it has been observed that working and non-working women struggle to fit in the whole situation and play the perfect role everywhere. To sum up, in the study, working and non-working women both work for the family from their side, fulfilling the role of housewife, which is quite different in some cases in response to the situation.

The following suggestion can be undertaken regarding women's role to respect and dignity:

- a. Non-working women need to provide same privilege as working women does in family
- b. Diversification of role-playing options compared to men
- c. Encouraging non-working women to involve in some social activities
- d. Providing freedom to non-working women for their mental satisfaction
- e. Developing mutuality between husband and wife to control their job and family pressure together
- f. Traditional mentality needs to shake off and help them in all aspect to continue their job
- g. Avoiding conflict need to give priority to tour, visit places and other entertainment

Notes

1. Working women refer to the women who have multiple responsibilities, for instance, working for a living, wages or salary, and regularly employed outside the home. In addition, they usually play a domestic and working role by manual or industrial labor. Getting married, they get additional responsibilities, and when they become mothers, they have to manage the primary care of children and extended family and are, thus, under tremendous pressure to continue on a career path. Working mothers of today fulfill family responsibilities and try to remain fully involved in their careers, coping with the competing demands of their multiple roles. So, they play dual responsibilities (Delina & Raya, 2013).
2. Non-working Women also have the same duties and responsibilities that a woman plays for the family and society, but the status differs from working women. Because non-working women are not involved in formal employment, only domestic chores like caring, cooking, cleaning, and other essential tasks are performed without any wages or salary.

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