

# CHAPTER - I

## CHAPTER - I

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

#### **Women and Employment : A Historical Perspective**

The entry of women into the work-force in large numbers dates back to the second world-war which compelled women, particularly in the west, to come out of the confines of their homes and play the productive roles which were hitherto considered only male prerogatives. This was followed by the women's liberation movement of the sixties and seventies when women, again particularly of the west, protested against their discrimination and exploitation and started demanding equal rights on par with men, in all spheres of life.

In India, however, the history of women's employment has been quite different. In the agrarian Indian society, women had always been participating in economic activities on par with men. This was the time when home itself was the production unit, making it easier for women to perform their domestic as well as economic roles. Although we have references to women scholars like Gargi, Maitreyi and Lopamudra and heroic women like Rani Sultana, Chandbihi and Lakshmbai in ancient India, the majority of the women received only informal education. In fact, education was not deemed necessary for them.

The middle ages pushed the women, especially of the upper and middle class, into 'Purdah', making them almost 'invisible' from all the public and productive domains of life. The evil social customs like child-marriage, sati, female infanticide, dowry etc. soared nothing in oppressing women. The widely accepted Manu code put all types of restrictions on woman's physical mobility and condemned women as evil beings. They were treated almost like chattels. The women of rural agrarian sectors however continued working without being affected by any of the above mentioned customs.

With the advent of the British rule in India, things began to change gradually for the betterment of Indian women. As a result of the combined efforts of social reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Banade etc and British rulers like Bentinck, successful attempts were made to eradicate the above mentioned social customs from Indian society. The upper class Indians, who were the beneficiaries of British education, perceived a need for educating women in order to rescue them from their sub-human and oppressed conditions.

The Independence Movement gave a great impetus to the efforts for the improvement of women a lot. Gandhiji gave a call to Indian women to come out of the four walls of their homes and take an active part in the freedom struggle. Without the active participation of women, Gandhiji declared, the goal of independence, would be impossible to attain.

In the post-Independence period, our new constitution which was based on the principles of equality, liberty and fraternity, conferred equal rights on women in all the spheres, particularly franchise, education and employment. Not only this, but looking to the prolonged deprivation of women in the past, they were given some more privileges like free education and reservation in educational institutions, various government departments and very recently in local self-government bodies. Various other measures were also taken for the upliftment of women. Amongst these measures, education was emphasized the most because it was regarded as an instrument to bring about social change. It was envisaged that education would enable Indian women to define their position in a more active manner, by equipping them with knowledge and skills which can make them economically independent. Education would present before them new alternatives and choices. It was also expected that education would make them aware of their own identities and their roles in society, emphasising their productive roles in different public domains.

All the commissions and committees which were set-up for planning and executing educational policies also emphasised education for women. The Indian Education Commission (1964-66), recommended linking up of higher education for women with their employment. The National Policy on Education (1968) stressed women's education not only

on the grounds of social justice but also for social transformation. The National Policy on Education (1986), "Programme of Action", stated that education would be used as an agent to bring about a basic change in the status of women. According to the "Programme of Action", the national education system would play a "positive interventionist role in the empowerment of women". It also laid emphasis on promotion of women's studies and encouraged educational institutions to take up active programmes to further women's development.

Following this, the central government and various state governments have taken concrete steps to raise women's status by giving them free education and enhancing their employment opportunities. Gujarat government has made education for women free from primary to university level. There has also been an increasing emphasis on professionalising women's education so as to enable them to find employment. As a result of all such persistent efforts, at present, we find increased literacy rate among Indian women. According to 1991 census, the female literacy rate in India is 39.47% as against the female literacy rate in 1951 which was 7.95%.

As education has direct bearing on employment in India, parallel to the increased literacy rate among Indian women, their participation in the employment market is also increasing. Their entry in the work-force has begun with

occupations like teaching and nursing but to-day we find them making forays into all types of occupations as clerks, secretaries, stenographers etc and lastly as doctors, lawyers, scientists, engineers, managers and even as police officers.

## Women in the Professions

Beginning with the professions like teaching and Medicine, gradually women started entering into all types of professions, even in the so-called male dominated professions like Law, Engineering, Management and Accountancy wherein they have successfully established themselves. Many of them occupy positions of power and prestige, as heads of university departments, managers in banks, judges in the courts and also as police officers. No longer is their motive for employment just survival or supplementing the family income but now they work to realise their potential and to contribute to the society.

But this is just one side of the picture. Although the numerical graph of the Indian professional women seems to be quite impressive, the graph of their professional development is far from satisfactory. "Higher the fewer" very appropriately describes the position of women in the professions. Only a few women are able to reach up to the highest ranks in the professions. A majority of them stagnate at the middle or the lower level, doing repetitive types of jobs. Moreover, people still doubt their legitimacy as professionals. There are charges labeled against them that they are lacking in professional commitment and they give only second priority to their work, first priority being their families.

Some of the research findings also support this. Desai (1978) refers to "a lower need felt by women for professional competence and advancement". Gurnani and Sheth, (1983) in their study on women in scientific professions have come out with the finding, "their (women's) choice of science as a profession is yet restricted to its use value, as an instrument for making living more convenient. They continue to consider their family roles more important than their professional roles". Ahmad Karuna (1984) in another study talks about "women not setting high career targets". Krishnaraj (1977) has arrived at a conclusion in a study related to women in occupations requiring higher education that women were in lower positions relative to men and relative to their qualifications. Cole " Cole (1973) in a study exploring unequal participation of women in scientific profession reveals that women scientists, regardless of their marital status or size of their families, simply produce fewer scientific papers or papers of lesser impact. He further writes that women are not as frequently promoted to senior positions as are men who come from the same doctoral departments.

All such negative findings regarding professional women raise the following questions.

- \* Why are women professionals not able to rise high in their respective professions ?
- \* Are they really lacking in professional commitment ?

- \* Why are they manifesting less professional competence and excellence ?
- \* What can be the possible reasons for their lagging behind ?
- \* Do they lag behind due to their so-called feminine traits which make them too emotional, soft and unable to perform their professional roles ?
- \* Is it due to certain problems that professional women face which come in their way of achieving success as professionals ?
- \* Is it something related to the very nature of the professions and the concepts related to professions like commitment, professional excellence, professional accountability, profession culture etc, that their professional development is far from satisfaction ?

Several attempts have been made to answer the above questions related to under-achievement of women as professionals. From all such attempts, it becomes very clear that women in the profession are put in a unique position, quite different from men in the professions. Considering the late entry of women into professions, the masculine ethos prevalent in most of the professions and the male defined concepts like professional commitment, professional excellence etc, and male-oriented work-ethos and professional culture of most of the professions, it seems that women may

be finding it rather difficult to make their way into the professions and rise up to the higher levels of professional hierarchy. To understand how this happens, it is necessary to look into the nature and structure of the professions and how the related concepts like professional commitment, professional excellence, professional competence, professional culture etc, have been defined.

### **Major Definitions of Profession**

It is rather difficult to offer a very comprehensive definition of a profession, the reason being a variety of meanings attached to it, sometimes even contradictory to each other. Moreover, there are factors like culture of a society, bureaucratization and growing state control which have added to the complexity of the concept of a profession. Some of the definitions of a profession are as follows.

R.H. Tawney (1920), defining a profession wrote " The essence of a profession is that though men may enter in it for the sake of livelihood, the measure of their success is the service they perform, not the gains which they amass".

According to Larr-Saunders and Wilson (1932) " A profession emerges when a number of persons are found to be practicing a definite technique, founded upon a specialized

training. A profession may perhaps be defined as an occupation based upon specialized intellectual study and training, the purposed of which is to supply skilled service or advice to others for a definite fee or salary".

Defining a profession, Parsons (1939) wrote, " I conceive a profession to be a category of an occupational role which is organized about the mastery and fiduciary responsibility for its perpetuation and for its future development. In addition, a profession may have responsibility for the application of its knowledge in practical situations".

According to Coqsn (1950), " A profession is a vocation whose practice is founded upon an understanding of the theoretical structure of some department or learning or science and the abilities accompanying such understanding. This understanding and these abilities are applied to the vital practical affairs of men. The professions, serving the vital needs of men, consider its first imperative to be altruistic service to the clients."

On the basis of the above definitions, one can derive the following, as essential attributes of any profession.

### Attributes of a Profession

- (a) Its practice is based on certain theoretical foundations or scientific body of knowledge.
- (b) It also includes the technical aspect in its practice whereby its theoretical principles are applied to people or situations through techniques or operation.
- (c) It requires its practitioners to undergo a period of preparation whereby they get deep sound and thorough knowledge of that particular discipline as well as training or apprenticeship which equips them with technical competence needed for the profession.
- (d) It has a clear defined social role which includes understanding of social functions the profession performs and how these functions relate to the total functioning of the society. This particular feature of a profession demands accountability from the professionals.
- (e) Each profession has its recognised code of ethics which regulates the professional conduct of its practitioners and curbs the mal-practices and unethical behaviour on part of the professionals.
- (f) A profession is self-organising and self regulating. This gives rise to professional organisations. Such professional organisations work towards building up of a positive image of the profession in society and towards protecting the interests of the professionals.

- (g) A profession grants a high degree of autonomy to its practitioners. This enables them to exercise their discretion and judgment in their daily practice as well as in the critical situations.
- (h) A profession also demands pursuit of excellence from its practitioners. They are constantly seeking new knowledge, thus updating themselves as the profession itself.

### **Professionalism**

One major concept related to any profession is professionalism. There are different interpretations of the term 'professionalism'. Some emphasise the practical and functional aspect of it, viz. performance or behaviour of professionals while some consider it a state of mind, a matter of attitudes and perceptions.

According to Greenwood (1962) "Professionalism is one that views a profession as an organised group which is constantly interacting with society that forms its matrix, which performs its social functions through a net work of formal and informal relationships and which creates its own sub-culture requiring adjustments to it as pre-requisite for career success". Parry and Parry (1976) feel that professionalism is a strategy for controlling a profession in which colleagues set-up a system of self-government."

The above definitions of a profession and professionalism clearly spell out the high demands of a profession. A profession demands from its practitioners, a high level of commitment, accountability, continuous pursuit of excellence, adherence to ethical code of behaviour in their daily practice and exercise of their discretion and judgment in critical situations.

But when one considers the social reality of Indian women, one wonders whether women professionals are able to fulfill such high demands of professions. Beginning with the long period of professional training which discourages women from entering into the professions to the concept of pursuit of excellence which becomes very difficult for women as they have to devote more time and energy to their social roles, women face many obstacles in making their way into the professions and to establish successfully in the professions. When one considers the concepts of professionalism, one is given an "all or nothing" kind of definition preaching total commitment, moulding one's entire personality and life-style to suit the profession (professional image), and emphasising professional socialization (professional culture) for a professional. The stereotypical image of a professional is that of a male professional who single minded<sup>d</sup>ly pursues profession. He, along with other males of the same profession forms professional networks wherein mutual interrelations, support and sometimes even competitiveness help him to rise in the profession. In

case of women professionals, because of compelling household duties, they cannot pursue professions. Single-mindedly even if they want to. Unlike men, they don't enjoy facilities to pursue career single mindedly. To cope up with professional autonomy is also a problem for Indian women as they are hardly encouraged from their childhood to take independent decisions. Moreover, as they are assumed to be too emotional and unable to think objectively, there is no faith in women's discretion and judgment. Adhering to professional culture becomes even more difficult as there are fewer women compared to men in most of the professions which makes it difficult to form any kind of effective women's networks. Due to social taboos, they hesitate to become an integral part of male networks as it will require interactions with men. And lastly, regarding competitiveness, less said the better. As they are taught from childhood to be submissive and self-effacing, they find it very difficult to be assertive and combative.

In the light of such high demands of the professional roles and even higher demands of the social roles of women, it becomes pertinent to know how women professionals function as professionals and how they perceive professionalism. It is also pertinent to inquire whether they agree with the idealistic definitions of professionalism which are prescribed or they differ significantly in their perceptions regarding professionalism.

There have been attempts to study various issues related to professional women i. e. their status, their professional commitment, their professional efficiency etc. Many of such studies reveal underachievement of women as professionals. Some of the inquiries have also concentrated on identifying the factors responsible for underachievement of professional women. Such types of studies reveal that women professionals face some specific problems which come in their way of functioning as professionals. These problems can be categorised into three types.

- (a) Socio-cultural Problems
- (b) Psychological Problems
- (c) Problems arising out of the structuring and ethos of the profession.

The following section briefly attempts to discuss the above stated problems which professional women face.

### Problems Faced by Professional Women

#### (a) Socio - Cultural Problems

##### 1) Agrarian Family Set-up

Indian society follows an agrarian model of social design. In this type of social set-up, joint or extended family becomes the most important institution. A woman's place is prescribed within the family as a house keeper, wife and a

nurturant mother. She is expected to give comforts to all the family members and look after their needs. Conformity, surrender and sacrifice are the values nurtured in a girl child from the very beginning. A woman is rarely encouraged to excel in any public domain hence we find most of the professional women's careers unplanned. The qualities like competitiveness, assertiveness and combativeness which are considered essential for a professional to function successfully are not cultivated in them. Lack of these qualities comes in the way of their achieving success.

#### 11) Role-Models

Indian culture, by way of scriptures, mythology and religious beliefs imposes certain role models on Indian women such as Sita and Savitri. The behaviour of Indian women is moulded in accordance with these role models. Women with this kind of upbringing find it difficult to adjust to professional roles and work-ethos which are products of industrialised society. Ahmad Karuna (1984) has referred to low professional commitment of women resulting from their role-perceptions and self-images imbibed through processes of socialization. b. Bhargava (1982) studied sex-differences in the professional identifications of medical students wherein he conceptualized professional identification as career commitment, career satisfaction and professional self-image and found that the scores of women were lower when compared

to those of men.

Indian women have tried to borrow new role-models from the western society but these role-models have been accepted only at ideational level. They are not accepted within the traditional set-up of our society. This creates a lot of psychological stress among professional women. They find it difficult to commit to the formal work-ethos of the professions. They feel guilty towards other social roles and suffer from anxiety in letting go the social ideals.

### iii) Gender Stereo-Types

There prevail certain stereo-types in our society regarding the nature and role of women. Certain human traits and qualities are considered to be dependent on gender i.e. tenderness, emotionalism, nurturance, forbearance, vanity, jealousy etc, are considered to be innate traits of women. A woman's self-image and society's image of a woman is influenced by such stereo-types. A woman is also compelled to conform to these stereo-typed images lest she be considered unfeminine. If she behaves in an assertive or competitive manner, she is termed as masculine and 'aggressive'. She is not expected to be highly achieving and successful in her career. Research findings such as "The belief that a successful career woman is unfeminine is widely held by men and women alike". (Epstein -1970) and "There is also a prevalent belief that a woman should not be more

competent than her husband" (Komarovsky -1973) support the above mentioned views. Such stereo-types are responsible for the underestimation of women by their employers who hesitate to assign to women, important and challenging tasks which enhance a professional's career. Male colleagues cannot accept them as equals and male subordinates resent taking orders from them. In short, such stereo-types create many problems for professional women.

#### (b) Psychological Problems

There are a few other problems of professional women which are psychological in nature and hence operate in a covert manner. They are not perceived directly by others, sometimes even by professional women themselves, yet play a major role in hampering the development of professional women. Following are the two major psychological problems faced by women.

##### i) Conditioning

Indian women from their childhood are conditioned to think of themselves as inferior to men. They have lower self-concept which directly affects their performance as professionals. Several studies have substantiated the fact that self-concept has a direct bearing on the success or failure of a person in life. Indian women with their low

self-concept find it very difficult to handle certain tasks independently. As they are conditioned to think that they need to depend on men in some or the other way, they find it extremely difficult to make important decisions.

#### (ii) Role-Conflict

An Indian woman has to play a dual role, the familial role as well as the professional role. A profession, as mentioned earlier is highly demanding in terms of time and energy. At psychological level, a profession expects more commitment, internalisation of the professional values and moulding one's entire life-style according to the requirement of the profession. At the same time, the family expects a woman to provide comforts to all the family members, irrespective of whether the woman is burdened with the additional responsibilities at the work-place or not. These conflicting demands exert tremendous pressure on a woman professional. She faces a dilemma as to which role should be given priority. To fulfill the demands of both the roles is extremely difficult and could lead her to a sense of guilt in either case.

#### (c) Problems Arising out of the Structuring and Ethos of the Professions.

There is yet another set of factors leading to the underachievement of women professionals. It is the nature of

profession with their specific characteristics which affects professional women adversely. In the past, when the professions emerged, they were confined only to men as the work-ethos and the work patterns were designed from a male perspective. Women's entry into the professions was not envisaged. As a result, by and large, professional culture of most of the professions is male-oriented and fails to accommodate women fully. This leads to the marginalisation of women in the professions.

It is not just the structuring or designing of the professions but the concepts related to a profession such as professionalism with its components like commitment, pursuit of excellence and professional competence etc, are also defined entirely from a male perspective, ignoring the social reality of women in which they function. This also poses problems for professional women.

Following are the problems arising out of the nature and structuring of professions which prove to be obstacles to the advancement of professional women.

#### i) Stereotypes about the Professions

Just as there are stereotypes about the innate qualities of women and men, so are there stereotypes regarding different professions also, in terms of their

suitability to a particular gender. The professions like academics and medicine are considered to be suitable for women, whereas professions like engineering, management, law etc. are considered to be suitable to men. As a result of this kind of ideology, women have to face problems right from the entry stage. There is a general reluctance to employ women in certain male-dominated professions. If at all they are employed, they are channeled into certain types of work-roles which are routine, repetitive and unchallenging leading them to stagnation.

#### (i) Ethos of the Professions

The work-ethos of the most of the professions reflect the male world-view. The professional activities are buttressed and cemented by male patterns of sociability. Women failing to conform to these patterns are labeled as less competent. They are also assessed by male criteria of competitiveness, aggressiveness and combativeness ignoring their special and unique strengths.

#### (ii) Professional Relationships

Due to the professional norms of the Indian society, women in the professions still feel confused as to how they should relate to the males within the professional set-up, viz. male superiors, male colleagues and male subordinates. More often they refrain from professional

interactions and relationships. This deprives them of the opportunities of having an access to 'soft-information' and messages transmitted during the informal chats and sessions. They often remain uninformed about the subtle internal politics of the professions which becomes a major handicap in their professional growth.

#### iv) Lack of Sponsorship and Peer Support

The professions are socially organised life communities and as such they involve informal roles and practices and tend towards homogeneity and exclusionary relations. Social control in the professions as well as access to rewards typically operate through a sponsorship system. Within this network, social relations with one's peers and colleagues bring opportunities and promotions. The women professionals who are excluded from the protegee system are likely to find themselves disadvantaged when it comes to professional opportunities.

The male-oriented work ethos and the male-defined concepts related to professions result in one major problem which women professionals, particularly in the so-called male-dominated professions face. This is popularly known as 'marginalisation' of women. Women, within the professions are marginalised through a variety of subtle mechanisms. They are deliberately excluded from various professional activities

like meetings, conferences, collective decision-making etc. Spencer and Portmore (1985) identified the following factors which contribute to the marginalisation of women in the male dominated professions.

- (a) Stereotypes about women - that women's innate nature is 'emotional', 'unstable' and not decisive enough.
- (b) Stereotypes about the nature of the professions -- that professions are combative.
- (c) Lack of sponsorship system - the need for young professionals to find seniors who will push along their careers. This is difficult because of the lack of senior women professionals.
- (d) Lack of Role-models - As there is dearth of senior women professionals, the aspirant professionals do not find role-models to inspire them or from whom they can imbibe professional values.
- (e) Lack of Peer-support -- the relatively small number of women professionals means, women are often isolated and lack in peer-support.
- (f) Informal Relationships -- Women find themselves excluded from many of the informal activities which are so important in building up successful careers.
- (g) The concept of professional commitment -- the all or nothing of professionalism which women find or are assumed to find difficult to adhere to.

- (h) Clients' Expectations - the claim that women professionals are unacceptable to many clients and so can work only in 'less visible' capacities.
- (i) Fear of competition -- the fear that women will work for less remuneration than men and lower the prestige of a profession.

The above discussed socio-cultural, psychological and professional problems create obstacles in the way of women professionals in their day-to-day functioning, so it is very important to study how the above mentioned problems come in their way of achieving higher level of professionalism. Such problems are bound to colour their perceptions regarding professionalism hence the present investigation tries to study the perceptions of professional women with regard to professionalism and the professional problems faced by them.

## The Present Study

The researches related to professional women and their problems, so far have concentrated on only one or two dimensions of professionalism such as professional commitment, professional efficiency, accountability, professional ethics etc, but even few researches have attempted to study professionalism of professional women in a broader sense. The present inquiry is an attempt to study professionalism in a comprehensive manner, taking into consideration most of its dimensions -viz- professional commitment, accountability, pursuit of excellence, professional culture, autonomy and professional ethics. In case of problems, however the present study focuses mainly on professional problems encountered by women in their work-settings because enough attention has been paid to socio-cultural problems and role conflict of women. It is difficult, however, to compartmentalize the problems into strictly different categories, so certain problems which overlap are taken into consideration.

Moreover, the researches conducted so far have been mainly of comparative nature, taking gender as a variable or a correlate showing how men and women differ due to gender-differences. The present inquiry too is comparative, but of a different type. It attempts to compare perceptions of women professionals in different professions with regard to professionalism and also to compare their problems. As discussed in the earlier section of the chapter.

most of the professions are male-defined and male-oriented in terms of their ethos, norms and work conditions. But here too, there is a degree of difference. Certain professions are more male-oriented than the others. Generally professions are demarcated by labeling them as "masculine" or "feminine" professions or sometimes as "traditional" and "non-traditional" from women's point of view.

The academic profession needs a special mention here. It was the first profession with which women made their entry into the professions. There was and still is a widely prevalent belief that this is the most suitable profession for women as it is an extension to their nurturant role. In fact, teaching, atleast up to school level, is considered to be a feminine profession. Even to-day, compared to other professions, we find heavier concentration of women in the academic profession.

Next to the academic profession is the medical profession with respect to its suitability for women. The reason being again its nurturing nature - looking after the health of people, tending them. This is similar to their socially prescribed roles. But the profession like Engineering, Law, Management etc are considered to be less "suitable" for women. They are termed as 'masculine' as they require high degree of efficiency, objectivity, assertiveness, combativeness and decision-making. The

question which arises here is - Do such 'masculine' and 'feminine' professions influence the perceptions of women professionals in a significantly different way? Similarly it is also worthwhile to know whether the nature and the extent to which women professionals face various problems in so-called traditional and non-traditional profession is significantly different.

With this consideration, the investigator has attempted to study the perceptions of professional women with regard to professionalism and the problems which they face in achieving higher level of professionalism. This will also partially answer the question as to whether the felt need for re-defining and re-structuring professions in a gender-free way, in order to accommodate women, is justified.

#### **Title of the Study**

The title of the present study is as follows :

'A Study of the Perceptions of Professional Women with Regard to Professionalism and Professional Problems, with a Special Focus on Women Teachers in Higher Education .

#### **Operational Definitions of the Terms**

##### **(1) Professionalism**

In this study professionalism means the manner in which the professional women function, adhering to professional values like commitment, accountability, pursuit

of excellence, sincerity and ethical conduct.

## (2) Professional Women

Professional women in this study mean :

- women teachers in Higher Education which includes women teachers who are working in the universities and affiliated colleges of Gujarat as lectures, Readers and Professors.
- Women doctors in government and private hospitals as well as having private practice.
- Women lawyers in courts of Gujarat or working as legal officers in different departments.
- Women administrators working as class I and II officers in different governmental departments and Nationalised Banks.
- Media Women associated with All India Radio, Press and Television.

## (3) Perceptions

Perceptions in this study means the understanding or awareness of external objects, qualities and relations. It is a process by which an individual organises and makes sense of his/her experiences.

## Objectives of the Study

- (1) To study the perceptions of women teachers in Academics (Higher/ Education) with regard to professionalism.
- (2) To study the perceptions of women professionals in the professions of Medicine, Administration, Law and Media with regard to professionalism.
- (3) To study the differences in the perceptions of women professionals in the professions of Academics (Higher Education), Medicine, Administration, <sup>Law</sup> and Media with regard to professionalism.
- (4) To study the professional problems of women teachers in Academics (Higher Education).
- (5) To study the professional problems of women professionals in the professions of Medicine, Administration, Law and Media.
- (6) To study the differences in the professional problems of professional women in the professions of Academics, Medicine, Administration, Law and Media.
- (7) To prepare profiles of selected women professionals with outstanding achievements in their respective professions.

## The Significance of the Study

The present study is undertaken to find out the perceptions of women professionals in different professions, with regard to professionalism and to understand the problems of women professionals in different professions.

This kind of knowledge will throw light on how women professionals perceive professionalism within our patriarchal social system and masculine professional structures and work-ethos. Moreover, it will also reveal the nature of the problems they face within the male-oriented professional set-ups.

This kind of knowledge can help the women professionals in understanding their problems in a better way so as to enable them to cope with their problems easily. It can also be used as an input in the professional preparation programmes for future women professionals. This would ensure higher level of professionalism on the part of future women professionals.

Moreover the comparison across the professions will clearly indicate whether the nature and structure of a particular profession with its specific professional ethos and culture and working conditions have direct bearing on the problems which professional women face. This will clearly

spell out the need, if any, of re-defining and of restructuring the professions in order to accommodate more and more women in the professions..pe

#### **Delimitations of the Study**

- (1) Owing to the large-time factor involved in collecting the data, the study was confined to only five professions-viz- Academics, Medicine, Administration, Law and Media.
  
- (2) The study was confined only to five cities of Gujarat -viz- Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Surat, Jamnagar and Rajkot.