

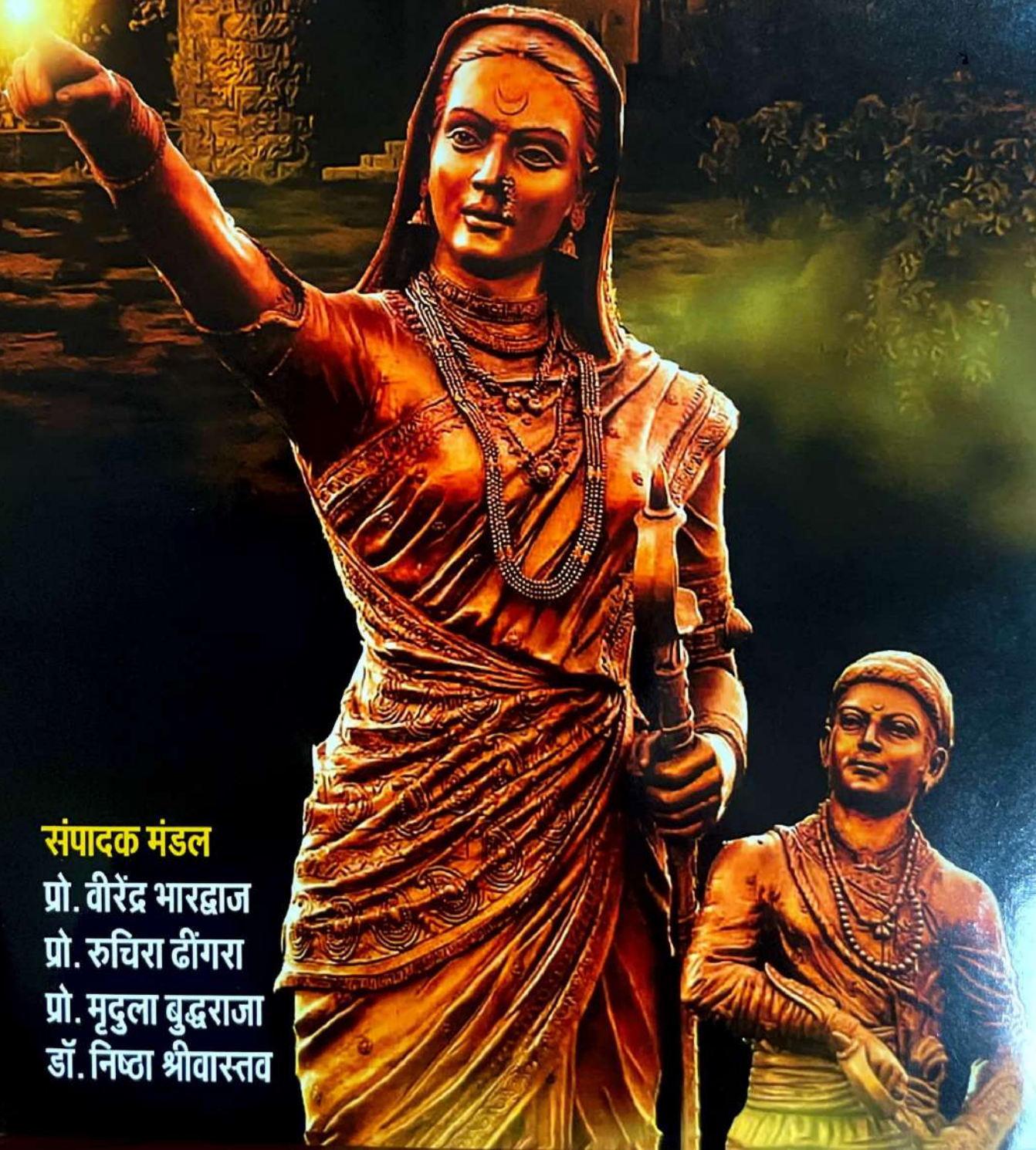


शिवाजी कॉलेज

राष्ट्रीय मूल्यांकन एवं प्रत्यायन परिषद (एन.ए.ए.सी) द्वारा 'ए' श्रेणी मान्यता प्राप्त
दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय



कुटुम्ब प्रबोधन



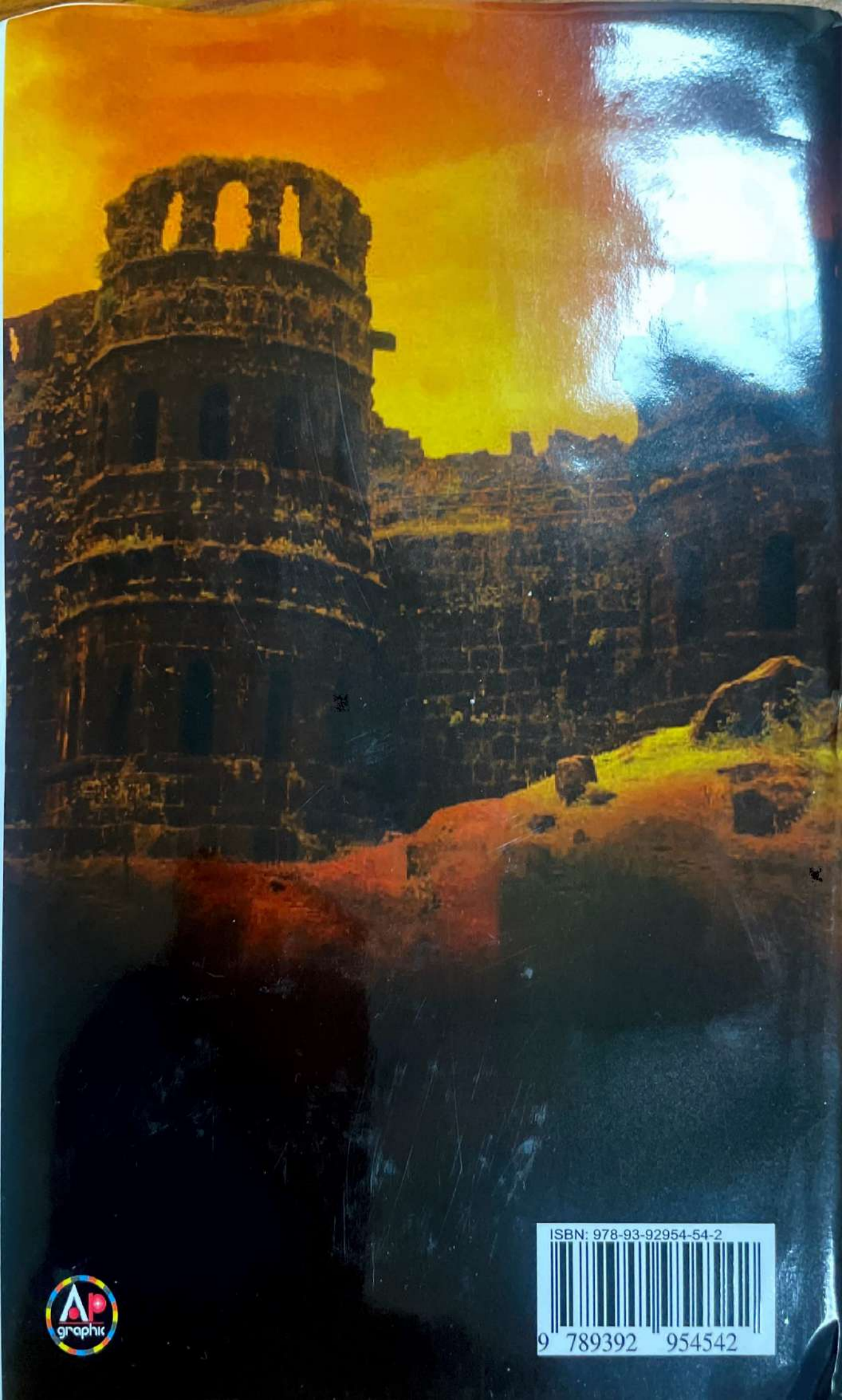
संपादक मंडल

प्रो. वीरेंद्र भारद्वाज

प्रो. रुचिरा ढींगरा

प्रो. मृदुला बुद्धराजा

डॉ. निष्ठा श्रीवास्तव



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Message from The Chairman

Dear Esteemed Stakeholders,

The resonance that the book on "Woman and Family: Some Reflections" has found among our community is truly remarkable, underscoring the pivotal nature of the subject. As the chairman, I take immense pride in presenting this anthology, a collaborative effort by our students, alumni, and faculty members. It encapsulates the diverse perspectives surrounding the intricate yet profoundly significant theme of womanhood and family.

Year after year, we meticulously incorporate stories of the Jijabai awardees, recognizing the multifaceted brilliance of these luminaries. This practice not only pays homage to their achievements but also transforms the book into a repository of the rich archives of Shivaji College.

As the chairman, I am proud to be associated with a project that delves into the complexities of such a significant topic. This anthology serves as a testament to the intellectual depth and diversity within our academic community. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to everyone involved and look forward to the continued success of this endeavor.

Prof. Rakesh Kumar
Chairman, Shivaji College

प्रधानाचार्य की कलम से

आज के संदर्भ में परिवार नामक संस्था की प्रासंगिकता और अधिक बढ़ गई है। एक ऐसे समय जब तकनीकी तौर से देखें तो दूरियाँ पट गई हैं , परंतु वास्तविकता में मानवीय संबंध सतही हो गए हैं। ऐसे में परिवार ही वह संस्था है जो समाज को बांधने का महत्वपूर्ण कार्य कर रही है ।

शिवाजी कॉलेज के प्रधानाचार्य के रूप में मैं कॉलेज के महिला विकास प्रकोष्ठ के विद्यार्थियों और शिक्षकों को बधाई देता हूँ कि उन्होने एक टीम के रूप में इस महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर विद्वतापूर्ण विमर्श किया, और उसको एक सूत्र में बांध कर इस पुस्तक को प्रकाशित कराया । महिला विकास प्रकोष्ठ के जीजाबाई पुरस्कार से संबन्धित कार्य और उनके वृतांत को कलमबद्ध करने का कार्य भी सराहनीय है । मेरा विश्वास है कि प्रकोष्ठ भविष्य में भी ऐसे सार्थक कार्यों की परंपरा को आगे बढ़ायेगा।

प्रो. वीरेन्द्र भारद्वाज
प्रधानाचार्य

From the Desk of The Editors

A book on “Woman and Family: Some Reflections” touched an instant chord amongst the stakeholders of the book, because of the central importance of the subject. An anthology of articles by students, alumni and faculty members, this book is an apt reflection of the multifarious perspectives that open up around this complex, but extremely significant topic. As editors, we were particular to include most of the viewpoints figuring in the articles, even if they were conflicting and uneasy, as we believe that churning of thoughts is the only way to reach a workable conclusion around a subject, which elicits more controversy than consensus. As a team, we also feel convinced that controversies elicit the highest possibility of promise and potential, as far as lived institutions are concerned. Stories of the Jijabai awardees are religiously included every year, primarily to do justice to the multifaceted personalities of the luminaries, as also to make it a repository of the rich archives of Shivaji College.

The Women Development Cell, Shivaji College, remains committed to carry on this academic exercise, with utmost passion, so as to continue the dialogue between the past, present and the future.

Prof. Virender Bhardwaj

Prof. Ruchira Dhingra

Prof. Mridula Budhraja

Dr. Nishtha Srivastava

Acknowledgements

Making of a book is such a herculean task, as it elicits multiplicity of thoughts, processes, administrative prerequisites to be fulfilled, as well as seemingly impossible deadlines to be met. The challenges are aplenty, but precisely those are also the motivation to carry on. The team at WDC has gathered immense support from almost all quarters of the college to come out with this endeavour. As one of the editors and being the convenor of the Women Development Cell, one needs to acknowledge their contributions in order to count our blessings and strengthen our resolve. At the outset, I thank the Almighty for giving us the vision to visualize such a venture, as well as granting us the conviction that social change is a product of consciousness, which evolves as a process.

Humble thanks are due to the Principal Sir, Prof. Virender Bhardwaj for not only supporting us at each and every stage of the book-making, but also contributing an article in it, inspite of his extremely pressing administrative engagements. We will take this opportunity to request him for such co-operation, for times to come.

A big thank you needs to be expressed towards all the contributors of the book, without whom the book would not have seen the light of the day. The subject, 'family', might seem quotidian and thus easy to handle, but when one starts to write around it, its everyday nature becomes a cause for complexity, which is actually difficult to write about. Special thanks to the faculty members, for pitching in and adding grace and value to the book. Alumni, who have been included for the first time as contributors, need to be thanked, for giving us the conviction that time must have passed, but they care for the academic

rigour of their *alma mater* , in the most thoughtful of ways. Students who have worn the hat of authors need to be acknowledged, for writing around the theme in the most engaging of ways. Special thanks are extended towards the student editors for their active co-ordination and acting as a healthy mediator between teachers and the students. We sure had some uneasy moments, but today it all seems totally worth the effort.

It is important to add that every step of this book-production had to go through a lengthy administrative procedure, through GEM. A big thanks is expressed towards the team of faculty members and non-teaching colleagues, who were engaged with the procedure of GEM, which is an extremely tedious task. Alongwith GEM, the publication of '*Kutumb-Prabodhan*' was not possible, without the co-operation of non-teaching staff, who need to be acknowledged individually as well as collectively. Mr. Hemant Lamba and his team who took care of the administrative requirements, Mr Praveen and his team who supervised the project as having economic ramifications, Mr. Bhupinder and his team, who did all the plagiarism checks Mr. Ratan and his team who did all the GEM related tasks more than once, and Ms. Mamta and Mr. Mohit who provided us with printouts repeatedly and copiously, and Shankar and Bhola for providing us many many cups of tea and coffee to keep our spirits alive, are as much part of this book, as we all are. Being the spine of the college, its amazing how they all shoulder tedious responsibilities of all kinds, with an extremely cheerful disposition. Thankyou all, for such co-operation.

Teachers of WDC, need to be acknowledged profusely for all the patience they have shown in a process which had more downs than ups. If we have this book in our hands today, your efforts have borne

fruits. Special mention of Prof. Ruchira Dhingra, who has been involved from day one, when the concept note was being drafted. Prof. Mridula Budhraj needs to be mentioned for her unstoppable energy and guidance, when the weather was inhospitable. Your vision is what constitutes the essence of the book. Ms. Manisha has been part of this exercise and its publication at various levels. A deep thanks to all. Teachers, who have collected the stories of our Jijabai awardees need to be thanked for all the efforts, which included field trips, interviewing as well as the writing bit. They have been the most efficient middle – person between the College and the awardees, and have prepared an archive for the college.

Students have been an inherent part of the making of the book. Student editors, executive, core teams and many more levels, kept the teachers on toes, taking notes, editing and re-editing and meeting deadlines, inspite of their hectic class and examination related schedules. You all need to be applauded and let me add, you all are, surely, the pulse of the WDC. The publishers and printers are profusely thanked for keeping the project intact, inspite of many hiccups.

Inadequacies may be aplenty, and they are mine and mine alone. Let me end with Nida Fazli's words:

Mire junuun ka natija zaruur niklega
Isi siyah samundar se nuur niklega

Dr. Nishtha Srivastava
Convener, Women Development Cell

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परिवार : परंपरा और प्रेरणा

प्रो. वीरेंद्र भारद्वाज¹

मानव की विकासशील यात्रा में परिवार की रचना एक महत्त्वपूर्ण घटना है। परिवार की भावना यद्यपि कई प्राणी समूहों में देखी जाती है, किंतु इसका उत्कृष्ट स्वरूप मानवजाति द्वारा ही निर्मित हुआ है। ऐतिहासिक संदर्भों में परिवार मनुष्य की समूह में रहने की स्वभावगत सहजता भी रही है और सांस्कृतिक सामाजिक परिप्रेक्ष्य में यह विकास का एक महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रस्थान बिंदु बनी है। परिवार की संरचना में एक बेहद रोचक और अहम तत्त्व है - मातृत्व का भाव। अर्थात् माता की भूमिका। वस्तुतः पूरे परिवार की योजना माता के इर्द-गिर्द ही घूमती है, वही प्राथमिक - प्राकृतिक और प्रारंभिक धुरी रहती है।

इस रूप में परिवार एक पवित्र तथा उपयोगी संस्था है। परिवार में मानव की सर्वांगीण उन्नति का आधार सहयोग, सहायता और पारस्परिकता का भाव है। यह भाव वह शक्ति है जिसके आधार पर मनुष्य आदि जंगली स्थिति से उन्नति करता-करता आज की सभ्य स्थिति में पहुँचा है। सहयोग की भावना ही मनुष्य जाति की उन्नति का मूल कारण रही है। एकता, सामाजिकता, मैत्री आदि की सहयोग मूलक शक्ति ने ही आज मानव सभ्यता को उच्चता पर पहुँचा दिया है। सभ्यता के प्रारंभिक युग में जिस व्यक्ति ने सहयोग की शक्ति समझ कर उसका प्रकटीकरण तथा प्रवर्तन किया होगा, वह निश्चय ही एक बड़ा दार्शनिक तथा समाज हितैषी महापुरुष रहा होगा। सहयोग की शक्ति जान कर लोगों ने अपनी स्थूल तथा सूक्ष्म विशेषताओं को मिला कर संगठन की चेतना प्रबुद्ध की होगी और कन्धे-से-कन्धा, विचार-से-विचार, शक्ति-से-शक्ति तथा साधन-से-साधन मिला कर एक तन-मन से काम किया होगा, जिसके फलस्वरूप सभ्यता तथा मानवीय समृद्धि के एक के बाद एक द्वार खुलते चले गये होंगे।

परिवारों से मिल कर समाज और समाज से राष्ट्र का निर्माण होता है। यदि परिवार, संगठित, शक्ति सम्पन्न और समृद्ध हो जायें तो समाज तो वैसा स्वतः बन जायेगा। उसके लिये अलग से कोई प्रयत्न करने की आवश्यकता न रह जायेगी। परिवार का प्रमुख लक्षण है, एक-दूसरे से प्रेम, सहानुभूति, आत्मीयता और स्वार्थ रहित सेवा-भाव। एक-दूसरे के लिये त्याग तथा उत्सर्ग की तत्परता। जिस मानव समूह में एक दूसरे का सुख-दुःख अपना सुख-दुःख न बन सका, वहाँ पारिवारिक भावना नहीं मानी जायेगी। पशु- पक्षी का साथ रहते हुए भी इसी आत्म-भाव के अभाव में पारिवारिक नहीं माने जाते। पारिवारिक

¹ प्राचार्य, शिवाजी कॉलेज, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

जीवन का लक्षण है- "प्रेम, आत्मीयता, सहयोग, सहायता, संवदेना, सद्भाव तथा सबके प्रति यथायोग्य व्यवहार सबकी मंगल-कामना, सबकी सुख-सुविधा का विचार आदि के सात्त्विक गुण।" जहाँ बड़ों का छोटों के प्रति आशीर्वाद नहीं, छोटों में गुरुजनों के प्रति आदर और विनम्रता का भाव नहीं, जहाँ भाई-भाई और भाई-बहन में एकात्मकता नहीं वहाँ पारिवारिक भावना का अभाव है, यही मानना ही पड़ेगा।

परिवार का अर्थ है- एक-दूसरे की साँसारिक सुख में सहायता के साथ आत्मोन्नति में यथासाध्य सहयोग करना। जहाँ लोग एक-दूसरे का अधिकार छीनना चाहते हो, एक-दूसरे से ईर्ष्या व डाह करते हों, पीछे खींचने का प्रयत्न करते और अपने स्वार्थ पर ही दृष्टि रखते हों, वहाँ परिवार कहाँ? वहाँ तो पाशविक समूह जैसी भावना ही समझना चाहिये।

किसी भी राष्ट्र के निर्माण में उस राष्ट्र के संगठित, सुव्यवस्थित एवं मधुर पारिवारिक जीवन का अत्यधिक योगदान होता है। परिवार व्यक्ति व समाज को जोड़ने वाली प्राथमिक कड़ी है। पारिवारिक मूल्य एक स्वस्थ समाज का निर्माण करते हैं। सामाजिक मूल्य राष्ट्र की एकता के दृढ़ स्तंभ के रूप में कार्य करते हैं। भारतीय विवाह संस्कार में तीन होम का विधान हमारे मनीषियों ने किया। राष्ट्रभूत, जया होम, अभ्यातन होम। इनमें राष्ट्र भूत होम को सर्वप्रथम रखने का उद्देश्य ही यही है कि गृहस्थ आश्रम में प्रवेश करने वाले युगल को यह ध्यान रहे कि व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ को पीछे छोड़कर सर्वप्रथम समाज व राष्ट्रहित को प्रमुखता देनी है। अर्थात् गृहस्थ में प्रवेश के समय ही हमारे यहाँ सामाजिकता व राष्ट्रहित के मूल्यों का उपदेश देकर परिवार व राष्ट्र की एकता पर बल दिया है। जो व्यक्ति व्यक्तिगत स्वार्थ को पीछे रखकर परिवार, समाज व राष्ट्र को आगे रखते हैं उनकी जय ही जय होती है इसलिए जया होम का विधान है।

परिवार में विद्वान, अतिथि, बुजुर्गों का विशेष योगदान होता है। उनकी संगति से श्रवण, मनन की प्रवृत्ति बनी रहती है।

यजुर्वेद अध्याय 33 में एक मन्त्र आता है जिसके अनुसार सब चाहते हैं कि -

उप नः सूनव गिरः शृण्वत्वमृतस्य चे।

सुमृडीका भवन्तु नः ॥ (यजुर्वेद 33.77)

जो हमारी सन्तान हैं, पुत्र-पौत्रादि हैं, वे अमृतस्वरूप परमेश्वर की वेद वाणियों को गुरु चरण में बैठकर या ज्ञानी वेदज्ञ उपदेशक या संन्यासी महात्माओं के समीप बैठकर

श्रवण करें, जिससे कि वे हमारे लिए सुखकर हों।

अथर्ववेद में भी उल्लेख मिलता है -

अनुव्रतः पितुः पुत्रो मात्रा भवतु संमनाः ।

जाया पत्ये मधुवर्ती वाचं वदतु शांतिवाम् ॥ (अथर्ववेद 3.30.2)

पुत्र पिता का अनुव्रती-अनुकूल कर्म करने वाला अर्थात् आज्ञाकारी हो और माता के साथ एक मन होकर आचरण करने वाला हो। पत्नी पति के प्रति मधुमयी शान्तिदायक वाणी बोले।

मनुष्य के मन में यह संदेह उत्पन्न हो सकता है कि क्या पिता की सभी आज्ञाओं का पालन करना चाहिए ? इस प्रकार के संदेहों का वेद ने बहुत ही सुन्दर रूप से निवारण कर दिया है। वेद ने यहां 'अनुव्रत' शब्द दिया है, जिसका तात्पर्य यह है कि उसके पिता के जीवन में जो व्रत हों, श्रेष्ठ कर्म हों या उनके जो आदेश श्रेष्ठ हों "व्रतमनु इति अनुव्रत" उन्हीं के अनुकूल चलना, उन्हीं को मानना ही पुत्र का धर्म है। इसके विपरीत अपने पिता के असद् उपदेशों और उलटे कार्यों का शिष्टाचार एवं मधुरता पूर्वक समझा-बुझाकर परित्याग करना ही उसका कर्तव्य है। इसी प्रकार पुत्र एवं पुत्री अपनी माता के मन से अपना मन एक करके अर्थात् उनकी मनोभावनाओं का यथेष्ट सम्मान करते हुए व्यवहार करें।

परिवार में जहां माता-पिता अपनी आने वाली सन्तान से यह आशा रखें वहां उनका स्वयं का भी कर्तव्य है कि उनके सम्मुख जीवन में पग-पग पर अपने व्यवहार द्वारा ऐसा आदर्श उपस्थित करें कि जिसे देखकर उन्हें अर्थात् बालकों को अपने माता-पिता पर गर्व अनुभव हो और वे अपने आपको भाग्यशाली समझें तथा प्रभु का हृदय से धन्यवाद करें, जिसने उन्हें ऐसे अच्छे आदर्श धार्मिक माता-पिता प्रदान किये। उनका संतान के प्रति उपदेश शब्दों से नहीं अपितु व्यवहारों से प्रस्फुरित हो। इसलिए वेद ने कहा कि पत्नी को पति से मधु के समान मधुर शान्तिमय सम्भाषण करना चाहिये और ऐसा ही पति को भी। पति-पत्नी का परस्पर का यह आदर्श दिव्य व्यवहार आने वाली सन्तति के लिए जीवन में पग-पग पर प्रेरणा का स्रोत बनता रहेगा। ऐसा आदर्श जीवन होने पर समय-समय पर यदि आवश्यकता पड़ने पर कुछ उपदेश भी माता-पिता द्वारा दिया जायेगा तो सन्तान उस उपदेश को श्रद्धापूर्वक शिरोधार्य करने में सुख अनुभव करेगी।

परिवार में परस्पर कैसा व्यवहार होना चाहिये, इसके सम्बन्ध में वेद उपदेश देता है-
मा भ्राता भ्रातरं द्विक्षन् मा स्वसारमुत् स्वसा ।
सम्यंचः सत्रता भूत्वा वाचं वदत भद्रया ॥ (अथर्ववेद 3.30.3)

भाई भाई से द्वेष न करें, बहिन बहिन से द्वेष न करें, समान गति से एक-दूसरे का आदर सम्मान करते हुए परस्पर मिल जुलकर कर्मों को करने वाले होकर अथवा एक मत से प्रत्येक कार्य करने वाले होकर भद्रभाव से परिपूर्ण होकर सम्भाषण करो।

वेद पुनः आगे उपदेश देता है -

ज्यायस्वन्तश्चितिनो मा वियौष्ट संयधयन्तः सधुराश्चरन्तः ।

अन्यो अन्यस्मै वल्यु वदन्त एत सश्रीचीनान् वः समनसस्कृणोमि (अथर्ववेद 3.30.5)

हे मनुष्यो ! परिवार में वृद्धों का सम्मान करने वाले, सम्यक् ज्ञान के धनी, एक साथ मिलकर कार्य को सिद्ध करने वाले, एक धुरी के नीचे रहकर कार्य करने वाले अर्थात् कार्य भार को मिलकर आगे बढ़ाने वाले तुम लोग परस्पर पृथक् मत होवो। तुम सब कार्य करते हुए एक दूसरे से सदा स्नेह आदि सम्मान पूर्वक बातचीत करते हुए आगे बढ़ो। मैं तुम सबको, एक साथ मिल-जुलकर कार्य करने वालों को समान मन वाला बनाता हूँ, जिससे तुम अपने उद्देश्य में सदा सफल होते रहो।

इस प्रकार एक परिवार में वृद्धों को सम्मान मिलता रहे, छोटों को प्यार, आशीर्वाद तथा उत्साह मिलता रहे और सब मिल जुल कर प्रेमपूर्वक परिवार के अभ्युत्थान में कृतसंकल्प हो जायें, तो उस परिवार के सुख-सौभाग्य में सन्देह रह ही नहीं सकता।

वेद आगे कहता है कि -

सश्रीचीनान् वः समनसस्कृणोम्येकश्श्रीन्संवननेन सर्वान्।

देवा इवाऽमृतं रक्षमाणाः सायं प्रातः सौमनसो वो अस्तु ॥ (अथर्ववेद-3.30.7)

इस प्रकार परस्पर मिलजुल कर पदार्थों के सेवन से या उत्तम सेवा भाव से तुम सबको एक साथ मिलकर पुरुषार्थ करने वाला, एक मन होकर विचार करने वाला तथा परिवार में एक को अपना बड़ा मानकर उसकी आज्ञा में चलने वाला या एक ध्येय को लेकर कार्य करने वाला बनाता हूँ। अपने अमरत्व की रक्षा करते हुए देवों के समान प्रातः सायं

तुम सबका सौमनत्व बना रहे।

वेद हमें एक सारगर्भित उपदेश देता है, वह यह कि हे परिवार में निवास करने वाले मनुष्यो! जैसे देवजन ज्ञानी महानुभाव सभी प्रकार से अपने अमरत्व की रक्षा करते हैं अर्थात् जगत् से विदा हो जाने के उपरान्त भी अपने कार्यों से अपने को अमर बनाकर सुदीर्घ काल तक आने वाली पीढ़ियों के लिए प्रेरणा के स्रोत बने रहते हैं, वैसे ही तुम्हारे इस आदर्श परिवार का मूल मन्त्र 'सौमनस' हो। यदि तुममें 'सौमनस' बना रहा तो सुमन के परिणामस्वरूप तुम सुमन (पुष्प = फूल) के समान खिल जाओगे, प्रसन्नता से विभोर हो जाओगे और अपने परिवाररूपी वाटिका के सुमनों के खिल जाने के परिणामस्वरूप अपने सत्कर्मों की पावन सुगन्धि से सारे वातावरण को सुगन्धित कर सकोगे।

प्रारंभ में ही उल्लेख किया गया था कि मातृत्व परिवार की सहज स्वाभाविक केंद्रीय भावभूमि है। बालक पर जन्म से पूर्व ही माता के व्यवहार विचार आहार का प्रभाव पड़ता है। माता किसी भी बालक के चरित्र निर्माण में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है। ज्ञानवान मर्मज्ञ भारतीय मेधा “**वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्**” की भावना से ओत प्रोत रही है। पूरी पृथ्वी माता के रूप में अपनी संतति का पालन पोषण करती है। इस अर्थ में संपूर्ण प्रकृति ही मातृस्वरूपा है। माता ही जन्मदात्री है, वही प्राणदायिनी है और पालनकर्त्री है। इतिहास साक्षी है की श्रेष्ठ एवं उदात्त भावों से भरी माताओं ने अपनी संतानों के पालन पोषण में अद्भुत गुणों का संचार किया है। माता जीजाबाई ने शिवाजी महाराज का, शकुंतला ने भरत का, सीता ने लव कुश का, चित्रांगदा ने बभ्रुवाहन का, जाबालि ने ऋषि सत्यकाम का, गौतमी ने सात्ककर्णी जैसे प्रेरणादायी व्यक्तित्वों का निर्माण किया है।

साहित्य, परिवार और समाज में नारी की स्थिति

प्रो. रूचिरा ढींगरा¹

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नारी और पुरुष किसी भी समाज के दो ऐसे मजबूत स्तंभ हैं जिन्हें अलग करके देखा ही नहीं जा सकता। परिवार और समाज में दोनों के सहयोग से ही विकास संभव है किंतु यह भी निर्विवाद सत्य है कि पारिवारिक स्तर पर जो संस्कार व्यक्ति को माता से मिलते हैं वे कालांतर में उसके व्यक्तित्व का एक अविभाज्य अंग बन जाते हैं। अतः एक समर्थ, शिक्षित, अपने विचारों को क्रियान्वित करने में सक्षम स्त्री न केवल अपने परिवार को खुशहाल बनाती है समाज को भी विकसित करती है।

शोधालेख:

वैदिक काल से लेकर आधुनिक परिदृश्य तक समाज में महिलाओं की स्थिति और उनके प्रति दृष्टिकोण में निरंतर परिवर्तन देखा जा सकता है। वैदिक समाज में नारी की सुदृढ़ स्थिति थी। वेदों - पुराणों आदि में जिस नारी का उल्लेख मिलता है वह बेचारी नहीं थी। उन्हें शिक्षा ग्रहण करने, शास्त्र करने, पारिवारिक दायित्वों का वहन करने में सम्मान पूर्वक सम्मिलित किया जाता था। वे शास्त्रार्थ में अपनी सुविज्ञता का लोहा मनवाती थीं। उदाहरणार्थ महर्षि वशिष्ठ की धर्मपत्नी अरुंधति, अगस्त्य ऋषि की अर्धांगिनी लोपामुद्रा तथा शंकराचार्य को मंडल मिश्र की पत्नी भारती ने शास्त्रार्थ में पराजित किया था। ये नारियां अपने मनोबल तपोबल और अस्त्र-शस्त्र संचालन से सबको चमत्कृत करने वाली वीरांगना थी। इस समय नारी सहधर्मिणी, अर्धांगिनी, देवी के रूप में सम्मानित जीवन यापन कर रही थी। उसके शक्ति स्वरूप की आराधना की जाती थी। कोई भी धार्मिक अनुष्ठान उसके अभाव में पूर्ण नहीं माना जाता था। यहां तक कि मनुस्मृति में भी नारी सम्मान की बात करते हुए निम्न श्लोक में कहा गया है कि-

"यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।

यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राफलाः क्रियाः ॥" (1) मनुस्मृति ३.५६)

अर्थात् - परिवार कुल आदि में नारी सम्मान होने पर ही देवता प्रसन्न होते हैं। जहां नारियों का अपमान -निरादर किया जाता है वहां सभी धार्मिक कार्य भी निष्फल होते हैं।

¹ हिंदी विभाग, शिवाजी कालेज, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

आज की नारी के लिए अपनी अस्मिता का प्रश्न सबसे मुखर है। उसे अपनी उपलब्धियों के लिए क्षणांश भी प्रेरित नहीं किया जाता जबकि वो गृहस्थ जीवन की सभी जिम्मेदारियों के साथ साथ कार्यक्षेत्र में भी उन्नति कर रही है। शक्ति और क्षमता की दृष्टि से तथा एक उज्ज्वल भविष्य के निर्माण में वह पुरुष के समकक्ष है। अपनी उपस्थिति बनाए रखने के लिए उसे परम्पराओं, मान्यताओं और रुढ़िवादी दृष्टिकोण से लड़ना पड़ता है। बहुत आवश्यक है कि उनकी क्षमता -कौशल के अनुसार उन्हें काम करने के लिए प्रेरित किया जाए। नारी ने अनेक रूपों में पुरुष जीवन को प्रेरित किया है। वहीं वह वात्सल्य से युक्त माता है, तो अन्यत्र प्रेम में पगी जीवन को उल्लसित करती पत्नी, कहीं लड़ती -झगड़ती-रुठती-मनाती बहन है तो दूसरी ओर प्रेरणा से भरी प्रेमिका। इसके साथ ही राजनीति, प्रबंधन, प्रशासन, साहित्यकार रूप में वह पुरुष के कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर चलती दिखाई देती है। नारी की सामाजिक व पारिवारिक स्थितियों को बदलने में साहित्य ने महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है।

महिलाओं की स्थिति को पूरी संवेदनशीलता के साथ महिला लेखिकाओं ने उजागर किया। स्त्री लेखन एक सामाजिक सत्य और नारी द्वारा अपनी अस्मिता की सुरक्षा की चुनौती के रूप में अस्तित्व में आया। स्त्री ने समाज, परिवार और उनके मध्य अपने स्थान को अपने दृष्टिकोण से देखना चाहा। उन्होंने स्त्री मन की छटपटाहट, संवेदना को लिपिबद्ध किया है। प्रारंभ में सामाजिक कुरीतियों (पर्दा प्रथा, दहेज, बाल विवाह) पुनर्जन्म, दान, पूजा, धार्मिक कर्मकाण्ड, विदेशी वस्तुओं के बहिष्कार, वीरांगनाओं की वीरता, साहस, दृढ़ता आदि को विषय बनाया। भारतेन्दु व द्विवेदी युग में अध्ययन की सुविधाओं के अनुपलब्ध होने पर भी कुछ शिक्षित महिलाओं में सामयिक राजनीति और तत्संबंधी गतिविधियों के प्रति समुचित जागरूकता मिलती है। मुगल शासन काल में नारी पर अनेक प्रतिबंध थे। उनमें आत्मसम्मान और जागृति लाने के लिए इन लेखिकाओं ने उक्त वीरांगनाओं को उनके समक्ष उदाहरण स्वरूप रखा। मारवाड़ की तेजस्विनी वीर रानी विदुला अपने पुत्र संजय को सिंधु नरेश के विरुद्ध युद्ध लड़ने और विजयी होने की प्रेरणा देती हैं परिणामस्वरूप वह विजयी होता है।

स्त्रियों की स्वावलंबिता को पुरुष का अहम् स्वीकार नहीं कर सका और उसने उन्हें उनके अधिकारों से वंचित कर घर की चारदीवारी में कैद कर दिया और वे पति की आवश्यकताओं और इच्छाओं की पूर्ति का साधन मात्र बन गई। मध्य काल में मुगलों के आक्रमणों, सामाजिक कुरीतियों यथा पर्दा प्रथा, बाल विवाह, बहु विवाह, सती प्रथा, विधवा पुनः विवाह निषेध, देवदासी प्रथा इत्यादि के परिणाम स्वरूप नारी की स्थिति शोचनीय हो

गई। उसके सम्मान और सशक्तिकरण को अनदेखा किया जाने लगा। ऐसे समय में कुछ नारियों के उदाहरण हमारे समक्ष आते हैं जिन्होंने धर्म, शिक्षा, सामाजिक, राजनीतिक परिस्थितियों को बदलने में अपना नाम स्वर्णाक्षरों में अंकित किया। दिल्ली पर शासन करने वाली रजिया सुल्तान, महारानी दुर्गावती (जिन्होंने अकबर के सेनापति आसिफ खान से लड़कर लगभग 15 वर्षों तक शासन किया), चाँद बीबी (जिन्होंने अकबर की सेना से अहमदनगर की रक्षा की), शिवाजी की माता जीजाबाई जो कुशल योद्धा होने के साथ-साथ कुशल प्रशासिका थी, लक्ष्मीबाई जिन्होंने अपनी झांसी को हर कीमत पर न देने का प्रण किया था। इन्होंने राजघराने में होने के साथ ही सामाजिक उत्तरदायित्वों का निर्वहन किया और समाज में सशक्त महिला की छवि को उद्घाटित किया।

थेरी गाथाओं में भी नारी के स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व का परिचय मिलता है जहां वे सामाजिक बंधनों को तोड़ते हुए अपनी अलग पहचान बनाती दिखाई देती हैं। भक्ति काल में महिलाओं ने कविताओं -गीतों के माध्यम से सामाजिक अंधविश्वासों, रुढ़ियों को चुनौती दी और सदियों से परंपराओं की बेड़ियों में जकड़ी नारी की छवि को तोड़ने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। इन्होंने अपने लिए नयी राहों का अन्वेषण किया तथा भक्ति के माध्यम से अपने अस्तित्व की लड़ाई लड़ी यथा पुरुष वर्चस्व वाले समाज में जिसमें पातिव्रत्य, पर्दा, परिवार, परंपरा आज्ञाकारिता नारी जीवन को प्रभावित करने वाले कारक थे। मीराबाई ने आजीवन कृष्ण भक्ति की और स्वयं को कृष्ण की सधवा के रूप में ही स्वीकार किया। संत सम्प्रदाय में कुछ स्त्रियां ने पारिवारिक प्रतिबंधनों को अस्वीकार कर अपने आचरण से स्त्रियों को आगे बढ़ाने का प्रयास किया यथा बाबरी साहिबा। ये गुरु मायानंद की शिष्या थीं व संत दादूदयाल की समकालीन निर्गुणोपासक संत कवयित्री व बाबरी सम्प्रदाय की प्रवर्तिका थीं। इन का उल्लेख केवल आचार्य हजारीप्रसाद द्विवेदी ने किया है। इसी संदर्भ में मुक्ताबाई, अम्मैयार, कन्होंपात्रा के नाम भी समादर से लिए जा सकते हैं। आधुनिक मीरा महादेवी ने भी पितृसत्तात्मक समाज में नारी की सामाजिक, आर्थिक, मानसिक समस्याओं पर लिखा और उन्हें बंधनों से मुक्ति का संदेश दिया, अपने सभी निर्णय स्वयं लेने पर बल दिया तथा अपनी निजता को स्थापित किया। तुलसी दास की पत्नी रत्नावली ने व्याकरण, छंद, पिंगल शास्त्र व धर्म ग्रंथों का अध्ययन किया था। उन्होंने नीतिपरक दोहों के माध्यम से जीवन को सार्थक बनाने का संदेश दिया, सूर की गोपियाँ गौ पालन, दूध, मक्खन घी के विक्रय में सक्रिय आर्थिक रूप से स्वतंत्र, बेबाक हैं, अपनी तर्कणा शक्ति से उद्धव को निरुत्तर करती हैं।

परिवार मानव समाज की प्राचीन सुसंगठित संस्था है। परिवार की उन्नति में महिला

की महत्वपूर्ण अनिवार्य भूमिका के निर्वहन को नकारा नहीं जा सकता। वह परिवार का निर्माण करने के साथ ही ईश्वर की अनुपम सृष्टि है। यही कारण है कि उसे गृह लक्ष्मी, गृह स्वामिनी, कुल माता आदि संज्ञाओं से सुशोभित किया जाता है। नारी नारायणी का प्रतिरूप है अतः शक्ति और संभावनाओं से युक्त है। प्रकृति (नारी) और पुरुष वैवाहिक संबंध में बंधने के उपरांत परिवार का निर्माण करते हैं। परिवार की सुव्यवस्था का दायित्व यद्यपि पति-पत्नी दोनों का होता है तथापि गृह स्वामिनी का आचरण पारिवारिक वातावरण को सुख और समृद्धि से भरता है। नारी परिवार में रहते हुए सबके सुख-दुख का ध्यान रखकर उस ईंट - गारे से निर्मित मकान को घर बनाती है। वह अपने बच्चों में मानवीय मूल्यों को विकसित करने वाली प्रातः स्मरणीय गुरु है। वह अपनी संतान को सुसंस्कृत कर समाज में एक आदर्श नागरिक के रूप में प्रतिष्ठित होने योग्य बनाती है। बाल्यकाल में माता द्वारा दिए गए संस्कार जीवनपर्यंत बच्चों का मार्गदर्शन करते हैं यथा माता जीजाबाई द्वारा दिए गए संस्कारों के कारण ही शिवाजी योग्य और विख्यात बन सके। मां के स्नेह सिक्त जल से सिंचित बालक अपने जीवन में अच्छे- बुरे का विवेक सीखकर अपना जीवन लक्ष्य निर्धारित करता है।

वर्तमान परिदृश्य में नारी की परंपरागत छवि में तेजी से परिवर्तन आ रहा है और वह पुरुष सदृश घर से बाहर निकलकर आर्थिक रूप से स्वतंत्र हो रही है तथापि घर की व्यवस्था, सुख सुविधाओं का प्रबंधन जितनी सहजता- कुशलता से स्त्री कर सकती है उतना पुरुष नहीं कर सकता। यही कारण है कि बाहर धनार्जन करने के उपरांत जब पुरुष घर लौटता है तब एक व्यवस्थित घर, संतुष्ट पत्नी उसे नव उल्लास, नवचेतना और नवजीवन से भर देती है।

आर्थिक समृद्धि नारी में जहां एक ओर आत्मविश्वास का सृजन करती है वहीं कई बार उसमें अभिमान की भावना भर देती है। वह अपने चारों ओर प्रश्नों का ऐसा मकड़ जाल बुन लेती है जिसमें वह खुद ही उलझ कर रह जाती है। वह भूल जाती है कि परिवार और उसमें रहने वाले सदस्यों में उसकी एक महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका है। वह परिवार के प्रति अपनी प्रतिबद्धताओं को भूल केवल अपनी महत्वाकांक्षाओं को पूरा करने में लगी रहती है। कई बार विवाह, परिवार, बच्चों के महत्व को समझने में ही सदियां बीत जाती हैं।

मशीनीकरण की दौड़ में स्वयं मशीन बन गए मनुष्य की जिंदगी में आर्थिक सीमितता ने उसे स्वार्थी और आत्म केंद्रित बना दिया है। अब संयुक्त परिवार एकल होते जा रहे हैं जिनमें संबंधों के रेशमी धागे उसे उलझाने वाले लगते हैं। संयुक्त परिवारों के विघटन के परिणामस्वरूप पारिवारिक मूल्यों में परिवर्तन आया। पहले परिवार के वयोवृद्ध दादा

-दादी,नाना -नानी अभिभावकों के घर से बाहर जाने पर बच्चों में मूल्यों को विकसित करते थे किन्तु आज एकल परिवारों के कारण मूल्यों में परिवर्तन हो रहे हैं। बच्चों में स्नेह, त्याग, सेवा,साझा करने की प्रवृत्ति लुप्त हो रही है। उनके अन्दर अनेक ग्रंथियां जन्म ले लेती हैं। परिवार और सामाजिक स्तर पर कई बार नारी को लैंगिकता आधारित भेदभाव का सामना करना पड़ता है। उनके प्रति हिंसा होती है, समाज में नारी के प्रति बढ़ते अपराधों का ग्राफ संकेत अवश्य करता है कि उस पुरुष विशेष को उसके परिवार में वह शिक्षा या मूल्य नहीं सिखाए गए जिससे वह प्रत्येक नारी के प्रति सम्माननीय दृष्टि अपनाए। आज आवश्यक है कि नारी को केवल त्याग की मूर्ति या देवी मानकर पूजा न जाए उसके गुणों को समझा जाए।उसे इतना सक्षम बनाया जाए कि वह अपने लिए स्वयं लक्ष्मण रेखा खींच सके।

कहा भी गया है कि बच्चे को मां से संस्कार और पिता से परम्परा मिलती है। आज नारी केवल घर की लक्ष्मी बनकर नहीं रह गई है वह सामाजिक दायित्वों का भी निर्वाह पूरी निष्ठा के साथ कर रही है। उसने अपने को न केवल समाज में एक प्रतिष्ठित और सम्मानित जीवन जीने योग्य बनाया है अपने परिवार के सदस्यों में भी दायित्व भावना भरी है। वह हर क्षेत्र में पुरुष को चुनौती देती आगे बढ़ रही है। शिक्षा के प्रचार-प्रसार के कारण वह सामाजिक कुरीतियों अंधविश्वासों अज्ञानता को चुनौती देकर आगे आने वाली संतति के लिए नई राहें बना रही है।

भानुमती नागदान के शब्दों में-

"मैं आज की नारी हूँ

अपनी लक्ष्मण रेखा खुद खींचती हूँ

अपनी और अपने परिवार की रक्षा करती हूँ

मुझे अपने आप पर गर्व है

मैं आज की नारी हूँ।"(2)

आधुनिक नारी से परिवार और समाज में सशक्तिकरण की प्रेरणा मिलती है। उसने पुरुष केन्द्रित समाज में स्त्री-पुरुष संबंध की विडंबना पूर्ण स्थिति पर प्रहार किया है और परिवार में स्त्री- पुरुष के मध्य असमान श्रम विभाजन का विरोध किया है। उसने नारी की पारम्परिक छवि को तोड़ कर अपने लिए नयी राहों का अन्वेषण किया है। वह चुनौतियों से टकराते हुए अपने लक्ष्य तक पहुंचने में सफल हुई है।

जयशंकर प्रसाद ने अपनी महाकृति कामायनी में भी नारी की क्षमता को रेखांकित करते हुए लिखा है-

"नारी! तुम केवल श्रद्धा हो
विश्वास-रजत-नग पगतल में
पीयूष-स्रोत-सी बहा करे
जीवन के सुंदर समतल में
देवों की विजय, दानवों की
हारों का होता-युद्ध रहा
संघर्ष सदा उर-अंतर में जीवित
रह नित्य-विरुद्ध रहा
आँसू से भीगे अंचल पर
मन का सब कुछ रखना होगा
तुमको अपनी स्मित रेखा से
यह संधिपत्र लिखना होगा।" (3)

नारी का सशक्त होना वास्तव में नारी को उस क्षमता तक पहुंचाना है जहां पर पारिवारिक और सामाजिक बंधनों से मुक्त होकर वह अपने निर्णय खुद ले सके। जब पुरुष उसे यह ना कहे कि मैंने तुम्हें काम करने की स्वतंत्रता दी। इसके विपरीत जब वह यह कह सके कि 'मैं अपनी इच्छा और योग्यतानुसार घर और बाहर कार्य करने के लिए स्वतंत्र हूँ'। हमें यह नहीं भूलना चाहिए कि नारी के साथ पूरा समाज सशक्त बनता है और जब परिवार-समाज जागरूक और सशक्त होंगे तो निश्चित रूप से राष्ट्र विकास करेगा, उन्नति की ओर बढ़ेगा।

हमें यह समझना होगा कि हर अधिकार के साथ कर्तव्य जुड़ा हुआ है। अगर हम अपने विकास की बात करते हैं तो हमारा विकास तभी संभव होगा जब हमारा परिवार और समाज विकसित होगा। ये सभी अन्योन्याश्रित हैं।

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Jijabai as a mother-A biographical sketch

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Source : Jijabai Academic block, Shivaji college.

Keywords- Jijabai, Shivaji, Swaraj, courage, justice

Independent, courageous, fearless, visionary-these are just a few words to describe the dynamic personality of Jijabai, mother of Shivaji who not

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only dreamt of *Swaraj* but also facilitated in the process by guiding and inspiring Shivaji. The Maratha empire stretched from modern day Maharashtra to the Sutlej River in the north, and to Orissa in the east under the able military leadership of Shivaji. Jijabai the only daughter of Mahalasa Bai Jadhav and Lakhujji Jadhav was born on 12th January 1598, in Sindkher village. Lakhujji was chief of an army of Nizam Shahi of the Ahmednagar Sultanate. The Nizam Shahi dynasty ruled from 1490-1636 in the northwestern Deccan. Growing up in a culturally rich family, Jijabai developed an immense sense of pride and respect towards her Maratha heritage. Jijabai got married to Shahaji Bhonsle on 5th November, 1605, when she was only about eight years old, and her husband was twelve years old. Jijabai's father-in-law, Maloji Bhonsle worked as a *shilledar* (soldier) under the command of her father Lakhujji Jadhav. Later Maloji Bhonsle grew in ranks to become "Sardar Maloji Rao Bhonsle". Shahaji Bhonsle (husband of Jijabai) also became a warrior, and official of Nizam Shahi. Jijabai and Shahaji had eight children- six daughters and two sons. All the daughters died in infancy and the two sons- Sambhaji and Shivaji reached adulthood. Shivaji was born on 19th February, 1630 at Shivneri Fort, located in present-day Pune district. At the time of the birth of Shivaji, the families of both Shahaji and Jijabai served the Nizam Shahi. Shahaji joined the Mughal forces during the Mughal invasion of Deccan, and served under Shah Jahan for some time, but defected to the Adil Shahi (Bijapur) Sultanate in 1632 after being deprived of his *jagirs*. The Adil Shahi (or Bijapur) sultanate ruled the Western Deccan from 1489 to 1686. Shahaji regained control of his *jagirs* under Adil Shahi sultanate and in return he was assigned the job of conquering Karnataka. So, while Shahaji went ahead with his conquests, he handed over the responsibility of his *jagir* of Pune to his Queen Jijabai. Kempe Gowda -I was a ruler of Karnataka, who had founded the city of *Bendakaluru*, now the city of Bangalore. Kempe Gowda -III ruled at the same time as Shahaji Bhonsle, and was defeated

by Shahaji as part of the political expansion of Bijapur Sultanate.

Jijabai, along with her younger son Shivaji, moved to Pune to manage her husband's *jagir*. Pune was not in condition to be inhabited at that time. The Mughal, Nizam Shahi and Adil Shahi dynasties had been constantly engaged in the power struggle for Western Deccan, and Pune stood in the middle of the violent crossfire and was completely destroyed by these forces. Jijabai started the task of resurrecting Pune. She, alongwith her son, Shivaji, conducted an auspicious ritual to purify the land. She assured the villagers that they would be protected, in all respects. She motivated villagers to start agriculture, and special offers were extended to farmers in order for them to cultivate the land. Fruit orchards were promoted. A dam was built for guaranteed water supply for irrigation purposes. Jijabai rebuilt the local Kasba Ganpati temple and Tambdi Jogeshwari temple, and reinstated the practice of daily worship in the temples. Jijabai actively managed the affairs of her *jagir* of Pune, and finally resurrected it.

The training of Shivaji

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, a large part of Maharashtra was under the rule of Nizam Shahi of Ahmadnagar and Adil Shah of Bijapur, and the two rulers constantly fought amongst each other to establish their dominance over Maharashtra. The foreign invaders - the Portuguese, the British, the Dutch and the French were also trying to prove their dominance over Maharashtra. The condition of the common man was miserable, and the *sardar* of various *jagirs* of Maratha worked either for Nizam Shahi or Adil Shahi.

Jijabai was unhappy that her father and husband were serving under the Muslim rulers². Her father Lakhuji Jadhav and her brothers had been deceitfully murdered by Nizam Shahi in 1629. Only one brother, mother

²Jijabai, S.G. Lokhande, Litent ePublishers, pg. 47

of Jijabai and a few young members of the family survived. Jijabai provided protection to the surviving members of her parental family. Professor Namdevrao Jadhav is a family member of the existing lineage of Jadhav family, and has authored the book “Jijau”, which is the source of this information. This incident had a deep impact on Jijabai. She started envisioning for an independent kingdom, free from the rule of Nizam Shahi, Adil Shahi and Mughal dynasties. She started sowing the seeds of *Hindawi Swaraj* in the mind of young Shivaji and inspired him to establish *Swaraj*. She started the training of young Shivaji in statecraft and military prowess, under the able guidance of Dadoji Konddeo, who was a trusted official under Shahaji Bhonsle. Besides military training, *Mata Jijabai* also started giving life lessons to her son regarding governance, leadership, justice and human values. *Mata Jijabai* inspired Shivaji by telling stories from *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and about the lives of *Shri Ram*, *Shri Krishna*, to instill in him values of justice, truthfulness and courage.

Shivaji is one of the most admired and celebrated leaders and kings in India, who founded the Maratha Empire and is known for his courage, wisdom, love for his people and respect for all religions and communities. The multifaceted personality of Shivaji was the result of teachings, guidance and inspiration of his mother, and military and administrative training of the officials appointed by Shahaji Bhonsle, for this purpose.

Some of the great lessons imparted by *Mata Jijabai* to her son, which led to the making of him as Chhatrapati are:

(i) Love and respect for ordinary people:

Jijabai taught her son to treat ordinary people with respect and care. Shivaji was always respectful towards ordinary people and the people around him. An incident from the life of Shivaji, which shows how he treated ordinary people is as follows:

Shivaji was held captive in Panhala fort by Adil Shahi sultanate in

March 1660. In July 1660, he escaped from the fort and moved towards the Vishalgad fort, which he had captured in 1659. The Vishalgad fort is a grand fort, and hence it was named so, by Shivaji. Shivaji and his soldiers had to travel a distance of about 75 kms to reach Vishalgad. They travelled through the entire night to reach a village named Pandharpani early in the morning. They were all very hungry. An old lady, without knowing their identity, offered them *roti* and *chutney*.

Shivaji, thus safely escaped from the captivation of Adil Shahi. After a few days, he sent his soldiers with a palanquin to the village Pandharpani, and invited the old lady to his Rajgarh Fort. In his court he offered a *sari* and jewellery to the same old lady, as a symbol of gratitude for the hospitality extended by her. The old lady humbly requested him that a well be built in her village as during the summer season her locality experienced a shortage of water. An expert accompanied the lady to her village, and a well was made in the village, ending the water woes of the villagers. The well is still there in Pandharpani village and is called “The well of Shivaji”. Shivaji treated his subjects with great respect, and never took their services for granted. His people also followed the same, and he was greatly respected and admired by the Maratha people. The love and respect for subjects was an important value taught by Jijabai, to her son.

(ii) Adapting to newer strategies with changing times:

Mata Jijabai had experienced a very rough weather throughout her life. She had lived without the support of any close family members in Shivneri Fort, when Shivaji was born in 1630. Later, she went with her six-year-old son, Shivaji to Pune, to administer their *Jagir*. She was an iron lady, with wisdom and farsightedness, who was ready to adapt to newer strategies, as per requirement. She taught the same pragmatism to Shivaji also, while working for building *Swaraj*. Shivaji supplied farm seeds and tools to ordinary people, and thus supported and promoted agricultural economy.

But Aurangzeb attacked Maharashtra and ruined the crops. The Marathas then started evolving more as a military community. They stopped practicing farming. Instead, they would raid and rob the provisions brought by Mughals. This practice lasted for several years.

Maratha army had a specific technique called the guerilla tactics of warfare. The Maratha armed force was well trained, and the experts would always keep a watch on the weaknesses of the enemy. The name of Shivaji was associated with more than two hundred well known forts and naval infrastructure, in an expanse of around 35 years, when he was militarily and politically active. The forts were unsurmountable and people with indisputable commitment were made fort chiefs or given other important positions, to safeguard the forts. Marathas always avoided battles, as they believed that battles led to loss of lives of soldiers as well as ordinary people. Battles would also require lakhs of soldiers, elephants, horses, fire, power, ammunition and finances, so they preferred raids with proper planning and timely action. In fact, an important war strategy of the Marathas was raids (surgical strikes). *Mata Jijabai* was always an advisor and guide to Shivaji, as he strategically planned his raids and expansion.

(iii) Respect and empowerment of women:

Women were treated with great respect in the regime of Shivaji and Jijabai. Marathi women were given training in using weapons. *Jijamata* herself engaged with military training throughout her life. She provided for military training to the daughters and wives of Maval (present day Pune) region. Every village had an individual separate home guard unit in place.

Severe punishment was given to any person who indulged in crime against woman. An incident worth quoting is: -

The village chief of Ranze village under Maratha regime, raped a girl belonging to poor backward class family. The rapist was punished by

³ Jijau: The Mother of All Gurus, Prof. Namdevrao Jadhav, Rajamata Prakashan, Pune

cutting his arms and legs, as per order of Shivaji³.

(iv) Lessons from Spiritual Scriptures:

Mata Jijabai narrated stories from *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* to her son to give him invaluable lessons regarding life. She guided him to prepare and engage with committed people, for the establishment of *Swaraj*. She gave the example of the commitment of *Hanuman ji* towards *Shri Ram*. *Hanuman ji* with his power and intellect helped *Shri Ram* in finding Maa Sita, bringing the *Sanjeevani* for Laxman, and achieving victory, as a part of the *Vanar Sena*. She advised Shivaji to have committed, courageous and intelligent people around him, who reflected virtues like that of *Hanuman ji*. She advised her son to have wise advisers, and also that people should be carefully evaluated, before being appointed as advisers. She gave the example of *Manthra*: the advisor of Queen *Kaikai*. It is said that the advice of *Manthra* led to *Shri Ram* going away for *vanvaas* (exile) for fourteen long years. King Dashrath, his father died due to the same grief. The younger brother *Bharat* also refused to accept the throne, in place of his elder brother. *Mata Jijabai* explained to her son how the advice of a wicked person led to the devastation of the entire family. She also gave examples of *Shakuni Mama* who was advisor to *Duryodhana*. The wrong advices of *Shakuni Mama*, led to the battle of Mahabharata, in which many members of family and extended family were killed and also led to total devastation. *Mata Jijabai* went on to explain that ultimately *Pandavas* were successful because they had Lord Krishna as their advisor, who was a brilliant strategist as well as a strong well-wisher of *Pandavas*. Though these ideas were very subjective and can be contested, our idea to highlight these is to emphasize the values instilled by a mother to her son, who went on to become emblematic of fighting against injustice.

Jijamata's advice held immense value for Shivaji in the long run. He appointed eight ministers in his cabinet who were intelligent, experienced

and wise. Shivaji always treated *Jijamata* as a respected *Guru*. From the age of fifteen to forty-four years, he relentlessly kept following his goals and objectives of building *Swaraj* and Shivaji was coronated on 6th June 1674 to become “*Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj*”. *Mata Jijabai* left for her heavenly abode on 17th June, 1674 just a few days after her son achieved the dream of establishing *Swaraj*, but the values that she imbibed in him has transcended ages, and are still part of the cultural stories of contemporary Maratha identity. The role of a mother, thus, is the key to the evolution of her children, and the life of Shivaji is emblematic of this pious and very important human bond.

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स्त्री और परिवार : एक अवलोकन

प्रो. दर्शन पांडेय¹

परिवार किसे कहते हैं ? परिवार कैसे निर्मित होता है ? परिवार में स्त्री का क्या महत्व है ? व्यक्ति, परिवार, समाज के विविध पक्ष, स्त्री की पारिवारिक भूमिका और प्रदेय को किस प्रकार रेखांकित किया जा सकता है ? विशेषकर भारतीय संदर्भ में स्त्री और परिवार के संबंध का आधार

और उपादेयता को किस प्रकार परिभाषित किया जा सकता है ? ये तमाम प्रश्न हैं, जिनको जानना, समझना और विश्लेषित करना इस लेख का उद्देश्य है।

भारतीय समाज या दुनिया के किसी भी समाज में परिवार एक छोटी इकाई के रूप में देखा जाता है। किसी भी समाज की परंपरा, संस्कृति, मूल्य एवं इतिहास आदि का निर्माण इसी परिवार नामक संस्था में व्यवस्थित रूप से जीवन यापन कर रहे सदस्यों के माध्यम से होता है। भारत के पारिवारिक जीवन पर ऐतिहासिक दृष्टि डालने से पता चलता है कि उसकी जड़ें ऋग्वेद तक पहुँची हैं। पंचमहायज्ञ, संस्कार, यम-नियम, वर्ण-धर्म आदि मानव-जीवन को संचालित करने वाले तत्वों का वर्णन वैदिक काल में मिलता है। ब्राह्मण, उपनिषद् आदि ग्रन्थों से भी पारिवारिक जीवन का पता चलता है, किन्तु गृह्य-सूत्र, धर्मशास्त्र आदि से तो पारिवारिक जीवन का स्पष्ट चित्र प्राप्त होता है। प्राचीन काल में जो विदेशी भारत में आए, उन्होंने यहाँ के पारिवारिक, सामाजिक और वैयक्तिक जीवन की भूरि-भूरि प्रशंसा की है। मेगास्थनीज़ आदि यूनानी लेखकों ने भारतीयों की सत्यनिष्ठता, धार्मिक वृत्ति, आकर्षक व्यक्तित्व तथा उत्कृष्ट पारिवारिक जीवन की अतिशय प्रशंसा की है।

समाज जीवन का विकास परिवार-जीवन से ही होता है। सांख्य दर्शन के अनुसार 'यह संसार प्रकृति व पुरुष का ही खेल है। इस युग के दर्शन प्रत्येक स्थल पर हो सकते हैं। दाम्पत्य जीवन के बिना पारिवारिक जीवन दुष्कर ही नहीं बन सकता है। स्त्री व पुरुष एक-दूसरे के प्रति आकर्षित होकर एक साथ रहना सीखते हैं व प्रजा-सृजन करने लगते हैं। विवाह-संस्कार इसी का निदर्शन मात्र है। इस प्रकार परिवार का प्रारम्भ होता है। उपनिषदों में वर्णन आता है कि पहले ब्रह्मा अकेला ही था। उसे इच्छा हुई कि मैं अकेला हूँ, बहुत-से उत्पन्न करूँ- "एकोऽहं बहुस्यां प्रजायेय" इस प्रकार उसने मानव-सृष्टि का प्रारम्भ किया" (1) व्यष्टि एवं समष्टि का सम्बन्ध नैसर्गिक तथा वैज्ञानिक आधार पर निहित है। व्यक्ति समाज का आवश्यक अंग है, ऐसे में प्रत्येक परिवार किसी न

¹आचार्य, हिंदी विभाग, शिवाजी कॉलेज, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

किसी समाज का एक घटक है।

भारतीय सामाजिक संरचना की एक विशेषता के रूप में यहाँ संयुक्त परिवार का प्राचीन काल से ही महत्व रहा है। हिंदुओं के अलावा गैर-हिंदुओं, अनेक कबीलाई और आदिवासी समाजों में भी संयुक्त प्रकार की पारिवारिक व्यवस्था पाई जाती रही है। सामान्यतः हिंदुओं के बीच संयुक्त परिवार विशिष्ट रूप से दिखाई देता है। अधिकांश समुदायों में यह संयुक्त परिवार व्यवस्था पितृसत्तात्मक एवं कुछ में मातृसत्तात्मक रूप में देखने को मिलती है। कई प्राचीन ग्रन्थों में भी यह परिवार व्यवस्था उल्लेखनीय है।

जिस प्रकार संस्कृति, धर्म, आध्यात्म, दर्शन, अर्थव्यवस्था, वर्णाश्रम व्यवस्था आदि भारत के लोक तथा सामाजिक जीवन के महत्वपूर्ण अंग हैं, उसी प्रकार यहाँ संयुक्त परिवार भी एक महत्वपूर्ण संस्था है या हिंदू संस्कृति का संचालक सूत्र रहा है। हिंदुओं में विवाह एवं परिवार को धर्म का अंग माना जाता रहा है। भारतीय ग्रन्थों में गृहस्थ आश्रम सभी आश्रमों का मूल माना गया है। इसी गृहस्थ आश्रम में परिवार नामक संस्था आकार लेती है। परिवार व्यक्तियों का एक छोटा समूह है, जो विवाह एवं रक्त-संबंध पर आधारित होता है। जिसके सदस्यों में स्थाई संबंध होते हैं, जो जीवन की मौलिक आवश्यकताओं से जुड़े होते हैं। साथ ही संपत्ति एवं धन-संचय में भी भूमिका निभाते हैं और आपसी बँटवारे में हिस्सेदारी भी रखते हैं। जैविक इकाई के रूप में परिवार में सामाजिक स्वीकृति से यौन सम्बन्ध रखने वाले एक स्त्री और एक पुरुष और उनकी सन्तान होते हैं। सामाजिक इकाई के रूप में परिवार को दोनों लिंगों के व्यक्तियों का वह समूह कहा जाता है जो विवाह या रक्त या गोद लेने के अधिकार से जुड़े हुए हों, जो आयु, लिंग और सम्बन्धों पर आधारित भूमिकाएँ अदा करते हों, और जो सामाजिक रूप से एकाकी गृह में रहते हों। एलेन रॉस ने परिवार की परिभाषा में पारिवारिक जीवन के भौगोलिक, सामाजिक और मनोवैज्ञानिक तत्व को शामिल किया है। एलेन रॉस के अनुसार: “परिवार किसी विशेष प्रकार के बन्धुओं के रूप में सामान्यतः सम्बन्धित लोगों का समूह है जो एक ही गृह में रहते हैं और जिनकी एकता उनके अधिकारों, कर्तव्यों और भावनाओं के रूप में निहित रहती है।” (2)

परम्परागत प्राचीन भारतीय परिवार (वैदिक और महाकाव्य युग) निवास, सम्पत्ति, और कार्यों में संयुक्त था। जिसमें संयुक्त परिवार की पाँच विशेषताएँ हैं: सह-निवास, सह-रसोई, सह-सम्पत्ति, सह-परिवार पूजा और कोई नातेदारी सम्बन्ध। इस आधार पर इरावती कर्वे ने संयुक्त परिवार को परिभाषित करते हुए लिखा है- “व्यक्तियों का समूह जो सामान्यतः एक ही छत के नीचे रहते हैं, एक ही चूल्हे पर पका भोजन करते हैं,

सम्पत्ति में समान हिस्सा रखते हैं, पारिवारिक पूजा अर्चना में समान रूप से भाग लेते हैं और एक दूसरे से किसी प्रकार के बन्धु-सम्बन्ध रखते हैं।” (3) वहीं अरस्तू ने परिवार की परिभाषा इस प्रकार की है-“ स्त्री-पुरुष एवं स्वामी-दास के मध्य सम्बन्धों के योग से जो संगठन बनता है, वही परिवार है।” (4)

अब बात करते हैं स्त्री और परिवार के सम्बन्धों पर। इस बात से कौन इंकार कर सकता है कि स्त्री किसी भी परिवार रूपी भवन की सुदृढ़ नींव होती है। स्वामी विवेकानंद के अनुसार-“ नारी ही परिवार की केन्द्रबिन्दु है।” वास्तव में स्त्री परिवार की धुरी होती है। एक परिवार को अपनी सेवा, समर्पण, प्रेम, ममत्व, त्याग और पारिवारिक सदस्यों की हर प्रकार से देखभाल करते हुए वह समस्त परिवार को एकजुट रखने का कार्य करती है। स्त्रियाँ एक परिवार की समग्र संरचना और समृद्धि में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती हैं। उनके योगदान से परिवार का संतुलन बना रहता है और सभी सदस्यों का साथ मिलकर समाज के निर्माण में मदद मिलती है।

परिवार के दायरे में एक माँ के रूप में स्त्री अपनी संतानों का लालन-पालन करती है, उन्हें शिक्षा, संस्कार और जीवन में प्रगति के मार्ग पर आगे बढ़ने की प्रेरणा देती है। एक पत्नी के रूप में स्त्री अपने पति की जीवन-संगिनी बनकर कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर उसे प्रेम और संबल प्रदान करती है। जबकि बहू या बेटी के रूप में अपने सास-ससुर, देवर-देवरानी, जेठ-जेठानी, ननद का सम्मान, सेवा, सद्भाव रखती है। भाई, बहन आदि का सहारा, सुरक्षा और प्रेम का आधार होती है। स्त्री के स्नेह, प्रेम, करुणा से परिवार में एक सकारात्मक वातावरण का निर्माण होता है। परिवार को प्रत्येक संकट से उबारने तथा बच्चों को नैतिकता और संस्कार देकर वह सभ्य सुसंस्कृत इंसान बनाने का निर्वहन भी करती है।

स्त्री और परिवार का रिश्ता सदैव से ही अटूट रहा है। परिवार में स्त्रियाँ गृह-प्रबंधन, बच्चों की देखभाल, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, भोजन-व्यवस्था, अन्य सदस्यों के साथ संवाद आदि में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती हैं। स्त्री का संघर्ष और समर्थन परिवार को मजबूती और सहयोग प्रदान करता है। इसके अलावा, स्त्रियाँ अक्सर परिवार की मान्यताओं, संस्कृति, परंपरा और मूल्यों का पालन करती हैं, जिससे परिवार की एकात्मता बनाए रखने में मदद मिलती है। वे अपने जीवन के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में कौशल और प्रतिभा का प्रदर्शन करके अपने परिवार की समृद्धि और सम्मान बढ़ाती हैं। स्त्रियाँ परिवार में अपने योगदान से न केवल परिवार को समृद्धि और स्थिरता प्रदान करती हैं, बल्कि समाज को भी विकास और समृद्धि की दिशा में आगे बढ़ाने में मदद करती हैं। एक स्त्री अपने घर-परिवार के

सभी कार्यों को करती है, जैसे कि खाना बनाना, सफाई करना, कपड़े धोना, बच्चों की देखभाल करना आदि। वह परिवार के सदस्यों को आरामदायक और सुखी जीवन जीने के लिए सभी आवश्यक सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराती है। वह बच्चों की शिक्षा और देखभाल में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है। वह उन्हें नैतिक मूल्यों, सामाजिक आचार-व्यवहार और जीवन के लिए आवश्यक ज्ञान और कौशल प्रदान करती है। समकालीन संदर्भों में आज की स्त्री परिवार की आर्थिक व्यवस्था में भी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रही है। वह नौकरी या व्यवसाय आदि के जरिये परिवार की आर्थिक उन्नति में योगदान देती है। आज की शिक्षित, स्वावलंबी और आत्म-निर्भर स्त्री परिवार के बाहर भी कई सामाजिक कार्यों में सक्रिय रूप से भाग लेती है। वह महिलाओं के अधिकारों और सशक्तिकरण के लिए भी काम करती है, समाज में शांति और सद्भाव बनाए रखने के लिए प्रयास करती है।

आधुनिक युग में, स्त्री का परिवार संस्था में योगदान और भी अधिक महत्वपूर्ण हो गया है। आजकल स्त्री, पुरुष के समान सभी क्षेत्रों में सक्रिय रूप से भाग ले रही है। वह नौकरी करके, व्यवसाय करके, या राजनीति में भाग लेकर परिवार की आर्थिक व्यवस्था में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दे रही है। इसके अलावा, वह सामाजिक कार्यों में भी सक्रिय रूप से भाग ले रही है। ऐसे में स्त्री और परिवार के संदर्भ में कुछ बातें हैं, जिन पर गौर किया जाना जरूरी है। एक स्त्री को परिवार के पुरुषों की भाँति समान अधिकार और सम्मान अपेक्षित होता है। स्त्री के प्रत्येक सकारात्मक और प्रगतिगामी कार्य और योगदान को समर्थन, सराहना और स्वीकृति मिले। परिवार संस्था में उसे शिक्षा और आर्थिक स्वतन्त्रता प्राप्त करने का अवसर मिलना चाहिए। परिवार के पुरुषों द्वारा उसे समान सहयोग मिले। जिससे एक बेहतर समाज निर्मित हो सके।

एक स्त्री को अपने परिवार से कुछ अपेक्षाएँ होती हैं। जिनमें सबसे जरूरी है- परिवार से प्यार और सम्मान। वह चाहती है कि उसके परिवार के सदस्य उसे महत्व दें, उसकी बातों को सुनें और उसकी भावनाओं का सम्मान करें। उसे अपने परिवार से विश्वास और समर्थन की अपेक्षा होती है। वह चाहती है कि उसके परिवार के सदस्य उस पर विश्वास करें और उसके सपनों और लक्ष्यों को प्राप्त करने में उसका समर्थन करें। स्त्री को अपने परिवार से समझ और सहयोग की अपेक्षा होती है। वह चाहती है कि उसके परिवार के सदस्य उसकी जिम्मेदारियों और चुनौतियों को समझें और उसे घर और काम के बीच संतुलन बनाने में मदद करें। स्त्री को अपने परिवार से सुरक्षा और सहारे की अपेक्षा होती है। वह चाहती है कि उसके परिवार के सदस्य उसे सुरक्षित महसूस कराएँ और उसे हर मुश्किल में साथ दें। स्त्री को अपने परिवार से स्वतंत्रता और स्वायत्तता की

भी अपेक्षा होती है। वह चाहती है कि उसके परिवार के सदस्य उसे अपनी पसंद और निर्णय लेने की स्वतंत्रता दें। स्त्री को अपने परिवार से व्यक्तिगत विकास और उन्नति के अवसरों की भी अपेक्षा होती है। वह चाहती है कि उसके परिवार के सदस्य उसे अपनी शिक्षा और करियर को आगे बढ़ाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित करें। स्त्री चाहती है कि उसके परिवार के सदस्य उसके साथ समान व्यवहार करें और उसे लिंगभेद का सामना न करना पड़े। यह ध्यान रखना महत्वपूर्ण है कि ये केवल कुछ सामान्य अपेक्षाएँ हैं।

ये कुछ ऐसी सामान्य बातें हैं जिससे परिवार में स्त्री की भूमिका और महत्व का सकारात्मक पक्ष देखने को मिलता है। इसके विपरीत कई बार परिवार में स्त्री की नकारात्मकता के भी उदाहरण देखने को मिलते हैं। वास्तव में इसके कई पारिवारिक-सामाजिक एवं मनोवैज्ञानिक कारण हो सकते हैं। जैसे- तनाव, चिंता, अवसाद, आत्म-सम्मान की कमी, पूर्व का कोई कटु अनुभव यथा-दुर्व्यवहार या आघात, लिंगभेद, वेतन में असमानता, घरेलू हिंसा और यौन उत्पीड़न आदि किसी को भी नकारात्मकता की ओर ले जा सकते हैं। शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य समस्याएँ भी हो सकती हैं, जैसे कि हार्मोनल असंतुलन या थकान, स्त्री की नकारात्मकता को बढ़ा सकती हैं। परिवार और समाज एक स्त्री से कई तरह की अवास्तविक अपेक्षाएँ रखता है। जैसे कि वह एक आदर्श पत्नी, माँ, और बेटा होनी चाहिए। इन अपेक्षाओं को पूरा करने में असमर्थता से स्त्री में नकारात्मकता बढ़ सकती है। यदि स्त्री का परिवार उसकी जिम्मेदारियों में उसकी मदद नहीं करता है, तो यह उसकी नकारात्मकता को बढ़ा सकता है। प्रत्येक स्त्री की नकारात्मकता के अलग-अलग कारण हो सकते हैं। ऐसे में परिवार को स्त्री की नकारात्मकता को कम करने में मदद करनी चाहिए। जैसे- उसे स्नेह, सम्मान और समर्थन देना, घरेलू जिम्मेदारियों में उसकी मदद करना, परिवार के सदस्यों को खुलकर बात करना और परिवार की थैरेपी लेना।

निष्कर्ष रूप में कहा जा सकता है कि स्त्री और परिवार का संबंध अटूट है। यह संबंध देह और आत्मा जैसा है। परिवार का आधार ही है- स्त्री। यह ऐसा संबंध है जो स्वस्थ समाज और समृद्ध देश की नींव को मजबूत बनाकर खुशहाल समाज का निर्माण कर सकता है। जहाँ स्त्री परिवार के सदस्यों के लिए प्रेरणा, सहारा और मार्गदर्शन का स्रोत है, वहीं परिवार स्त्री को प्रेम, सुरक्षा और सम्मान प्रदान करता है। यद्यपि यह ध्यान रखना भी महत्वपूर्ण है कि यह संबंध व्यक्तिगत परिवारों और संस्कृतियों में भिन्न भी हो सकता है। आज स्त्री केवल घर-परिवार की चारदीवारी तक ही सीमित न होकर समाज के प्रत्येक क्षेत्र, सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक उन्नति और विकास में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रही है। भारतीय संदर्भ में इक्कीसवीं सदी को स्त्रियों की सदी

कहा जाने लगा है। आज स्त्री की भूमिका अब केवल घर-परिवार तक ही सीमित नहीं है। वह समाज के लगभग हर क्षेत्र में अपनी भूमिका निभाने को तत्पर और सक्षम है। देश की उन्नति और विकास में अपना भरपूर योगदान भी देती हुई दिखाई दे रही है।

संदर्भ:

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The institution of the ‘family’ in the Indian society: Resilience and Empowerment

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Keywords- *resilience, sociological, roots, history, theory, compromise*

If there is one “ism” that governs Indian society and its institutions, it is *familyism*¹

The institution of the family is so intrinsically attached to the category of women that talking about them separately, seems erroneous. The assumption, especially in the Indian context, is that both of these sociological categories are complementary to each other. To put the family under the scanner, when it comes to studying the position of woman in Indian society, thus, seems to raise many eye-brows. But such a study is essential to understand the existing power relations, and their impact on the contemporary society.

Terms like family, gender relations, sexual division of labour, patriarchy, and so on have always been used as having fixed meanings. It seems that these institutions have had a universal existence, which existed always and would always exist, in the same way. But this is very far from the truth. As and when we start pondering about the institution of family in the context of India, we have to start understanding its relevance as providing social security, in a society where social security has been an underrated concern.

The most striking advance in the study of the Indian family has been getting away from the earlier Indological view based on studies of classical texts, to a view based on empirical investigations into various sections of Indian society. In the

¹ Sudhir Kakar and Katharina Kakar, *The Indians*, 2007 in Sanjukta Dasgupta and Malashri Lal eds, *The Indian family in transition*. (Sage, New Delhi, 2007), pg.11.

former view, the Hindu family was viewed as an omnibus, three or four generation group performing a multitude of functions. The empirical studies gradually disaggregated this conception and observed each function in detail.”²

We also need to specify that family as a subject of study cannot be understood as a blanket institution. Its relevance as well as its role has to be seen differently, for different social stratas. This article is trying to refer to the middle-class families of North India, specifically. “Gender and class always operate together, that consciousness of class always takes a gendered form. particularly sensitive to middle class people’s division of the world into public and private spheres”³

Why do I chose the middle class as a point of study is worth elaborating upon. The first important point which needs to be highlighted is that the middle class is not a straitjacketed exclusive or neatly definable category. What brings them together is the simple fact that right from the early twentieth century,

the growing Indian middle class appears to be the engine that is pushing the socio-cultural change forward... process of creating a new sense of Indianness, a sort of ‘transitional identity’, the middle class aspires to be authentically Indian yet thoroughly modern...⁴

As a sociological category, family, in a functional perspective, has been a subject of study. “The scientific analysis of the role of the family in society began in France in the nineteenth century with the new science of

² Tulsi Patel eds, *The Family in India- Structure and Practice* (Themes in Indian Sociology, Vol 6) (Sage, New Delhi, 2005), pg.14.

³ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes- Men and women of the English middle class (1780-1850)* (Hutchinson, London, 1987), pg.13

⁴ Dinesh Sharma eds, *Childhood, Family and Sociocultural change in India – Reinterpreting the inner world*, (OUP,2003), pg.4

sociology. August Comte..... the father of sociology, viewed changes in the family as a product of the French Revolution.”⁵ An empirical orientation was added to family sociology in the twentieth century, when the socio-economic changes were to be seen as making a big difference on the family history of the times. Urban development and rapid industrialization has had a major impact on family structures throughout the world. Patriarchy had been a universal presence as a social practice vis-à-vis families, but the changing societal context meant that it was adopted in many different ways.

Gone are the days when family was seen as a set of identifiable, fixed set of relationships made ‘naturally’ from the ties of blood. As and how society evolved, family became a cultural construct, which needed to be invested upon. Also, to assume that family would have a unanimous voice on any issue, in today’s times, is not acceptable. It would be more appropriate to say that in contemporary times, family has become a domain where power equations are the rule of the day. The traditional understanding of the family has not been obliterated, but has got refashioned in radical ways.

Family as a sociological unit has had around it some theoretical formulations. Charles Darwin and his theory of evolution has been used to talk about family as a social organism, in a particular social and physical environment. If the social was at the centre of this theory, Marx and Engels talked about the economic aspect. “Marxist theory employed the concept of economic determinism to explain how economic resources determined social power, which in turn determined class struggle.”⁶ Another theory affiliated to this was one which encapsulated ideas of structuralism-functionalism, initiated by Spencer and further developed by Durkheim. This theory talked

⁵ James Georgas et al eds, Families across cultures – A 30-Nation psychological study (Cambridge, New York, 2006), pg.6

⁶ ibid, pg.7

about the changes in the structure and functionality of families, as a reflection of the social transformations in any/every human society.

Theoretical formulations apart, one should understand the simple fact that basic changes happened in the mindset of people, as they entered the phase of urbanization and industrialization. Not only should one understand this as an economic change. Infact, this change is social, sociological, political, cultural as also psychological and philosophical. At one level, this led to the disintegration of traditional family set-ups, but this also led to the construction of newer kinds of family structures. Families were never about complete harmony, but with the passage of time, power-relations became very important in making of families, which were not just about ties of blood, but cultural constructs, experiencing vigorous changes.

As far as the Indian society is concerned, the “reluctance to address the subject of the Indian family stems not from the unimportance and marginality of the field, but rather from its importance and sensitivity.”⁷ Before discussing family structures and meanings around the institution, we need to emphasize that family, right from the ancient time holds central importance in the sociological framework of India, across communities and classes. Though there has been great variation in family types, and the shifts have been marked, the sanctity of this institution has never been questioned.

What is remarkable, however, is the extent to which the family, particularly in the service class, does succeed in transmitting its cultural and social capital to its younger members, despite psychological failures of many kinds. This transfer is guided by complex social and psychological processes whose outcome can never be guaranteed in the individual case.....”⁸

⁷ Patricia Uberoi eds, : Family, Kinship and Marriage in India (Oxford in India readings in Sociology and Social Anthropology- Gen. Editor- T.N. Madan (Oxford, New Delhi, 1993), pg.1.

⁸ *ibid*, pg. 440.

It is important to emphasize that the Indian families in middle class households have shown utmost resilience. If you try to engage with the functionality of the family, it plays a significant part in shaping the personality of its members. Be it the preindustrial or agrarian family of the bygone days, or the industrial or modern family of today, the role of the family is centripetal in character. But family as a social institution, is not insulated from the external pressures of the society. “The family and primary relationships of most people evidence the deep imprint of the many stresses and strains of the workplace, the consumer marketplace, the economy in general, and the unjust power imbalances of the society.”⁹

It is a known fact that understanding the basic relevance of Indian middle - class family has been a subject of hectic debate. Critics have gone to the extent of saying that middle class Indian families are centres, where patriarchy is practiced in the most blatant of ways, where discrimination is the order of the day. But such sweeping generalizations cannot stand the tests of the times. The era of modernization may have brought about a change in gender roles, but cannot obliterate the significance or sanctity of Indian families. “The core of individual identity already contains a sense of belonging to some group, defined along many different dimensions, ranging from families, kin groups, residential and ethnic groups, races, religions and nations.”¹⁰

It is often heard in today’s world that families are on the brink of collapse, and one reason often given for this catastrophe is the non-committal nature of the womenfolk, vis-à-vis her family. As the focus of this article has been the middle classes, talking about this issue and in this

⁹Sharon K. Houseknecht and Jerry.G.Pankhurst: Family, religion and social change in diverse societies (OUP. New York, 2000), pg.3

¹⁰Hanna Papanek: The Ideal Woman and The Ideal Society: Control and Autonomy in the Construction of Identity in Valentine M Moghadam eds, Identity Politics and Women- Cultural Reassertions and Feminisms in International Perspectives (Westview, Colorado, 1994), pg.44

manner seems provocative, but imperative. It needs to be emphasized that the dynamics around which Indian families evolve cannot be the doing of only the man or only the woman. When talking about the role that family plays in the lives of middle-class Indian households, one will have to understand that it is the fulcrum around which human socialization depends. Family is the first classroom of any/every individual, which has a lasting impact on the psyche of the person. It teaches the individual the art of co-existing and self-realisation. True that families are breaking apart in many societies, which surely is a very unnerving situation. It is having a negative impact on the character of the society, and this trend needs to be reversed. It is imperative to understand that any/every resilient society needs to, in no uncertain terms, nurture the institution called family. This is the only way to have an active and strongly-rooted citizenry in place. Compassion and healthy compromise is the key to make the institution of family survive, in the long run. “Home can be a special place, only if all the family members make an investment in it.”¹¹

It is important to work on the inadequacies of family systems in India, no doubt. The gendered framework has to be opened up. Social discriminations need to be obliterated. Social and human justice needs to be made the basis of familial structures, but all this needs to be done keeping the faith on the sanctity of the family, intact. Let us work around this sacrosanct institution, rather than outside it.

Interestingly the year 1994 was declared by the United Nations to have been the International Year of the Family and the one-liner slogan “Building the smallest democracy in the heart of society” (Desai and Thakkar, 2000:85) clearly underscores the ideological interconnections between the family and the state.”

¹¹ Srijaya Char: Indian Womanhood- Warped in contradictions (Vikas, New Delhi, 2000), pg.73

Threads of Empowerment

Mr. Gaurav Anand

Founder & Director, Swachhatapukare Foundation

Gaurav Anand, an environmental engineering graduate and a passionate environmentalist from Jamshedpur, Jharkhand embarked on a mission to transform the landscape of river cleanliness by establishing *Swachhatapukare Foundation*. The Foundation operates as a non-profit organization to promote environmental protection, bring significant change and implement effective management practices, in areas such as air, water, waste, soil and energy.

Mr. Gaurav worked for 5 years with the Government of India on various World Bank funded river projects. In 2005, he joined Tata Steel Utilities and Infrastructure Services Ltd. where he realised his responsibility of imparting knowledge to the public about the importance of environmental protection. In 2018, he had the opportunity to join a month-long '*Mission Gange*' expedition, aimed at the restoration of River *Ganga*. Alongside fellow team members, he navigated the river using rafts, undertaking cleaning and awareness initiatives as they journeyed through seven distinct cities. The expedition commenced from Haridwar, and continued through Bijnor, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Varanasi, Buxar, concluding in Patna, Bihar. Subsequent to the mission's completion, each team member returned to their respective professional commitments; however, for him, this endeavor constituted a pivotal, transformative experience. Inspired by the mission's impact, he undertook the commitment of allocating every Sunday, to the noble pursuit of river cleaning.

To devote himself fully to the cause, Gaurav ji decided to conclude his extensive 17-year corporate career in 2022 and founded the *Swachhatapukare Foundation*. While engaging in river cleaning drives, he noted the presence of water hyacinth, a troublesome aquatic plant with significant growth potential that obstructs sunlight and poses a threat to the aquatic ecosystem, by causing blockages. Gaurav ji wanted to devise a

sustainable solution to the escalating issue of water hyacinth.

In his pursuit of a solution, he envisioned transforming the water hyacinth plants from a nuisance into a valuable resource. He identified the untapped potential for generating economic opportunities among rural women, residing near riverbanks. His visionary initiative involved collecting water hyacinth plants from water bodies and utilizing the dried stems of this invasive plant, to craft a diverse range of handmade products such as lampshades, carry bags, paper, notebooks, and more. This marked the commencement of a transformative journey that transcended the objective of addressing environmental concerns, extending its impact to encompass significant contributions to the socio-economic upliftment of local communities.

By leveraging the inherent qualities of water hyacinth to create artisanal products, Gaurav ji initiated a sustainable cycle that not only removed a potential environmental threat, but also provided a means for rural women to participate in meaningful economic activities. The process involved in crafting these handmade items not only showcased innovation but also presented an opportunity for skill development, empowering women with the tools to contribute actively to their households and communities.

Gaurav ji's transformative journey embodies the fusion of environmental consciousness and socio-economic empowerment. By converting a seemingly problematic plant into a valuable, eco-friendly product, he not only demonstrated a keen understanding of sustainable practices but also established a model that positively impacted the lives of those involved. This holistic approach reflects the potential for ingenious solutions to not only address environmental challenges, but also create avenues for social and economic betterment, thereby fostering a more resilient and sustainable future for communities at large.

While working on such products, Gaurav ji identified that the water hyacinth pulp contained cellulose which can be converted into yarn. This is when he came up with the idea of fusion sarees. He devised a procedure for the extraction of fibres from the stems of water hyacinth plants. By

combining 25% of this fibre with 75% cotton, a blended material is crafted. This fusion material is then skillfully transformed into elegant sarees by the weavers of Santipur in West Bengal.

Through its various skill development and vocational training programs, The *Swachhatapukare Foundation* empowered more than 450 rural women, who collect water hyacinths from about 35 ponds situated in the Bongaon and Machhlandapur regions of West Bengal and process them before sending them to weavers. The initiative not only successfully cultivated self-reliance among rural women, but has also emerged as a source of substantial employment opportunities. This remarkable achievement is attributed to the implementation of comprehensive training programs meticulously designed to hone the intricate art of crafting various items such as paper, lampshades, diaries, and a diverse array of exquisite craft pieces. Remarkably, these artisanal creations are ingeniously crafted from the desiccated stems of water hyacinth, showcasing both ingenuity and environmental consciousness.

The economic impact of these projects extends far beyond mere crafting, as they serve as a powerful catalyst for empowering rural women. This economic empowerment, in turn, provides these women with a tangible means to enhance their economic well-being and elevate their overall quality of life. The ripple effect of the initiative is profound, reaching deep into communities and households. By creating opportunities for meaningful contribution, the project is instilling a sense of pride and confidence among the participating women.

The *Swachhatapukare Foundation* received praise from PETA India, for taking the admirable step of producing sarees devoid of handloom silk. Recognizing the Foundation's unwavering commitment towards ethical and sustainable fashion, PETA India awarded the Foundation's unique fusion sarees the title of "**Best Vegan Saree**" at the prestigious Vegan Fashion Awards 2023.

In conclusion, Gaurav Anand's unwavering commitment to addressing

the water hyacinth issue showcases the impactful synergy of innovative thinking and community-centric initiatives. His multifaceted approach not only contributes significantly to environmental conservation, but also emerges as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of numerous rural women. Through comprehensive programs and ingenious solutions, Gaurav ji actively involves rural women in crafting diverse items from water hyacinth plants, creating sustainable employment opportunities. His work epitomizes the potential for positive environmental and social outcomes, when innovative solutions are coupled with a genuine concern for community well-being. His endeavors underscore the profound impact that visionary individuals can have in shaping a more sustainable and harmonious future. Gaurav ji's dedication serves as an inspiring example of how individual commitment and ingenuity can drive transformative change, for both people and the planet.









Monika Arora's Journey: In her own words

Ms. Monika Arora

Advocate, Supreme Court

Born on August 28, 1973, I ventured into the field of law with a deep-seated desire to make a difference. My educational journey at Hindu College, Delhi University, was marked by numerous awards and scholarships, including a prestigious stint at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. My career as a lawyer took off in 2007, and since then, I have been actively involved in several high-profile cases. These include representing the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Nirbhaya Case documentary ban, and the Government of India in various impactful cases like the regulation of transport aggregators and the decriminalization of marital rape.

Apart from my legal endeavours, my activism has always been close to my heart. I led a group of women advocates in the Nirbhaya case, urging the Delhi High Court to take *Suo moto* cognizance of the case. One of the significant moments in my career was the controversy surrounding my book, '**Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story.**' The withdrawal of the book by Bloomsbury India led to a heated debate on freedom of expression. However, undeterred, I stood firm in my beliefs and continued to advocate for what I believed in.

Five Important Lessons for Other Women:

1. Perseverance in the face of adversity: My journey shows that no matter what the challenges, staying true to your convictions is crucial.
2. Education and continuous learning: The awards and scholarships I received, were not just accolades but stepping stones for continuous growth and learning.
3. Voice for the voiceless: Whether it was the Nirbhaya case or other social

issues, I've learned that using your voice for the less fortunate, is one of the most impactful things you can do.

4. Stand firm in your beliefs: The controversy around my book taught me that standing firm in your beliefs, especially in the face of opposition, is essential for making a difference.
5. Mentorship and leadership: Leading by example and mentoring others, especially women in the legal field, is crucial for fostering a more equitable and just society.

The evolution of human life is a story of movement towards a just society. It was with this intention that I chose law as a profession. It is important to add that, Law, for me, is never just a profession. It is my inherent passion; which I practice from my heart and soul.

Monika Arora's life story is a testament to the power of determination, education, and standing up for one's beliefs, serving as an inspiration for women across various fields.







CanKids...KidsCan

Ms. Poonam Bagai

Founder & Chairman, CanKids

In the heart of India, a land steeped in diversity and history, the story of Ms. Poonam Bagai stands as a beacon of resilience, compassion, and hope. It is a tale that transcends personal adversity, transforming it into a collective mission of healing and empowerment for children, battling cancer across the nation.

Ms. Poonam's journey began in the vibrant tapestry of expatriate life in Warsaw, Poland, where she navigated the challenges and joys of living abroad with her family. Her life, marked by professional success and personal fulfilment, took an unexpected turn at the age of 38, when she faced a daunting diagnosis: colon cancer. This moment marked the beginning of a tumultuous year filled with surgeries, chemotherapy, and profound emotional turmoil. The fear of leaving her young sons without their mother cast a shadow over her, igniting a deep introspection about her life's purpose and legacy.

Amidst this existential crisis, Ms. Poonam experienced a moment of clarity that would redefine her life's trajectory. She made a solemn vow, a promise to the divine, to dedicate her life to the welfare of children with cancer in India. This pledge was not just a bid for her survival, but a commitment to transform her ordeal into a beacon of hope for others facing similar battles.

In 2004, this commitment took shape in the form of "CanKids", an organization co-founded with Sonal Sharma, who shared a similar path of pain and resilience through her daughter's fight against cancer. Together, they envisioned an organization that would extend beyond the confines of medical care, offering a sanctuary of support, education, and advocacy for children with cancer and their families. "CanKids...KidsCan" was to be a haven of hope and healing, ensuring that no child would have to navigate

the daunting journey of cancer treatment alone.

Under Ms. Poonam's leadership, CanKids blossomed into a national emblem of hope, weaving a support network that spanned across India. The organization's holistic approach to childhood cancer care encompassed a myriad of services designed to support the multifaceted needs of affected families. From guiding patients through the healthcare maze and providing crucial medical support, to offering psychological counselling, ensuring educational continuity, and raising societal awareness, CanKids created a nurturing ecosystem, that empowered families to face cancer with dignity and hope.

The initiatives spearheaded by CanKids, such as the *Chatai* clinics and **Girl Brigades**, stood as testaments to Poonam's innovative spirit and deep empathy. The *Chatai* clinics, simple yet profound setups on woven mats in hospital corridors, symbolized the organization's commitment to accessibility and grassroots support. The **Girl Brigades**, on the other hand, emerged as a powerful movement against gender bias, advocating for the rights and worth of girl cancer survivors and underscoring the message that every child deserves a chance at life, irrespective of gender.

Ms. Poonam's personal journey is marked by moments of light-heartedness and resilience that often manifested in laughter and humour, perhaps a coping mechanism that gave her the strength to face the challenges ahead. Yet, beneath this light-hearted exterior was a profound sense of purpose and an unwavering resolve to fulfil her pledge. While intertwined with fear and heartache, her story ultimately became a narrative of triumph over adversity, a testament to the indomitable strength of the human spirit.

As CanKids forged partnerships with global organizations like the St. Jude Global Alliance, Ms. Poonam's vision expanded, aligning with a shared mission to enhance access to quality care and improve survival rates for children with cancer worldwide. Her relentless efforts not only provided a lifeline to thousands of children in India but also positioned CanKids as a vital contributor to the global fight against childhood cancer.

Ms. Poonam Bagai's story transcends the narrative of individual survival, evolving into a symbol of hope, resilience, and unwavering commitment.

Her legacy, intricately woven into the fabric of "CanKids...KidsCan" and the lives it has touched, is a testament to the extraordinary impact one can have, when driven by compassion and a deep sense of purpose.

Through her remarkable journey, Poonam ji teaches us that the most enduring legacies are often forged in the crucible of our greatest challenges. Her life serves as a powerful reminder that even in our darkest moments, we possess the capacity to illuminate the paths of others, creating ripples of change that resonate with the essence of our shared humanity. Poonam Bagai's story is not just an inspiring tale of overcoming adversity; it is a call to action, a reminder that each of us holds the potential to make a difference in the world, transforming personal trials into pathways for collective healing and growth.

Her narrative encourages us to look beyond our struggles, to find a purpose that transcends our individual experiences, and to contribute to a cause greater than ourselves. It is a story that inspires us to believe in the power of resilience, the importance of legacy, and the transformative impact of turning personal adversity into a catalyst for global change.











Inspiration to many

Ms. Swati Garg

President, Shiksha Bharati



A woman with a vision and an iron-will to materialize it, Mrs. Swati Garg has been engaged with *Shiksha Bharati* since its inception. Her resilience and never-say-die spirit aided her survival during the Kedarnath floods in 2013. Filled with gratitude at having survived the floods, she decided to escalate her philanthropic endeavours in Uttarakhand, which led her to play an instrumental role in building a hostel in Guptakashi. She has been serving as the President of **Smt. Brahmadevi Saraswati Balika Vidya Mandir**, Senior Secondary School, affiliated to CBSE Board, before which she served as the Manager of the institution. She is also the President of *Shiksha Bharati*.

Armed with M.Sc. in Microbiology (with a minor in Biochemistry from Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology in 1984) and decades of experience, Mrs. Swati Garg is leading *Shiksha Bharati* by example, and setting new landmarks in the field of social service and education. Under her helm, *Shiksha Bharati* is constantly evolving to reach newer heights and taking the dream of women empowerment a step closer

to reality, every single day.

A woman of multiple talents, she is also a counsellor, who imparts guidance regarding cybercrime & motivates students to become independent and confident social beings. She has one goal in her life -

बालिका शिक्षा - एक संकल्प

ऐसी बालिका का विकास जो राष्ट्रवादी, समाज एवं परिवार के प्रति समर्पित, एक आदर्श नागरिक, आदर्श माँ एवं आवश्यकतानुसार जीविकोपार्जन में सक्षम हो जिसकी जीवन शैली आधुनिक परंतु भारतीय सभ्यता, संस्कृति एवं मूल्यों पर आधारित हो।

In 2015 she was honored **as a counselor** from Parivar Prammarsh Samiti by Police & also received laurels in 2023 **for selfless service in the spread of education for the Janajati areas of the Northeast** by *Purvottar Janajati Shiksha Samiti*.

Women are unable to access quality education, due to numerous hurdles including financial challenges, lack of good facilities and geographical limitations. Shikha Bharati aims to provide a platform where these girls can make their dreams come true, by giving them free and merit-based education with hostel facilities. Providing a holistic world class education with its roots firmly embedded in the value system of Indian culture has always been the vision of Shiksha Bharati. Starting from a humble beginning with 6 girls in a rented room, the institution today is, thankful to its Patrons, reaching a total of 2000 students, with a hostel capacity of 102 girls - providing free boarding, lodging and tuition fee. Other facilities such as clothing, books and train fare is provided to disprivileged girls from the regions of North East.

Projects run under the supervision of Smt. Swati Garg

Tribal Girls Hostel – Our country's seven states of North East known as the seven sisters receive the first rays of sun in the morning, but they are

deprived of the rays of good education. There are approximately 20 crores tribal people in India who do not have the facility to access even the most basic of education. Considering this deplorable situation, *Shiksha Bharati* has constructed a hostel in its premises which is able to accommodate 102 girls. As of now, 107 girls from seven states of North East as well as Sikkim and Jharkhand's tribal areas are residing in this hostel and receiving education from class I to class XII in the girls' school run by Shiksha Bharati.

Given that these girls belong to backward and underprivileged areas, *Shiksha Bharati* bears the complete cost of their education, boarding and travel. After completing their education, they return back to their home states and impart education to the underprivileged native village children of their villages and areas. More than 200 girls have completed their schooling and have made a good and enriching career. Numerous girls are also dedicatedly working to spread the wings of education in their local areas. The idiom, "When you educate a girl, you educate a nation" has truly been proved by the team of Shiksha Bharati. *Shiksha Bharati* has also borne their expenses for their higher education, wherever needed. More than 42 girls have received scholarship from *Shiksha Bharati* to pursue higher education.

Village Development Program – Based on Mahatma Gandhi's teaching that "villages are the soul of our country", *Shiksha Bharati* believes that India can become a developed country by starting to make progress at the grassroot level. Implementation of the village development programs is one of the main objectives of Shiksha Bharati. *Shiksha Bharati* has adopted five neighbouring villages, under the rural development planning, in order to help people gain access to suitable education and employment opportunities, as well as to ensure health and social harmony and convert them into the ideal villages. The number of such villages will be expanded up to 25 gradually in the near future.

Shiksha Bharati has also established a state-of-the-art computer education centre since March 2012, to provide computer education without charging any fee for underprivileged girls from Hapur as well as the surrounding villages, who are not regular students of our school. About 500 such girls/women have already completed their computer education program from this centre. Five vocational centres are also running currently in five villages. Two hundred women have completed their sewing training, along with which they received one electrified multifunctional Usha sewing machine each. *Shiksha Bharati* has hence provided them not only the skillset, but also the equipment and financial means needed to become self-reliant members of their families. *Shiksha Bharati* also has recently established two primary schools in three nearby villages, for children belonging to deprived sections of the society. Approximately, one hundred and fifty children are enrolled in these primary schools currently.







The Modern Sage

Dr. Meena Mahajan

Founder - Siddhi Philanthropic Foundation

Dr. Meena Mahajan (Guru Maa) pioneering an era of ‘new spirituality’

Dr. Meena Mahajan fondly called *Guru Maa* is an ardent Mahadev Sadhak, and Spiritual Teacher, often delving into topics like Astrology, Yog, and Ashta Siddhi to help humanity. She’s known to help simplify the *Shastras* and Upanishads, combining them with an understanding of science to make these topics more appealing for the youth of today. As being on a journey of academic excellence was not enough, she chose the unconventional path of dedicating her life towards the spiritual wellbeing of others and service to humanity. She is a true new age *guru*, who focuses on educating the world about becoming a better human being by harnessing the power of the inside.

Guru Maa is a member of the Internal Complaint Committee on Sexual Harassment in the office of Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities. *Guru Maa* was recently awarded the **Sewa Bhushan Award** by *Sewa Bharti*, a non-governmental organization inspired by RSS, for her exemplary social work.

Guru Maa’s flagship programme ‘**The Modern Day Brahmastra**’ is the culmination of over 25 years of dedicated research of the *Shastras* and the Quantum World that is helping awaken the subconscious mind to lead happy and content lives. The program has had a positive impact on thousands of individuals from across the globe, by being the perfect synergy between ancient wisdom and modern-day management. Her *satsangs* are grounded in her love and devotion for Mahadev and the belief that *Shiva-Shakti* are the forces that balance the universe. *Guru Maa* believes that her ability to help people from around the world is a gift, and an even bigger responsibility given by Mahadev and Shakti.

Having been able to simplify the *Shastras*, and being a proponent of holistic wellness, *Guru Maa* is often invited to be a speaker at Defense Force camps, corporate organizations and educational institutes, like the Amity University. She has given a number of talks on the importance of spirituality for the Youth, the role of spirituality in helping create powerful future leaders, with solid belief systems. One of the highlights has been her panel discussions on the *Bhagavad Gita*. The ease with which she was able to explain the topics of the Bhagwat Gita to the students was evident from the numerous student testimonies about how this subject was alien to them before the discussion, and the interest they developed in the subject as a result of *Guru Maa's* talk.

Guru Maa is also a strong advocate of *sewa* for the society. Being a humanitarian, she has been working on a number of social issues throughout the country. She leads her followers in working on these issues through her non-profit Siddhi Philanthropic Foundation. She envisioned Siddhi back in 2013, to work with the less privileged people of the society. Today, Siddhi is working in Delhi, UP, Madhya Pradesh, Assam and Kolkata. Some of its key impact programs include **HOPE** (Help Other People Eat), **Mission Shakti**, and **Gurukuls** for the underprivileged children. *Guru Maa's* followers regularly volunteer at Siddhi, focusing on the impact that the programs are able to deliver, while understanding the importance of Nishkam Sewa.

Women Development program: MISSION SHAKTI

Mission Shakti is Siddhi's Health and Sanitation Awareness Program for Underprivileged Women. Siddhi works with the underprivileged and high risk groups to educate them, and make them self-reliant under the leadership of *Guru Maa*. Mission Shakti aims at empowering young girls and women from weaker sections and deprived communities, through education. A woman is the strength of each household, society and nation and her

wellbeing should be of utmost importance. Today the organization works with 5000 girls and women from various states, to help them live healthy and happy lives. Their main focus areas are health and hygiene awareness, formal education, menstrual hygiene, skill training, pregnancy care etc.

Mission Shakti has adopted 26 villages in Chandauli, UP where it has installed a sanitary pad production machine. This has provided employment for many rural women, who produce 500 sanitary pads each day. These are then distributed across India, in their working locations. It provides women with full sanitary kits, essential and medical help. Over 2500 sanitary kits are distributed every month to women of the underprivileged communities and weaker sections of the society. Open houses are conducted on a regular basis to interact with the girls and women, to voice their concerns. This program aims at empowering women and girls to lead happy and healthy lives. The protection of the girl child and her safety in today's society is a major concern. Siddhi helps create awareness and a support system, when it comes to protecting young girls from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation. Female malnutrition is a pressing concern in our society today, for which they work aggressively, to help eradicate any sort of discrimination, that can lead to denial of rights of girls and women. Their skill centres encourage women to come and learn stitching, make-up, crafts, etc and provide them with the means to make them self-reliant. Siddhi celebrates accomplishments of underprivileged girls and women in all the areas, so that they feel a sense of pride and can realize their dreams.

"Just condemning the evil practices against girls and women won't help, we need to uplift each other, as women, and change the mindset where women are considered inferior." - Guru Maa









Bridging the Gap between Heritage and ‘us’

Ms. Neera Misra

Founder Trustee & Chairperson, Draupadi Dream Trust

Neera Misra is a social entrepreneur, writer, editor on Indian culture and history with almost twenty-one years of experience. She is also an independent researcher, visiting faculty, consultant, founder trustee & chairperson of Draupadi Dream Trust, established in 2003, founded on Vedic principles and Philosophy. Her research and work focusses on propagation of *Bharatiya sabhyata, sanskriti evam Itihaas*, linking and nourishing the roots of our historical journey to create a better understanding and appreciation of ancient heritage legacies, history, geography, and social issues. The misperceptions about our past due to misrepresentation of certain historical periods and personalities have adversely influenced the thinking regarding liberated women of our country. Her experiences as a SIDBI-selected and DST trained entrepreneur, made her realise such misconceptions, and it disturbed her. To bring out facts related to personalities, it was necessary to revisit those times in a structured way and therefore attention towards cultural aspects of status of progressive women becomes pertinent.

With all these insights, *Draupadi Dream Trust* was established with a vision and mission to empower women/youth/ communities with authentic knowledge and skills to become self-reliant, confident and play a constructive role in nation building through socio-economic and political participation. Also, the trust focusses on research, documentation, promotion of ancient civilization, culture and *Itihaas*, blending of heritage and modernity to create better understanding and appreciation of the same and make the life of individuals richer- culturally, economically, socially, and spiritually. The trust entered its twentieth year on 15th December 2022. Since the last twenty years the trust has gained national and international

recognition and stature because of its dedicated work. It is a non-profit organization registered with **12A, 80G, CSR, NITI AAYOG**.

The trust derives its name and strength from the historical *Draupadi*, and is working in the birthplace of *Draupadi*, *Kampilya* (Distt. Farrukhabad UP), *Indraprastha* (Delhi), besides other areas of India, and follows the method of advocacy, awareness, training, research and documentation. All programs and projects are finalized after research. The trust has conducted various programs and workshops since 2003, for empowerment of women and communities. Some specific programs pertaining to upliftment of women conducted by trust in Farrukhabad, *Kampilya* and other places in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi include various skill development workshops on food processing, tailoring & embroidery, tailoring and cutting, in the field of beauty, effective communication skill for entrepreneur, *ayurveda*-herbal medicines, entrepreneur opportunities in ayurvedic products, marketing, employment generation, computer training etc. The trust has also undertaken some projects from various govt. funding agencies, aiming at developing entrepreneur skills & employment generation for rural women, e.g.- “**Exploratory Research for Standardizing the Manufacturing & Packaging Process of Aloo Papad**”, supported by Dept. of Science and Technology, Govt. of India (2014-15). The trust also promotes knowledge sharing by conducting various women centric conferences like “**Role of Ayurveda in Rural Women Healthcare: Issues, Challenges and Policies**” (2010) and “**Role of Media in Women Empowerment**” (2008).

The trust has convened several international and national conferences, positioned several exhibitions, published over nine books, twenty articles and related lectures and talks, since 2010. It has successfully advocated for heritage-promotion projects. In this view the trust is closely working with the youth from Kashmir, for their empowerment and better understanding of *Bharatiya* culture; closely researching with **Ministry of Culture** in understanding the chronology of *Indraprastha*, dates of the *Kurukshetra*

Dharma Yuddha, Sri Krishna's birth for scientific structuring of our *Itihaas* and heritage legacies; working with **Nepal-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry**, for developing knowledge content for *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* tourism between the two countries, covering landmark places/*Itihaas*, storyline, etc., for the website and coffee table book: knowledge content sharing for **Gita Museum Kurukshetra**. Through the efforts of the *Draupadi Trust*, Ms. Neera Misra always actively advocates the preservation, restoration, and promotion of our cultural heritage legacies like formation of *Mahabharata Tourism Circuit* across Bharat and SE Asia since 2003, prepared a detailed project report (DPR) and facilitated the sanction of the tourism project for *Kampilya* (from Govt of India), proposed and advocated from 2003, for building a bridge across *Ganga* linking *South* and *North Panchala*, which was eventually ready in 2013.

Neera ma'am has also held numerous significant positions in various organisations, specially working towards women empowerment. She was the member, Governing Body and Business Cell Councillor /Consultant in **FICCI Ladies Organisation** from (1997-2005). She was also the Research Advisor to National Commission for Women Committee for Women in Industry, from 2004-05. She was consultant in **"SWASHAKTI"** program of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India in 1999, and Expert Committee Member: Govt. of India SSI (MSME) Committee for Women Entrepreneurs from 2001-10. She also held the post of Jt. Secretary in Women's Football Federation of India, from 2006-13. She was also member of *Gurusaday Museum*, Kolkata (2018).

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Intersectional Feminism: Emblematic of the complexity contained in the phenomenon of equality

Veer Vikram Singh¹

Keywords- Feminism, Intersectionality, Family Dynamics, Diversity and Inclusion, LGBTQ+, Empowerment.

In the quest for gender equality and justice, the stentorian call of ‘feminism’ has resonated throughout the world. As a socio-cultural and political movement, feminism has challenged the systemic inequalities, discriminations, and stereotypes that have historically disadvantaged and marginalized women. The roots of feminism can be traced back to the late 19th century, which started with movements like the suffrage movement that fought for women's right to vote. However, over time the scope of feminism has broadened to encompass a wide range of issues like reproductive rights, work-place equality, gender-based pay scales and much more. Feminism has had a profound impact on societies, by playing a crucial role in challenging the ways in which we perceive gender and has helped in reshaping cultural and societal structures. It has empowered women and men to challenge the *status quo* and fight for a more inclusive and equal society. Feminism has been successful in encompassing a broad range of ideologies and activism. Such ideas had a united and common goal of dismantling gender-based hierarchies. These ideas have advocated the cause of equal rights, autonomy, and well-being of women and men, both. At its core, feminism has challenged the patriarchal power structures, which are responsible for perpetuating inequality and discrimination against women. Feminism, therefore, has fostered a heightened awareness of women's experiences and the need for dismantling gender-based barriers. However, as the world has evolved and our collective understanding deepened, it has become increasingly evident that the struggle for an equal and inclusive world transcends simplistic binaries. Therefore, our

¹BA (programme), Batch (2016-19)

understanding of equality and justice needs a more nuanced approach. This realization has given rise to a transformative and inclusive ideology of “intersectional feminism”.

Kimberlé Crenshaw, an American legal scholar who coined the term intersectional feminism in 1989, has explained it as, “a prism for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other”¹. This approach tries to acknowledge and address the intersecting social identities and experiences of women. It recognizes the multifaceted nature of social identity, such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability, which intersect to shape personal experiences. In this article, we will try to delve into the issue of intersectional feminism. We shall explore its principles, significance, and the transformative power it holds in creating an equal and inclusive world. We will also try to find an answer to the following questions. Why are we even talking about this form of feminism? Is it a very recent phenomenon? Is it different from what we understand to be feminism till now? Is it an offshoot of feminism or an altogether different concept? How is it going to help us establish a more inclusive and just society?

Understanding Intersectionality: Before elucidating on the fundamentals of intersectional feminism, we first need to understand what exactly does this term intersectionality mean. To start with a very simple definition, intersectionality is a concept that refers to the interconnected nature of social identities, such as race, gender, class, sexuality, ability, and such others, and the understanding of how they intersect and interact with holdings of privilege and oppression. Intersectionality recognizes that individuals can simultaneously hold multiple social identities, and these identities can influence their experiences and shape their social, economic, and political realities. For example, race and gender intersect and they mutually affect each

¹. ‘Intersectional feminism: What it means and why it matters right now’, Wednesday, 1 July 2020, unwomen.org

other. Similarly, caste, sexual orientation, and gender are interconnected and have multiple reciprocal effects. This idea highlights that various forms of inequality and oppression, such as racism, sexism, and homophobia, are not isolated or independent concepts, but they all are mutually interconnected and interdependent. For instance, a disabled woman of a particular color faces discrimination due to her race, gender, and disability. Her disability is perceived as a hindrance which might affect her ability to perform the tasks expected out of her. Her race and gender are bound by stereotypical beliefs. She, therefore, is experiencing intersectional discrimination where her race, gender, and disability intersect to compound the prejudice she faces. In this scenario, the discrimination faced by the woman is intersectional, because it arises from the overlapping disadvantages of her race, gender, and disability. The discrimination she encounters cannot be fully understood by solely examining her race or disability or gender separately, but rather as the result of the combined impact of all the three identities. Recognizing the limited binaries of a one-size-fits-all approach, a more inclusive, comprehensive, and intersectional analysis of societal structure was required. That is where the concept of intersectional feminism emerges as a transformative ideology. It recognizes that systems of power and privilege operate simultaneously, resulting in unique experiences of discrimination and disadvantage for individuals, who belong to multiple marginalized groups.

Tracing the evolution of intersectionality

While the term "intersectional feminism" was coined later, in 1989, by Kimberlé Crenshaw, the approach had its roots in the writings of a number of activists who realized the need to address the complex and interconnected forms of discrimination and oppression. In the 1960s, women from the global south (Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Oceania) began challenging west-centric (especially American and European) feminism, for its failure to acknowledge the issues affecting them. These issues were either ignored or marginalized by the mainstream feminism of the western countries. Black feminists, such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty,

Audre Lorde, and Bell Hooks, have contributed in highlighting the issue faced by women of color. In the early 1990s, the concept of intersectional feminism started gaining recognition in academic circles and social justice movements. Scholars and popular activists from diverse disciplines saw intersectionality as a promising analytical tool to understand the complexities of identity, which were earlier ignored. They began to incorporate intersectionality into various feminist theories, social justice and political movements, and policy discussions. Today, intersectional feminism has become a central component of the modern feminist discourse. As it continues to evolve further, it is incorporating the voices and challenges of diverse communities, including the LGBTQ+ individuals also.

The reason that it took so long to even recognize intersectional feminism and approve of its fundamental approaches was that it was perceived as a hijacking element built against the mainstream feminism. But the truth is that intersectional feminism is built upon the foundational principles of feminism only, and it has only tried to address the limitations and exclusions that are present in traditional feminist approaches and activism around feminism. By highlighting these intersecting forms of discrimination, it has helped in creating a more inclusive and comprehensive feminist movement. It has centered the experiences of women from diverse backgrounds, who otherwise have been historically marginalized, within the mainstream feminist approaches. In true essence, intersectional feminism is nothing but a forward-thinking framework that can and has only enriched the feminist movement.

Impact of intersectional feminism on family system

The family system is a socially recognized fundamental unit that plays an important role in shaping the lives of individuals and society. It consists of a group of individuals who share an emotional bond, and a certain set of responsibilities. The system provides love, care, support, and a sense of belonging. It also serves as a crucial platform, where values, ideas, beliefs, and traditions are passed down from one generation to the next. Intersectional feminism has a significant impact on the family system in

several ways. Intersectional feminism has challenged the traditional gender roles and expectations arising because of them, within families. It has encouraged us to re-imagine the roles that are based on interests, abilities, and choices rather than preset notions of masculinity and femininity. This idea has led to a more balanced and systematic distribution of household responsibilities. By encouraging communication and shared decision-making among family members, it has promoted healthier relationships and more respectful interactions within the family. Intersectional feminism has emphasized the need and importance of recognizing and valuing the different and unique experiences of family members, irrespective of their genders, based on their unique intersecting identities. This has created greater empathy and understanding among family members having different needs and perspectives. It has also focused on the intersection of various forms of oppression, including domestic violence. It has helped in creating support systems, that are highly sensitive to the unique experiences of survivors, who come from different backgrounds. By promoting education and empowerment for the girl child, intersectional feminism has positively impacted the future dynamics of families. As empowered women are more likely to make informed decisions about their family's health, education, and financial planning, it will help in creating an improved family structure. Similarly, economic empowerment being a crucial aspect, can help in reshaping the stereotypical roles by creating a balanced distribution of financial responsibilities, and thereby providing equal opportunities to all family members, irrespective of their gender identities. This shall include equitable wages and impartial access to employment prospects. The intergenerational advocacy of principles of intersectional feminism and values will help in bringing about high value transformative changes within the family system. With younger generations continuously adopting these values, they help in fostering a shift in family norms, where more open and elaborate dialogues about identity, equality, and justice are promoted among family members. This changing dynamics helps in translating into deeper and more inclusive conversations within family settings. Intersectional

feminism has also contributed in gathering support for LGBTQ+ family members. It has challenged the heteronormative assumptions and has continuously encouraged families to create environments, wherein all the members can easily express their gender identities and sexual orientations, without any fear of rejection or discrimination. By acknowledging the role of power dynamics and cultural contexts, intersectional feminism contributes to more effective interventions and prevention strategies.

It is important to note that the impact of intersectional feminism on the family system will vary based on cultural, social, and individual contexts. While it holds the potential to bring about positive change, it may also encounter resistance and challenges from those who are more invested in maintaining traditional gender roles and power dynamics. Overall, intersectional feminism encourages families to evolve into more inclusive and supportive units, that recognize and respect the diverse identities and experiences of their members.

Challenges faced by intersectional feminism

Intersectional feminism is a framework that recognizes and addresses the multiple dimensions of identity and the various forms of oppression that individuals may experience. While it aims to create a more inclusive and equitable feminist movement, there can still be contradictions and challenges within the ideology, due to its complexity and the diverse perspectives within it. Here are a few potential contradictions that may arise within intersectional feminism: -

Intersectional feminism grapples with a range of complex dynamics that arise within its multifaceted framework. One central concern involves the prioritization of identities, as the idea of intersectionality recognizes the convergence of various aspects such as race, gender, sexuality, and class in shaping individual experiences. However, tensions emerge in determining which identities should take precedence, leading to debates over the hierarchy of issues. A related challenge is striking a balance between universal struggles faced by all women, and acknowledging contextual

differences that specific groups encounter. The movement's effort to address distinct experiences sometimes clashes with the aspiration to establish a singular feminist agenda. Language and terminology further add complexity, as different groups within intersectional feminism may embrace diverse linguistic preferences, sparking conflicts over inclusive communication. Achieving authentic representation poses another dilemma, as ensuring marginalized voices requires navigating questions of authenticity and potential co-optation. Moreover, within identity categories, divergent perspectives can foster disputes, concerning priorities and strategies. Balancing subgroup concerns with overall inclusivity proves intricate.

Globally, intersectional feminism navigates applications across varied cultural landscapes, raising tensions between universality and cultural sensitivity. Even within the movement, power dynamics come into play, prompting discussions about leadership, voice amplification, and the challenge of avoiding replication of the hierarchical structures which feminism seeks to dismantle. It is important to note that these contradictions are not inherent flaws of intersectional feminism itself, but rather challenges that emerge due to the complexity of identities, perspectives, and the broader societal context. Intersectional feminism continually evolves as a result of these conversations and debates, and addressing these contradictions is essential for creating a more inclusive and equitable feminist movement.

Establishing an inclusive and equitable world

Intersectional feminism holds a very important place in modern times. It is an indispensable lens through which we must address complexities of discrimination faced by individuals who enjoy intersecting social identities. The framework helps us in recognizing how these intersections shape the experiences and opportunities of every individual. Its significance extends far beyond the realm of social theories, as it plays a pivotal role in reshaping the dynamics of family systems. Intersectional feminism helps in challenging the conventional norms and expectations in the family that have

perpetuated inequality. It has become an important tool in redefining family roles, breaking down stereotypes, and promoting discussions on ideas of power dynamics. Additionally, it also helps in recognizing and validating the diverse experiences of marginalized individuals. It empowers families to become platforms of support, equality, and inclusive growth. It promotes candid discussions about privilege and oppression within the family, which helps in creating a more equitable and respectful relationship. Intersectional feminism addresses issues such as the unequal distribution of emotional labor, and caregiving responsibilities. Families that valued intersectional feminism have become spaces for societal transformation, a space where all members are valued and are not discriminated, based on their intersecting individual identities. In the broader context, the idea of intersectional feminism has been a catalyst for change. It has influenced not only the dynamics of family structures, but also reshaped education, workplace policies, broader legislations, and most importantly the societal attitudes. As we move forward and continue to embrace and integrate the principles of intersectional feminism into our lives and our families, we are destined to move closer to creating a world which has components valuing and celebrating the unique contributions and identities of every individual, therefore, nurturing a more inclusive, just, and equitable society. It is important to add that '*isms*' should also be seen as containing possibilities of multidimensional growth, and a discussion on 'intersectional feminism' is a good example of this.

The Changing role of Family: Addressing gender-based issues

- Dheeraj Kumar¹

Keywords: Family, Gender, Gender sensitization, Equality, Sex education

What is a 'Family'?

Family, often referred to as the cornerstone of society, plays an indispensable role in shaping individuals and communities alike. In its literal sense, a family is a group of people who share a blood-relation, but the role of a family is multi-faceted, but if we take a generalized idea, we can mention the following significant roles of a family –

- Family provides emotional support and offers comfort, understanding, and a sense of belonging, helping individuals navigate life's challenges, cope with stress, and maintain mental well-being.

- Families provide guidance and mentorship, and offer advice & wisdom based on their experiences, helping individuals make informed decisions about their education, career, and life choices. - Families connect individuals to their cultural and social roots.

- Families provide financial support, especially during challenging times, and this assistance can be crucial for achieving economic stability and pursuing one's goals.²

The theoretical depiction of a family is straightforward and clear, but in reality, the family's role is complex. Beyond the basic aspects, there are nuanced points that require careful consideration. In this article, we will explore these intricacies that hold greater significance, than commonly perceived.

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²Assessment with Late-Life Families: Issues and Instruments Brian D. Carpenter, Elizabeth A. Mulligan, in Handbook of Assessment in Clinical Gerontology (Second Edition), 2010

Significance of this article

Our family is our first school of life, which serves as a moral compass, imparting values and ethics that guide our decision-making throughout our lives, and where we learn essential life skills, language, and cultural norms from our parents and extended family members. These early teachings set the foundation for future educational pursuits and shape our social interactions. In this article, we will look at the family from a different aspect by relating it with the concept of gender in today's changing world, so as to look at the significance and impact of family, on gender issues.

Also, people discussing issues related to gender often argue that why are we always more focused on rights for females or talk about strengthening women only, and not men. The reason behind this is the condition of women in our society.

For the sake of statistics & numbers, and as significant indication, - In 2021, a total of 31,677 rape cases were registered in India, i.e. around 87 rape cases every day.²

- As per NCRB data, 339457, 329243 and 338954 cases were registered as crime against women in the years 2014, 2015 and 2016 respectively.³

- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 2019-2021, 29.3 per cent of married Indian women between the ages of 18 and 49 have experienced domestic/sexual violence.⁴

But what about such cases related to men? There is no sufficient official data available to be used, only because the number of such cases are too small. So, what we really need is to work on improving the position of

² <https://www.google.com/amp/s/m.thewire.in/article/women/crimes-against-women-rape-cases-india-2021-ncrb-data/amp>

³ https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://ncrb.gov.in/sites/default/files/crime_in_india_table_additional_table_chapter_reports/Chapter%25205_2014.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwjXkOOcx7iBAxVE2TgGHZYjCscQFnoECBYQAQ&usg=AOvVaw3XV0QWcWh8kvaY9twqXYP2

⁴ https://www.business-standard.com/amp/india-news/nearly-30-of-married-indian-women-face-domestic-violence-shows-data-123051400486_1.html

females in Indian society.

Different scholars, thinkers and philosophers give different perspectives about improving the position of women. Some of most significant ones are,

- Ensuring gender sensitization, and
- Proper sex education

So in this article, we will look at how families can help in bringing this change, first with respect to gender sensitization, and then as regards sex education.

Family & Gender Sensitization: Paving the Path to Equality:

Gender sensitization is an essential and transformative process that seeks to challenge and change societal perceptions, norms, and behaviors related to gender. If you ask small children, "What's the difference between boys and girls?" You are most likely to get answers like, "Boys are strongly built" or "Girls keep crying over small things, while boys don't cry," or "Girls do make up, while boys don't," and so on. Thus they already have certain ideas about the opposite gender, which have been shaped by societal messaging, and can lead to hurtful speech and behavior, in later stages of their life.

In a world where gender-based discrimination and inequalities persist, gender sensitization plays a pivotal role in raising awareness, fostering empathy, and for promoting gender equality. It is a multifaceted process that encompasses education, awareness, and advocacy with the goal of promoting gender equality and eliminating gender-based discrimination. It seeks to challenge traditional gender roles, stereotypes and biases that have perpetuated inequality for generations. This process aims to sensitize individuals and communities to the diverse experiences and needs of people of different genders, acknowledging that gender is not binary, but exists on a spectrum.

The absence of gender sensitization can lead to numerous harms, both for individuals and society as a whole, like

- Without gender sensitization, gender inequality persists, limiting opportunities and rights for individuals based on their gender, and this can result in disparities in education, employment, income, and political representation.

- Lack of awareness and sensitivity towards gender issues perpetuates harmful stereotypes and biases, which can lead to discrimination and prejudice against individuals who do not conform to traditional gender norms.

- Insufficient gender sensitization contributes to a culture of acceptance or normalization of gender-based violence, including domestic violence, sexual harassment, and human trafficking.

- Inadequate gender sensitization can result in disparities in access to reproductive healthcare, family planning, and comprehensive sexual education, impacting the health and well-being of individuals.

- Gender discrimination can limit economic opportunities for women and gender-diverse individuals, leading to wage gaps and financial instability.

- In politics, business, and other sectors, the under-representation of women and gender-diverse individuals can persist without gender sensitization, hindering diversity and decision-making processes.

- Without awareness and sensitivity, victims of gender-based violence may be reluctant to report incidents, fearing further stigma or retaliation. Although, the Government of India has already enacted a number of legislations to address the issues of discrimination and gender disparity like ‘*The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009*’, ‘*The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005*’, ‘*The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961*’, ‘*The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013*’, ‘*The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006*’, ‘*The Equal Remuneration Act, 1976*’, etc., but still, families play a pivotal role in gender sensitization by

shaping attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to gender.

From birth, children observe, internalize, and mimic the behaviors and values exhibited by their families. Parents and caregivers are the first role models children encounter, making the family a cornerstone of their early socialization process. As children grow, they develop a sense of self and learn about societal norms, including gender roles, through their family interactions.

Families have the power to challenge or reinforce gender stereotypes. When parents actively work to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations, they create an environment where children can develop more open-minded perspectives. Encouraging boys to participate in traditionally feminine activities or girls to take up traditionally masculine ones helps dismantle these stereotypes. Effective communication within families is paramount in promoting gender sensitization. Encouraging open and honest conversations about gender-related topics helps children understand the complexities of gender identities and expressions.

By discussing issues such as sexism, gender discrimination, and LGBTQ+, parents can provide a safe space for children to ask questions and seek guidance. Family is where children learn core values such as empathy and respect. Parents can instill these values by modeling respectful behavior and teaching children to treat all individuals, regardless of their gender, with kindness and dignity. Encouraging empathy enables children to understand the challenges that people of different genders may face and promotes a more compassionate society.

Families can create an inclusive environment that embraces diversity in gender identities and expressions. This can involve celebrating various cultural practices and customs related to gender or openly supporting family members who identify as transgender or non-binary. This support can have a profound impact on a child's mental health and overall well-being. Gender sensitization can be ensured from the very young age of children. But as

they grow up, and become adolescents, families need to also focus on providing proper sex education to them. Let us discuss why & how is it possible to impart the same.

Family & Sex Education

Sex education is a critical component of well-rounded education, providing students with information and skills necessary for healthy relationships and responsible decision-making. However, sex education is intricately linked with gender, as it must address the diverse experiences and needs of individuals across the gender spectrum. Mostly we learn about 'sexuality' and relationships from our peers or from what we see on social media, for example two out of top ten and five out of twenty most visited websites in India are explicit or porn related⁵, and this is where children and even adults learn about sexual relationships. Why? Because it is 'not supposed' to be discussed with parents or guardians or taught in schools, in any form. Infact, these discussions are seen as being societal taboos.

But that is not an education, but just an interpretation of what others have felt. To clear it further, comprehensive sex education is not only discussion about some kind of physical relationships, but covers a plethora of ideas & thoughts related to:

- Puberty, anatomy, sexual orientation, and gender identity
- Relationships, including self, family, friendships and others
- Sexual behavior,
- Sexual health, including sexually transmitted diseases, birth control, pregnancy, and abortion, etc.
- Society and culture, including shame & stigma, and power, identity, & oppression, and much more.

Sex education has long been a topic of debate and controversy, particularly within the family unit. Most parents overlook the importance

⁵ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1108779/india-websites-ranking-by-traffic/>

of sex education in the early years of a child's life. When it comes to sexual problems, women are the majority of the victims. Some of these issues arise as a result of the neglect of issues associated with sexual health.

While many societies have made significant strides in embracing open and comprehensive sex education, it remains a subject of taboo in numerous households worldwide. There are several reasons behind why sex education continues to be a taboo topic within families, like

1. Different cultures and religions have distinct perspectives on sexuality, modesty, and the role of parents in educating their children about sex. Additionally, certain religious doctrines may condemn premarital sex or homosexuality, making discussions on these subjects uncomfortable or forbidden within the family, leading to the perpetuation of silence regarding this topic.

2. Fear among parents that providing sex education to their children may inadvertently encourage early sexual activity. This misconception arises from a lack of understanding of the benefits of sex education, which actually aims to promote responsible and informed decisions about sexual health.

3. Many parents themselves lack sufficient knowledge and comfort in discussing topics associated with sex education with their children. They may feel embarrassed, unprepared, or ill-informed to address complex issues related to human sexuality.

4. Parents may also fear judgment and stigma from their peers, relatives, or their own children if they engage in open discussions about sex. This fear of social backlash contributes to the perpetuation of sex education as a topic not worth discussing.

It is important for parents to teach their children about sex education. Else, they would learn about it from elsewhere, where they can be misled. Statistics from UNICEF state that one in every four females is sexually abused before the age of 18, mostly because many of them have been

naively lured into sex at a young age, which eventually leads to adolescent pregnancy and others becoming addicts, which leads to prostitution.⁶

It is crucial to address these concerns and misconceptions to promote a healthier and more informed approach to sex education. Encouraging open and age-appropriate discussions about sexuality within families can empower individuals to make responsible choices, reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections, and build stronger parent-child relationships based on trust and understanding. Breaking the silence surrounding sex education is essential for the well-being of future generations and a more informed society.

Sex education can challenge harmful stereotypes and norms related to gender and sexuality. It can promote healthy relationships based on consent, respect, and equality, regardless of gender. It is a parent's as well as society's obligation to prepare a child by providing them with comprehensive sexual education that equips them with the tools they need to make healthy sexual choices.

Conclusion

The family's role in society cannot be understated. It is a place of love, support, and growth, where individuals learn essential life skills and values. Families play a critical role in shaping the character of the individual, and by extension, the character of society, as a whole. As we navigate an ever-changing world, it is essential to recognize and appreciate the enduring significance of the family as a social unit.

Families encouraging open discussions about gender norms and their impact, can help reduce stigma, and empower individuals. Promoting awareness of gender-related disparities and providing sex education can

⁶ <https://hacey.org/blog/sex-education-for-children-parents-responsibilities/#:~:text=Parents%20should%20allow%20their%20children,a%20solution%20to%20the%20problem>

help in building communities, that are inclusive and supportive of individuals of all genders, and will create safe space for discussing gender concerns. By breaking down stigma and providing tailored services, we can work towards a more equitable and mentally healthy society, for all genders.

Gender-based issues continue to be a significant concern worldwide, affecting the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of children. While schools, communities, and governments play essential roles in addressing these issues, the family as a social unit remains one of the most influential factors in upbringing of a child. It is important to note that while children may reflect their families in many ways, they also have their unique personalities, experiences, and perspectives that may lead them to develop distinct identities and beliefs. Family is a very significant influence, though not the sole determinant of a child's character or future.

A supportive family environment helps children develop a strong sense of self-worth, reducing vulnerability to bullying and discrimination based on gender. Family members who model healthy gender dynamics and equality set a positive example for children to follow, and thus empower their children regardless of gender, foster self-confidence, and resilience, making them better equipped to tackle gender-based challenges.

The family unit is undeniably significant in addressing gender-based issues in children. By fostering open communication, providing emotional support, promoting positive role modeling, and nurturing gender-neutral values, families can play a pivotal role in shaping children's attitudes and behaviors towards gender. To create a more inclusive and equal society, it is essential that families actively engage in the fight against gender-based issues, from an early age.

भारतीय परिवार में स्त्री की स्वतंत्रता

उत्कर्ष मिश्रा¹

संकेत शब्द : चारदीवारी, स्वतंत्रता, सम्मान, आरक्षण, सशक्तिकरण।

स्वतंत्रता के पश्चात् भारतीय नारी की स्थिति में क्रांतिकारी बदलाव आया है। वह घर की चारदीवारी से बाहर निकलकर देश के बहुआयामी विकास में अमूल्य योगदान देने लगी हैं। आज हमारे देश की नारियां राजनीतिक, सामाजिक, आर्थिक, सांस्कृतिक, वैज्ञानिक और शैक्षणिक सभी क्षेत्रों में आगे बढ़ रही हैं। सदियों से शोषित एवं पददलित नारी पुरुष प्रधान समाज के प्रभाव से मुक्त होकर स्वच्छंद जीवन का विकास करने की सुविधाएं प्राप्त कर रही है। “**यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यंते, रमंते तत्र देवता**” अर्थात् जहां नारी कि पूजा होती है वहां देवताओं का वास होता है परंतु उक्त श्लोक के अर्थ को और स्पष्ट करते हुए वेदों में कहा गया है कि नारी का सम्मान सर्वोपरि है। नारी जगत-जननी है, आदि शक्ति माँ दुर्गा है, माँ काली है, माँ लक्ष्मी है, माँ सरस्वती है, संपूर्ण सृष्टि में केवल नारी के पास ही वो शक्ति है कि वह एक नए जीव का निर्माण कर सकती है इसलिए नारी को देवी का स्थान दिया गया है। नारी का सच्चा सम्मान उसकी स्वतंत्रता में निहित है। हमारा समाज स्त्री को सम्मान तो देता है परंतु स्वतंत्रता नहीं देता। यदि वह स्वतंत्र नहीं होगी तो वह खुद की पहचान कहाँ से और कैसे बना पाएगी? यदि स्त्रियों को स्वतंत्रता मिले तो वे खुद की प्रतिभा से एक नया कीर्तिमान रच सकती हैं। स्त्रियां हर क्षेत्र में अपना एक बेहतर मुकाम बनाने में सफल रही हैं उदाहरण स्वरूप भारत की प्रथम महिला राज्यपाल श्रीमती ‘**सरोजिनी नायडू**’ (उत्तरप्रदेश राज्य); भारत की प्रथम महिला वकील ‘**कॉर्नेलिया सोराबजी**’ भारत की प्रथम महिला राष्ट्रपति श्रीमती ‘**प्रतिभा देवी सिंह पाटिल**’; भारत की प्रथम महिला प्रधानमंत्री श्रीमति ‘**इंदिरा गांधी**’ आदि। इन महिलाओं ने हमारे भारत को एक नया स्वरूप दिया है। इन महिलाओं ने यह साबित किया है कि महिलाएं पुरुषों से किसी मायने में कम नहीं हैं। इन सब के बावजूद हम देखते हैं कि कुछ स्त्रियों पर इस प्रकार से दबाव बनाया जाता है कि वे हार मान कर बैठ जाती हैं और सपने देखना छोड़ देती हैं जिसकी वे आकांक्षा रखती हैं।

हमारे लिए यह चिंता का विषय है कि हमारे समाज में अभी भी कई स्त्रियों को आगे बढ़ने से रोक दिया जाता है। इसके पीछे कई कारण हैं जैसे पुरुष समाज के कुछ हिस्से

¹ वाणिज्य विभाग, द्वितीय वर्ष, 22/50094

अपने संकुचित मानसिकता के कारण नहीं चाहते कि महिलाएं घर से बाहर निकलें व अपनी एक अलग पहचान बनाएं। कुछ जगहों पर इतना पिछड़ापन है कि महिलाएं चाह के भी अपना स्थान नहीं हासिल कर पाती हैं। और सबसे ज्वलंत मुद्दा यह है कि समाज में कुछ अवांछनीय एवं घिनौनी हरकत करने वाले लोगों की मौजूदगी जो महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता को गलत नज़रिए से देखते हैं, उसपर भद्दी टिप्पणी करते हैं जिससे बचने के लिए महिलाएं स्वयं अपने कदम रोक लेती हैं और वहीं से स्वतंत्रता का हनन करने वाले लोगों को बल मिल जाता है। वो इसे अपनी जीत मान कर खुद पर इतराना शुरू कर देते हैं परंतु उन्हें यह नहीं पता कि यह उनकी सबसे बड़ी हार है। पितृसत्ता का प्रयोग कर स्त्रियों पर रोक - टोक लगाने वाले शायद यह नहीं जानते कि स्त्री स्वतंत्रता पाकर ही चांद पर गई थी। यदि हमारे समाज की स्त्रियों को सम्मान व स्वतंत्रता मिले तो वह हमारे देश का नाम विश्व भर में रौशन कर सकती हैं। हमारे देश के प्रधानमंत्री श्री **‘नरेंद्र मोदी’** जी महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता एवं सम्मान पर कितना बल दे रहे हैं। वह अगर महिलाओं का सम्मान कर रहे हैं तो भारतीय लोकतंत्र में उनकी खुद की कीर्ति, यश और देश का गौरव भी बढ़ रहा है। पिछले दिनों जब मोदी सरकार की कैबिनेट का विस्तार हुआ तो बड़ी खुशी हुई कि सात महिला सांसदों को प्रधानमंत्री मोदी जी ने अपने साथ काम करने का अवसर प्रदान किया। ये सात महिलाएं हैं - श्रीमती **मीनाक्षी लेखी, अनुप्रिया सिंह पटेल, दर्शना विक्रम, अन्नपूर्णा देवी, भारती प्रवीन पवार, प्रतिमा भौमिक** और **शोभा करंदलाजे**। वह क्षण गौरवपूर्ण था जब इन सातों महिलाओं का सम्मान श्रीमती **‘निर्मला सीतारमन’** जी और श्रीमती **‘स्मृति ईरानी’** जी ने एक सामूहिक छायाचित्र खिंचवाकर किया।

परिवार ही वह जगह है जहां पर व्यक्ति को वो वातावरण मिलता है कि वह अपनी इच्छा को बताए और परिवार के लोग जब उसकी इच्छा का सम्मान करते हैं तो उसे कुछ कर गुज़रने का बल मिलता है। परंतु हम सब ने कभी न कभी तो यह जरूर अनुभव किया होगा कि स्त्रियों की स्वतंत्रता का हनन उनके परिवार में ही सबसे अधिक होता है। कुछ स्त्रियों को तो अपने शहर के अधिकांश रास्तों का ही पता नहीं होता है। आज उनके शहर में क्या हो रहा है इसकी भी खबर उनके पास नहीं होती है और कारण सिर्फ यह है कि उन्हें घर से बाहर निकल कर अपने नज़रिए से दुनिया देखने का हक नहीं प्राप्त होता है। लड़कियों की पढ़ाई पर अभी भी रोक लगाई जाती है। अगर वे स्कूल तक पढ़ लेती हैं तो उन्हें कॉलेज जाने से रोक दिया जाता है, यदि कॉलेज तक पढ़ने का मौका मिला तो नौकरी के लिए कहा जाता है कि क्या करोगी नौकरी करके ‘संभालना तो घर

ही है ना।' सोचने वाली बात तो यह है कि ऐसा मानसिक शोषण परिवार में किया जाता है।

तीन दशकों से अटका पड़ा महिला आरक्षण बिल इस वर्ष लोकसभा और राज्यसभा में पास हो गया है। महिला आरक्षण की मांग लंबे समय से होती रही है लेकिन संसद और विधानसभा में महिलाओं के लिए **33%** आरक्षण जरूरी है क्योंकि, देश में महिलाओं की आबादी **48.46%** फ्रीसदी से ज़्यादा है लेकिन राजनीति में एवं संसद व विधानसभा में इनकी भागीदारी नाम मात्र है। इसी भागीदारी को बढ़ाने के लिए लोकसभा और राज्यसभा में महिलाओं को **33%** आरक्षण देने के मकसद से “**नारी वंदन अधिनियम**” भारत सरकार द्वारा लाया गया है। इस बिल में कहा गया है कि पंचायत स्तर पर महिलाओं को आरक्षण मिलने से ग्रामीण महिलाओं का सशक्तिकरण हुआ है। महिला आरक्षण बिल पास होना अपने आप में एक बहुत बड़ी उपलब्धि है जो हमारे देश में महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता के लिए लाया गया है। इससे हमारे देश की महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता में काफी बढ़त मिलेगी और महिलाएं खुद को स्वतंत्र, सुखी एवं गौरवान्वित महसूस करेंगी।

संक्षेप में वर्तमान में महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता में काफी परिवर्तन हुआ। महिलाओं की स्वतंत्रता में देश की सरकारों ने काफी योगदान दिया है जिससे कि महिलाओं को अपने आप को स्वतंत्र करने में सहायता मिली है।

भारतीय परिवार में महिलाओं का समाजीकरण

रूपेश यदुवंशी¹

संकेत शब्द : समाजीकरण, परवरिश, लैंगिक भेदभाव, रूढ़िवादी परंपरा, पाबंदी, असमानता।

समाजीकरण एक प्रक्रिया है जो मनुष्य प्रजाति में जन्म लेने वाले किसी भी बच्चे को समाज का सदस्य बनाती है। समाजीकरण के कारण ही बच्चे अपनी सांस्कृतिक विरासत से जुड़ते हैं। मानवीय समुदाय के नियमों को एक बच्चा तब समझता है जब वह समाजीकरण की प्रक्रिया में भाग लेता है। समाजीकरण का उद्देश्य एक खाली मस्तिष्क में सामाजिक व्यक्तित्व का विकास करना होता है। समाजीकरण संस्कृति एवं विरासत को एक पीढ़ी से दूसरी पीढ़ी को सौंपने का एक माध्यम है। हर एक समाज अपने बच्चों का बौद्धिक विकास अपने दायरे के अंदर रखकर करना चाहता है। एक बच्चे के समाजीकरण में समाज के अलग-अलग संस्थाओं का अलग-अलग समय पर विशिष्ट योगदान होता है। इन संस्थाओं में सबसे अहम एवं बुनियादी योगदान परिवार का होता है। एक बच्चे को सामाजिक सदस्य बनाने की नींव परिवार ही रखता है। परिवार इस समाजीकरण की प्रक्रिया का आधार है। परिवार समाज की एक ऐसी इकाई है जहां बच्चे के अंदर सबसे पहले अपने जीवन के व्यवहारिक पक्ष की समझ विकसित होती है। भारतीय परिवार में लड़का एवं लड़की की परवरिश में कई प्रकार के अंतर देखे जा सकते हैं। यहां लड़कों एवं लड़कियों से उनके लिंग के आधार पर समाज में अलग-अलग तरीके से व्यवहार करने की अपेक्षा की जाती है।

भारतीय परिवार में लड़कियों को जन्म से ही लड़कों की तुलना में कमतर समझा जाता रहा है। लड़कों को एक तरफ जहां घर के बाहर के कार्यों को करने हेतु समर्थ बनाया जाता है, वहीं दूसरी तरफ लड़कियों को घर के आंतरिक कार्यों को निपुण तरीके से करना सिखाया जाता है। परिवार के इसी असमान दृष्टिकोण के कारण लड़कियों को असमान शिक्षा का भी सामना करना पड़ता है जिससे वे सामाजिक और आर्थिक रूप से पिछड़ जाती हैं। असमान शिक्षा महिलाओं के स्वावलंबी बनने की राह में एक रुकावट है।

परिवार लड़कियों की प्रकृति प्रदत्त क्षमताओं को दबाकर उन्हें कोमल एवं नाजुक बनाने का प्रयास करता है। ज्यादातर लड़कियां खेलकूद में भाग नहीं लेती क्योंकि परिवार

¹ इतिहास (विशेष), द्वितीय वर्ष, 22/35038

द्वारा उन्हें शारीरिक रूप से क्लिष्ट कार्यों को करने के लिए बचपन से रोका जाता है। परिवार एवं समाज में ऐसी अवधारणा बनी हुई है कि- महिलाएं केवल शारीरिक रूप से आसान कार्यों को ही कर सकती हैं। यह रूढ़िवादी अवधारणा बिल्कुल असत्य है। अगर यह असत्य नहीं होती तो आज महिलाएं सेना में अपना योगदान ना दे रही होतीं, महिलाएं ओलंपिक जैसी विश्व स्तर की खेल स्पर्द्धा में भाग लेकर हमारे देश के लिए पदक नहीं लातीं और ना ही महिलाएं खेतों एवं कारखानों में मजदूरी करके देश की आर्थिक प्रगति में सहायक की भूमिका निभा रही होतीं।

परिवार द्वारा किया गया लैंगिक भेदभाव ही आगे चलकर समाज में लैंगिक भेदभाव की कुरीति को बढ़ावा देता है। भारतीय परिवार में लड़कियों से यह उम्मीद की जाती है कि वे परिवार के सभी सदस्यों एवं जीवन के आने वाले पड़ाव में समाज के सदस्यों के साथ नम्र व्यवहार करें एवं धीमी व मधुर आवाज़ का प्रयोग करें। परिवार के लड़कों से ऐसी उम्मीदें ना के बराबर की जाती है। आवाज़ एवं विनम्रता को हमारे समाज ने लड़कियों को कमज़ोर एवं लड़कों को बलवान दर्शाने का पैमाना बना लिया है। एक सभ्य समाज में विनम्र होना सभी के लिए ज़रूरी है, चाहे वह महिला हो या पुरुष। भारत में परिवार एक ऐसी संस्था है जो महिलाओं के आत्मनिर्भर बनने में सर्वाधिक बाधा का कारण बनती है। परिवार में लड़कियों की परवरिश इस तरह से की जाती है कि वह घर के दरवाज़े के बाहर अपने घर के पुरुष सदस्यों पर निर्भर होने के लिए मजबूर हों। हमारे समाज में बहुत सारे ऐसे परिवार हैं जो बेटे - बेटियों में बिना कोई भेदभाव किए अपने सभी बच्चों की एक - समान परवरिश करते हैं जिससे लड़कियों को समानता की अनुभूति होती है। समाज में ऐसे सकारात्मक उदाहरण की ज़्यादा से ज़्यादा ज़रूरत है।

परिवार एक बच्चे को उसके दायित्वों से भी अवगत कराता है। अगर हम लड़कियों या महिलाओं के परिप्रेक्ष्य में दायित्वों की बात करें तो भारतीय समाज में हमें देखने को मिलता है कि महिलाओं के मुख्य दायित्वों में अपने परिवार के सदस्यों की सेवा करना, अपने बच्चों की परवरिश करना, घरेलू कार्यों को अच्छे ढंग से निष्पादित करना शामिल होता है। महिलाओं को घर के बाहरी दायित्वों से दूर रखा जाता है। कुछ दशकों से लड़कियों के लिए समान शिक्षा एवं समान अवसर की भावना समाज में देखने को मिली है, जिस वजह से महिलाओं के समाजीकरण में एक सकारात्मक बदलाव भी देखने को मिल रहा है। देश में आर्थिक उदारीकरण के दौर के बाद श्रम बल की बढ़ती मांग को देखते हुए महिलाओं के समाजीकरण में तेज़ी से बदलाव हुआ है क्योंकि समान अवसर एवं समान अधिकार के बिना कोई भी इंसान अपने श्रम के क्षेत्र में अपनी प्रतिभा का

संपूर्ण प्रदर्शन नहीं कर सकता। दूरसंचार क्रान्ति खासकर इंटरनेट की घर-घर पहुँच ने लोगों के दुनिया को देखने का नज़रिया बदला है। इंटरनेट ने समाजीकरण की प्रक्रिया को भी प्रभावित किया है। यह प्रभाव सकारात्मक एवं नकारात्मक दोनों है। इंटरनेट के माध्यम से हम आसानी से अलग-अलग संस्कृतियों से परिचित होते हैं। उस संस्कृति में स्थापित समाजीकरण की प्रक्रिया को भी समझते हैं एवं अपनी सुविधा के अनुसार यथासंभव अपनाने का प्रयास करते हैं।

परिवार ही वह संस्था है जहां एक व्यक्ति के जीवन के प्रारंभिक आदर्श एवं विचारधारा दोनों विकसित होते हैं। इन्हीं विचारों एवं आदर्शों को अपना मार्गदर्शक मान कर व्यक्ति समाज के लोगों एवं सामाजिक संस्थानों के बीच में अपनी एक अनोखी पहचान बनाने का प्रयास करता है। भारतीय समाज में खासकर ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में एवं छोटे शहरों में लड़कियों को एक आदर्श बेटे, आदर्श बहन, आदर्श पत्नी, आदर्श माँ आदि बनाने पर जोर दिया जाता है और यह आदर्श हमारी रूढ़िवादी परंपरा पर आधारित हैं। इन आदर्शों को हासिल करने के दौरान एक महिला खुद के स्वतंत्र अस्तित्व को खो देती है। इस तरह के समाजीकरण के दौरान महिलाओं के अंदर समर्पण की भावना विकसित होती है। महिलाओं के समर्पण का नकारात्मक पक्ष पितृसत्ता को और भी मज़बूत बनाता है। भारत के अधिकांश परिवार अपने घर की बेटियों को पराए घर की अमानत के तौर पर देखते हैं। यह एक जटिल रूढ़िवादी सोच है जो निकट भविष्य में भी समाप्त होती नहीं दिखती। विवाह जैसी संस्था का भारतीय महिलाओं के समाजीकरण में व्यापक दखल है। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि लड़कियों को विवाह के बाद के गृहस्थ जीवन - यापन हेतु उनकी परवरिश लड़कों की परवरिश की तुलना में बिल्कुल अलग तरीके से की जाती है। ज़्यादातर परिवार में लड़कों पर पाबंदियों की जहां कमी देखी जाती है वहीं लड़कियों पर पाबंदियों की कोई कमी नहीं दिखती। लड़कियों को अपने पसंद के संगीत सुनने, सिनेमा देखने, खेल खेलने, शैक्षणिक विषयों का चयन करने, पोशाक पहनने, अकेले किसी भी जगह पर घूमने जाने, लोगों से खासकर पुरुषों से सामाजिक रिश्ते बनाने तक की पाबंदी का सामना करना पड़ता है।

भारतीय परिवार में इन पाबंदियों के बीच लड़कियों का समाजीकरण होता है। इस प्रक्रिया के दौरान पारिवारिक एवं सामाजिक दबाव की वजह से लड़कियाँ भी मानसिक रूप से इन पाबंदियों को अपने जीवन में अपना लेती हैं, जिसके फलस्वरूप उनका सर्वांगीण विकास संभव नहीं हो पाता। इन पाबंदियों के कारण लड़कियों के मन से दुनिया को जानने व समझने की उत्सुकता कम हो जाती है। सामाजिक एवं सार्वजनिक जगहों व संस्थानों में

महिलाओं की भागीदारी सीमित हो जाती है। कैलेंडर के अनुसार हम मानव प्रजाति आज 21वीं सदी में अपना जीवन व्यतीत कर रहे हैं परन्तु ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि कुछ क्षेत्रों में जैसे लैंगिक समानता के क्षेत्र में हम आज भी सदियों पीछे की सोच के अनुसार समाज में बने अन्यायपूर्ण नियमों का अनुकरण कर रहे हैं। भारत के कानून एवं सरकारी प्रयास महिलाओं के ऊपर किसी भी पाबंदी की इजाजत नहीं देते फिर भी एक सामाजिक प्रथा के रूप में इन पाबंदियों एवं नियमों को हमारे समाज के लोगों के बीच मान्यता प्राप्त है।

संक्षेप में अगर हमें एक समाज के रूप में प्रगतिशील एवं विकसित बनना है तो सबसे पहले हमें इस समाज की आधी मानवीय जनसंख्या (महिलाओं) की स्वतंत्रता व समानता के अधिकार का सम्मान करना सीखना पड़ेगा। पिछले कुछ दशकों में महिलाओं के समाजीकरण के उदार स्वरूप को भी देखा गया है लेकिन ये बातें देश के बड़े व आर्थिक रूप से महत्वपूर्ण शहरों तक ही सीमित हैं। भारत के छोटे शहरों व गांवों में अभी भी महिलाओं का समाजीकरण पितृसत्तात्मक एवं रूढ़िवादी विचार से प्रभावित है। समाज एवं परिवार के सदस्यों को स्वतंत्रता, समानता एवं आत्मनिर्भरता जैसे मूल्यों को किताबों के पन्नों से बाहर निकालकर अपने व्यावहारिक जीवन में आत्मसात् करना होगा तभी महिलाओं के समाजीकरण में हम सकारात्मकता की उम्मीद कर सकते हैं जिससे समाज बेहतर बन सके।

Women and Family

Deepshikha¹

The idea of a family has changed over time, but the role of women in promoting stability and advancement has not. Women are adept at the roles they play in the family, because of their special abilities and traits. Giving care is one of the crucial duties that women play in the family. Mothers have to care for their children from the time of birth. Most women possess this caring trait, which enables them to provide their children with love, support, and care as they grow up. Women are skilled at establishing a secure and nurturing environment at home, so that the physical and emotional needs of the family members are met.

The presence of women is desirable in maintaining the family unit. They have a profound capacity for empathy and interpersonal connection. Their ability to manage emotions enables them to mediate disputes, offer consolation during trying times, and foster harmony and togetherness within the family. Women frequently act as the family's unifier, bringing stability and a feeling of solidarity. Women not only perform upkeep and repairs, but also contribute to their families' health. The number of women working has increased drastically in recent years. They now share the responsibility for providing for the family's financial needs, which is significant, since it helps their families. By striking a balance between job and family obligations, women are demonstrating their talent, adaptability, and will to excel in all spheres of life.

It needs to be emphasized that even the males of the family may not necessarily be against the idea of the liberation of the women. Just as an example, it is important to understand that a father's point of view that his daughter should refrain from going on late-night excursions is not only an act of control, but also a sincere show of concern, in a world where

¹ B.A. (Hons) Geography, Second Year, 22/31016

conversations about autonomy and personal freedom are prominent. While it is easy to focus on the purported negative aspects of these kinds of opinions, it is also important to acknowledge the thoughtful and concerned intentions that these requests actually represent. Despite the stereotype of restricting freedom, fathers understand that night-outs can be risky for girls. Achieving a balance between freedom and sensible safety precautions can be achieved by encouraging girls to experiment with their independence during the day. This strategy permits development and independence, within the parameters of a responsible and compassionate environment. Night-outs are not a bad idea, but need to take into account social realities.

Even though women have typically filled these roles in the home, it is vital to understand that things change all the time. Gender roles have shifted in the culture of today, with males now fulfilling greater household and caregiving responsibilities. With this shift, women now have the chance to explore their own passions and feelings outside their household duties. Women are overcoming obstacles and excelling in a variety of fields, including politics, business, and education. Women gain from this revolution, and it also advances humanity's growth and development. Even though women have made great progress around gender equality, more has to be done. Women continue to face particular difficulties and problems, such as gender discrimination and the pressure to manage many obligations. Organizations must acknowledge and deal with these concerns, in order to guarantee the ability of women to make contributions to their families and societies, at large.

ROLE OF A HOUSEWIFE

The role of a housewife was once considered the main role of a woman, but it has changed a lot over time. The multiple roles played by women in the Indian family is now fully recognized. The evolving definition of family as an institution in Indian society has contributed to this change. The family

is seen not only as a binding force for women, but also as a platform for the development and empowerment of women. Despite these changes, the stability of Indian families is still threatened today. Economic crises, urbanization and changing values affect family dynamics. In some cases, these changes improved women's rights and gave them freedom. But they have also led to conflict and rivalry, raising concerns about the future of the family in India. The role of family in shaping Indian society cannot be underestimated. Family organization plays an important role in enforcing cultural and social norms. But, it also has the potential to be liberating for women. By challenging gender roles and maintaining equality, families can contribute to the development and empowerment of women, ultimately leading to prosperity and unity.

In addition to providing care, support, and finances, women hold significant roles in the family. They are able to foster stability, good thinking, and a loving atmosphere in the house, because of their special traits and skills. The more vistas and relationships that women explore, the more valuable their contributions to the family are. To assist women, attain true equality, we must empower and encourage them.

PATRIARCHY AND WOMEN

One of the oldest structures, patriarchy has long caused harm to cultures all over the world. The subjugation and marginalization of women is a result of this structural power hierarchy that benefits men. The origins of different kinds of families can be linked to the past. Family has been utilized in many different contexts throughout history, ranging from the nuclear family to the joint and extended family. The implication of these familial dynamics on women's roles in society are profound. Expectations and customs have an impact on how women behave, in the home. Women feel compelled to put family first and give up on their own goals and aspirations. It is difficult to escape the cycle of gender inequity caused by the pressure

to fit into these roles, which is not merely social but has also become an understanding of the female psyche.

To guarantee that every family member, regardless of gender, is treated equally and has the flexibility to follow their own path, it is crucial to understand gender equality. The issue of women's dignity is frequently contested. While some think that maintaining traditional conservative beliefs is the path to dignity, others think that liberalism and accepting modern ideals are the paths to dignity. In Indian households, men and women may have differing definitions of liberalism and conservatism.

The complicated relationship between women and family may be an embroidered artwork, woven with strings of convention, advancement, and continuous societal change. Over centuries, women have been the foundation of familial structures, bearing the weight of caregiving duties and the passionate well-being of their family units. Be that as it may, the story has been subject to significant shifts, generally catalyzed by the tireless waves of the development of women's rights. As women have picked up, implemented instruction, entered the workforce in uncommon numbers, and smashed the glass ceilings that once obliged their aspirations, the conventional worldview of the family has experienced a transformation. There is a cluster of family structures in India – single-parent family units, mixed families, same-sex associations, and chosen families. These different arrangements highlight the flexibility and strength of familial connections, challenging biased ideas and grasping the lavishness of human experiences.

However, in the midst of this advance, the travel toward sex balance remains a work in progress. The requirement for a comprehensive work-life, and social shifts that esteem caregiving obligations independent of sex, is basic, to really enable women inside the family unit. Cultural and socio-economic settings encourage to complicate the account, as profoundly imbued standards and systemic aberrations can shape women's encounters inside families. Recognizing and tending to these relevant subtleties is vital

for an adjusted understanding of the challenges that women explore, inside familial settings universally. A comprehensive approach must be recognized and regarded, along with assorted social viewpoints, while pushing for widespread knowledge and autonomy.

In exploring this complex scene, a balanced conclusion requires the acknowledgment that advancement isn't uniform. Whereas strides have been made, there's no one-size-fits-all arrangement. Strengthening comes in numerous shapes and must be comprehensive, considering the assorted choices that women make inside the family system. Striking an adjustment, includes cultivating an environment that not only disassembles boundaries to women's proficient and personal yearnings but, moreover celebrates the differing qualities of choices made by women in numerous social, and financial contexts.

In conclusion, the subject of women and family underscores the requirement for a progressing, comprehensive, and intersectional discussion. It calls for arrangements that recognize the differing needs of women, social affectability that regards personal choices, and societal changes that recognize and place in the esteem and commitments of women, inside the family unit. The journey towards a more evenhanded and agreeable future includes weaving together the personal stories, battles, and triumphs of women from all walks of life, into a collective story that grasps the quality, versatility, and potential of women inside the ever-evolving embroidered artwork of family life.

**“A WOMEN IS THE FULL CIRCLE.
WITHIN HER IS THE POWER TO
CREATE, NURTURE, AND TRANSFORM.”**

DIANE MARIECHILD

Women in the Indian family: Some reflections

Kajal Chaudhary¹

Keywords: Gender Roles, Liberation, Women, Family, Society

Women have played a crucial and central role in families throughout historical times, serving as the backbone of the families, caregivers, nurturers, and the pillars of love and support. Being a woman implies being compassionate, assertive, kind, and powerful. Despite all these qualities, in many societies women are traditionally perceived as secondary beings. They are considered inferior to men, in all aspects.

The relationship between women and family is a multifaceted and evolving one. The family is the fundamental unit of the society, and women have been the backbone of this unit, for generations. Women take up various essential responsibilities including nourishment of the child, nurturing, managing the household, providing emotional support to their family, and balancing the overall structure. In addition, women are now actively participating in professional careers, contributing to the financial stability of their families, as well as the nation. In spite of all these efforts and qualities, the identity of women is considered secondary to that of men. This can be interpreted as the deeply ingrained patriarchal attitudes, that have prevailed across generations, in many cultures, including the Indian society. It is sometimes said that men and women have to share family responsibilities but majority of the people oppose this concept. It is worth thinking as to what are the reasons for this opposition.

Historically, it was believed that men should hold positions of power and authority, while women are meant to be suppressed. This idea was deeply engrained in the minds of people that gender roles are made by God, and women are made to live inside the four walls within a curtain, while

¹BA (Hons) Geography, Second Year (22/31022)

men are the bread-winners of the family. This idea was spread through religious beliefs, social norms, and emotionally-built architecture. A concept of *Pativrata* was prevalent in the society, in which women had to be fully devotional to her husband and to her parent-in-laws. Societal expectations of how women should behave, live, speak, work, were too rigid and harsh. Furthermore, the practice of dowry led to women being seen as liabilities, rather than assets. The prevalence of male inheritance was one more reason in the line, to suppress women, and consider them as secondary. All the property, power and authority of the family had to be transferred to the male heir of the next generation. Even in the cases of kings and rulers, the hierarchy which was male-centred was prominent. These practices slowly and steadily led to the subordination of women, within the family hierarchy. These not only lowered the status of the women in the society, but also made it normal for women to be suppressed and depressed. Their thought process got affected and women considered it normal to be secondary, as the practice was passed on, from generation to generation. Within the family, women face unequal distribution, limited access to some resources, discrimination, physical and emotional violence, marriage pressure, and more. But exceptions were always present. There were women who fought for their rights, who ruled the kingdoms, who were the bread-winners for their family, who fought against dowry, who were the heir to position of power, and authority. The women started to get liberated, seek equality, and contributed to the nation building.

At the inauguration of the All-India Women's Conference Building Complex in New Delhi, India, on 26 March 1980, Indira Gandhi quoted, "To be liberated, woman must feel free to be herself, not in rivalry to man, but in context of her own capacity and her personality". In the context of this quote, it can be said that a liberated woman is one who is free from traditional societal constraints, feels free to be herself, and is equal to other gender in every aspect of life, whether it is in emotional or in the financial

domain. She is someone who seeks equality, autonomy, and freedom in every sphere of life, including family, education, and career. Some people usually perceive that a liberated woman stands for stubbornness, selfishness, hypocrisy, anger issues, and rudeness. It is erroneous to assume that liberated women are a blend of arrogance and selfishness. In fact, they do not necessarily want men to work below them, or to pressurize them, rule them or harm their self-respect in any form. Generally, liberated women seek equality, freedom, and liberty in her life. It is important to note that the concept of a liberated woman is not a one size fit all, but it varies widely among people. Women in India, like women in many other countries, have diverse backgrounds, experiences, and aspirations, and what constitutes liberation for one woman may differ from another. Some people hold the belief that women seeking liberation can disrupt traditional family dynamics and societal norms, while others view it as evidence of a society which has moved towards gender equality and social development. It is thus important to add that a liberated woman may or may not be a threat to the Indian society.

The presence of a liberated woman in the family will change the entire family structure. The next generation will not accept the rigid traditional gender rules and regulations, and will challenge these norms. The role models in the families will not be constrained to the males only. Some typical Indians just try to end the conversation of liberated women as “It came from West, it doesn’t have roots in our culture, or it is a misconception of modernity”. But, for this we have long deep roots of liberated women in our own history. One of those is Rani Lakshmi Bai who fought for her kingdom until her last breath. She broke the social stigmas, held her sword in her hand, planned the fight, led the army, nourished her adopted son, and so on. She was neither from a different culture, nor from any western country. She was born and brought up in India, lived like a lioness, and showed what a liberated woman stands for.

Liberated woman will change the dynamics of the structure of family. She will break patriarchal attitudes of the society, which will dismantle the persisting thoughts of the traditional Indian society. It will possess a threat to those narrow-minded people who suppressed women, considered them as subordinates and a liability. The concerns stem from fear of losing control over the household, shift in power, or how to adapt to the changing norms. But, certainly changing and challenging the traditional gender roles does not mean that one has to abandon cultural values. Embracing the cultural values, while advocating for gender equality will lead to a liberated and inclusive society. It is crucial to emphasize that women's liberation and gender equality aims to provide women with same rights, opportunities, and choices as men, rather being a threat to family.

Liberation is never against motherhood; it is a myth created by this patriarchal society to handcuff the women. Liberated women can give birth and bring up children nicely. But an important question that arises though is why are men not considered, fit enough to bring up children? Again, there are many examples to prove that men who bring up children bring them up very well. It is the society that creates contrasting dualism between a man and a woman, something which is unfounded.

Balancing family and career is another challenge for a liberated woman. She often has to be in a conflict between the family responsibilities and her career ambitions. If she fails to manage her family, she will be termed as an imperfect bahu in the society, whereas if she leaves her career for the needs of the family, she will forever be haunted by the tough sacrifice she had to make. In both of these cases, it is the women who get affected by these social instincts. In a family, if she is involved in decision making process regarding finances, education, health, it will significantly lead to the overall growth and development of the family. That will be considered her duty, whereas if the same involvement is shown by the men, it will be considered as their talent or intelligence.

For all these definitions and thoughts, a practical look is indeed needed. According to Mckinsey, women do 75% of the world's total unpaid work.² In India, women spend 299 minutes a day on unpaid domestic services, while men spend 97 minutes, according to the 2019 report on Time Use in India by National Statistical Office. This inequality can be correlated with low participation of women in formal workforce. India ranks 140th among 156 countries in the **World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021**. Women's labour force participation rate as per that report is 22.3%.³ According to an article, pandemic has resulted in an increase in women's role towards the family that led to women leaving the workforce in record numbers.

In conclusion, the idea of threat to family is a subjective viewpoint that varies among individuals. Some people are concerned about disruptions in traditional dynamics, while other aims to promote equality and liberation of women for overall development. Women have been breaking barriers and achieving success in almost every field and contributing positively to their families, communities, and nation. The goal has to be to work towards the betterment of society that values and supports rights and aspirations of all of its members, irrespective of gender. As the Indian society continues to evolve, it is essential to foster an environment where women can exercise agency, make choices that align with their aspirations, and have their rights and well-being protected within the family unit.

²National Statistical Office, 2019, 2140 pages

https://mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Report_TUS_2019_0.pdf?download=1

³ Women and the Pandemic: Serious Damage to Work, Health and Home demands Response by Forbes in 2021

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2021/04/18/women-and-the-pandemic-serious-damage-to-work-health-and-home-demands-response/?sh=48b0ea9c1f49>

Norms of Socialisation in Indian Families

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Keywords: *Socialisation, Gendered Roles, Women, Family, Marriage*

The concept of a family in India has always been sacred. From the beginning of our lives, to its end, the act of prioritising our family has been inculcated in our minds. Modernisation may have reduced the prevalence of the practice of big joint families and brought smaller nuclear families in their place, but it did not destroy our culture of putting family and relatives first. While this culture stayed prevalent, it also sheltered another sub-culture, which is gendered socialisation within families. Before diving into the complexities of this subject, it is important to first form an understanding of the term *gender socialisation*. Gender socialisation simply put, is a process through which *societally accepted* gendered roles, norms, expectations, and behaviours are inculcated in a person.² Generally, the indoctrination of this starts at an early age, and this further drives people's tendency to pick up on certain thoughts and behaviours, at later stages of life, as well. It becomes evident that this is a *lifelong process*, catapulted into action from the childhood of the general population. There are various examples in our daily lives based on this. The most common ones include prevalent stereotypes, like pink being for girls and blue being for boys; how boys do not cry and it is okay if a girl does; how boys do not play with dolls and girls do not play with cars.

What socialisation of women in households means in today's world, is the traditional or stereotypical gendered roles that women are expected to follow and are conditioned to follow. A question that may arise in one's mind is— "How did we get these roles in the first place?" To this, anyone

¹B.Sc (Hons) Physics, Third Year, 21/19171

²Cynthia Vinney, 'What is Gender Socialization? Definition and Examples'

ThoughtCo, February 04, 2019

<https://www.thoughtco.com/gender-socialization-definition-examples-4582435>

may answer that, this is how it has always been. Societal expectations solidified these traditions, and so these roles were further passed on from generation to generation. While these did pass on from word of mouth, everchanging and taking different forms; this role assignment was not something that was recorded or institutionalised. But of course, with the change in times, the alteration in people's thinking, and the change in condition of women in society, these roles became obsolete, as they were deeply rooted in misogyny and patriarchy. Nevertheless, this does not mean that these roles do not exist in the modern times. *They do*, but in a subdued and subtle form.

When the roles of a woman in a family are talked about, the most traditional ones that come to mind are to make sure she bears children, does all the domestic housework, looks after the children and her husband, and in some cases, her in-laws as well. These are what some people would call the duty of the mothers and wives. Furthermore, there are some duties or roles, that are assigned to the daughters and sisters as well. Somehow, it is along the lines of what their mothers do. Considering some common ones, a mother always calls for her daughter, to help her in the kitchen, or clean around the house, or even take care of their brother's needs. Although the intensity and pressure of some of these roles have decreased over time, it is still a hard pill for people to swallow when a woman is seen as lacking in any of these fields.

Modern times have brought a shift in gendered role assignment with the increase in acceptance of working wives. Despite that, the acceptance of this shift is not that evident when it comes to the men doing household work or helping their wives with housework. This indicates that society not only expects women to earn, but also make sure that they do their jobs as housewives as well, whereas, somehow the same is not expected from the men. For men earning and providing for the household is a must, but helping with housework and domestic chores becomes an optional task.

Pondering about socialization and its implementation, in a conversation,

initiated with some daughters, when asked about their familial roles replied-
“*My mother asks me to do tasks like cooking or setting the dinner table, or that when guests visit, the females in the family are unconsciously expected to prepare and serve delicacies for them. This, according to me, is a commonly perceived role for females in the household.*”²

In the same article, another participant shared as to how there is family pressure on girls to get married at an early age, and knowing how to cook and take care of the house are important roles and skills of a woman. She further noted how these roles caused her *choices to be constrained between studying and cooking*. It can be inferred here, that *this* is socialisation in its barest form. Now on the basis of the above excerpt and a general observation made in most Indian households, it can be noted that whenever a family has guests over, it is mostly the women of the house scrambling around to get everything done. Whether it is setting up the table or cooking, the women of the hosting family rarely get to spend time with the guests, and are mostly confined to the kitchen. In stark contrast, the men rarely help around, and rather enjoy their time with the guests, completely relying on the women to take care of the serving and hospitality. In some instances, even the women from the guest family offer to help around in the kitchen with the cooking or serving.

So far, it has become well established that while not all roles are assigned to women by word of mouth, *some are even assigned through obvious actions*. When daughters see only their mothers doing the domestic work, it becomes a sort of an unsaid rule that only women are supposed to do that work. Even when the mothers do need help with any of their chores, they prefer to call their daughters and not their sons, under the guise that

²PRIA, ‘The Institution of Family: Assignment of Gender Roles Begin at Home’
FEMINISM IN INDIA, December 20, 2021
<https://feminisminindia.com/2021/12/20/the-institution-of-family-assignment-of-gender-roles-begin-at-home/>

these are skills the daughter should learn, since she will be married off and must carry on these duties at her own home. Furthermore, when it comes to the topic of the daughter's marriage, from her childhood until her twenties, she is constantly reminded how it is important for her to learn how to take care of the house, cook, how to clean, how to tend to other members of the family, and most importantly know how to look after a child. It is justified to her that the most important part of her life is when she comes of age to get married, and that it is important to get married at an apt age. Due to this, she is conditioned to think that her whole life revolves around starting a family, and taking care of the family.

Largely, from society's point of view, it is always expected of women to be submissive, docile, polite, and humble. She is expected to always be there for the men, and to consider it her moral duty to look after the family. So, it is not a surprise when traits like these end up manifesting in the dynamics of a family as well. Whether it is the wife, mother, daughter, or sister, they are always expected to look after the men of the house. Sons are considered precious, so it always ends up being the daughter who must help him, or do his work for him. It becomes even more apparent if she is the elder daughter.

But it is also interesting to note that at times, in many cases the women's instinct for perfection and control kicks in, and she takes it on herself to do the work for the men. Deep down she knows that the reason is because—"he does not know how to do it properly," or "rather than doing the work, he ruins the work." But aren't the women at fault here for not letting the men do any work? Because if they do not do any work, then how will they learn? From household work to their own work, it is as much duty of a son, as of a daughter, to do each and every work himself/herself.

Somehow, somewhere, it is *within these little actions and statements* that women find themselves restrained and tied up to the traditional roles of nurturers and caretakers. And so, women end up seeing themselves through this lens too. They start to consider it their duty to be like that, and

try their best to fit into their assigned roles. Even if a woman has a mind to oppose, she still finds herself abiding to the roles, unconsciously. She might go about complaining how no one helps her around the house, or knows how to do his own work, or how inept her husband is, but she will *still* find herself doing everything for the men, as if on reflex.

It is almost as if this behaviour has been ingrained in them. As a matter of fact, it has been ingrained so deeply that women end up disregarding their own wellbeing. Even if it burdens them, they will call it their obligation and something that every woman must put up with, as a part of a family. It is in her mental apparatus that this is her calling. And so, for the integrity of her family, and so that she is not shamed by society, *she must endure it*. She must endure it, even if it affects her emotionally and mentally. She must endure it, even if she is abused. All for the sake of her family. But if she is willing to go this far and not even consider herself as an individual, *then who will consider her?*

Throughout our lives, we have been conditioned to live by these roles. We not only live by, but have seen it play out in front of us too. But then again, the bad experiences of some people should not spoil a thing of joy, for other people. There are many women out there who do not mind playing by these roles, consider it their duty, and furthermore even enjoy it. So, while socialisation is not inherently a bad thing, it should also not mean that it takes away a person's freedom and peace of mind. And what better way, to make sure of that, than members of the family helping each other out, without having to think that "I am a man/woman. Men/women are not supposed to do this." If the mother is supposed to do all the housework, then so can the father, the daughter, and the son. If the husband is supposed to take care of all the expenses and bills, then so can the wife. It is time to let linear equality reign within families, rather than have a pyramid of power, because after all, just like a house is not a home without family; a family is not a family without the combined efforts of each of its members.

Beyond the Binary: Celebrating Diversity of Gender Identity in Family Structure

Sarthak¹

In the intricate tapestry of societal norms and familial expectations, gender plays a pivotal role in shaping an individuals' roles, responsibilities, and identities. The proverbial statement, "I'm raising my daughter like a son," serves as a poignant reflection of an ingrained cultural bias, that often favours traits and roles traditionally associated with men over those deemed as feminine. This seemingly innocuous declaration is emblematic of a broader issue ingrained in our societal fabric — the perpetuation of damaging divisions based on gender within family structures. Throughout history, society has subtly and overtly dictated specific roles, actions, and traits as inherently linked to one's gender. This has led to a compartmentalization of duties into distinct "male" and "female" domains, creating a binary narrative that reinforces a rigid duality. While it is not uncommon to hear individuals proclaiming their intent to raise their daughters "like sons," a striking asymmetry emerges when one attempts to reverse the statement - "I am raising my son like a daughter." This discrepancy underscores a deeper issue: a societal inclination towards valuing characteristics traditionally associated with men, while inadvertently devaluing those traditionally associated with women.

As we delve into the complex web of gender-related issues within the family unit, it becomes imperative to unravel the subtle biases that contribute to the perpetuation of conventional gender roles. This article seeks to illuminate the nuanced challenges surrounding gender expectations in the familial context, examining how such biases can influence individual development, family dynamics, and the broader social fabric. By exploring

¹Botany (Hons), Third Year, 21/09008

the intricacies of these issues, we aim to foster a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature of gender and family, paving the way for constructive dialogue and positive change.

The term "gender" refers to the social, cultural, and psychological characteristics and roles associated with being male or female. It includes various characteristics, behaviours, roles, and expectations that society deems appropriate for men and women. Gender identity is a person's individual sense of their gender, which may or may not match the gender assigned at birth. It is important to note that gender identity is different from biological sex, which is determined at birth based on physical characteristics, such as genitalia. Although gender dichotomy is consistent with the idea that only two genders correspond to two sexes, the reality is that gender is a complex and multifaceted aspect of human identity that encompasses many different experiences and expressions.

Non-binary is a term used to describe a gender identity that does not conform exclusively to the traditional categories of male or female. Non-binary people may identify as a mixed gender, a gender that fluctuates between two genders, or a gender that exists entirely outside of the binary. Non-binary people may use a variety of terms to describe their gender identity, including genderqueer, genderfluid, agender, and bigender. The non-binary concept challenges the traditional binary understanding of gender and acknowledges the diversity and fluidity of gender identities beyond the male/female dichotomy. Accepting non-binary identities supports a more inclusive and respectful understanding of gender variety, and challenges the constraints imposed by the gender binary. Therefore, it is essential to raise children free from imposing constrictive gender roles in their mind, in order to promote a more egalitarian society. Parents may assist by providing their children, with a variety of experiences, pastimes, and responsibilities, regardless of their gender identity. The loop of gender-based expectations may be broken by promoting boys' emotional

expression, empathy, and communication while encouraging girls to study traditionally male-dominated subjects.

A human's status, worth, and perception are profoundly influenced by culture. Women have held a variety of roles and positions in various civilizations. While some societies have long praised and honored women as matriarchs and leaders, others have enacted constrictive norms and practices that have reduced women's agency and chances.

The struggle for women's rights can be traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries.² The indigenous suffragette movement gained momentum during the pre-independence era, notably with the efforts of women like Anasuya Sarabhai and Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay. The demand for women's suffrage reached a significant milestone with the inclusion of voting rights for women in the Indian Constitution in 1947, marking a crucial step towards gender equality. However, the journey towards gender equality in India has been an ongoing battle. Post-independence, women activists continued to challenge societal norms. In the 1970s and 1980s, the women's liberation movement addressed issues such as dowry, domestic violence, and unequal employment opportunities. In recent times, campaigns for equal pay and increased representation in various fields demonstrate that the fight for gender equality persists. Recognizing the historical struggles of Indian women provides valuable context to contemporary activism, emphasizing the need for continued efforts to overcome persistent challenges and achieve true equality. The ability of women to make choices, take charge of their own life, and engage in social, economic, and political realms is referred to as women empowerment. Women's agency goes beyond simple participation; it entails actively directing their own lives and making a positive impact on larger

² Stephen, *The Evolution of Gender Roles in 19th Century Europe: A Fascinating Look into Cultural Norms and Women's Empowerment* (Europe, 2004-24)

societal change.

Despite significant progress in women's rights, many challenges remain around the world. Gender-based violence remains a pervasive problem that affects women in many ways, including domestic violence, rape, and human trafficking. Wage inequality remains a problem, with women often earning less than men for the same work. Limited access to health care and further education hinders women's empowerment and well-being and reinforces gender inequalities. Furthermore, the insufficient presence of women in leadership roles in the public and private sectors highlights the need for systemic changes.

To meet these challenges, various countries, including India, have implemented legislative measures and initiatives to promote gender equality. In India, the Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Act, 2017 recognized the importance of protecting women in the workforce and extending maternity leave. The *Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao* (Save the Child, Educate the Girl Child) campaign focuses on reversing the declining gender ratio and promoting girls' education. The #MeToo movement has gained momentum in India, empowering women to speak out against harassment and sexual assault and encouraging discussions about consent and workplace safety. While these initiatives represent positive progress, continued efforts to remove barriers and promote gender equality at both national and global scales are critical.

Fostering gender awareness becomes more important in families with LGBTQ+ members. A strong sense of belonging contributes greatly to overall well-being, acceptance, and respect for each individual's gender identity. However, challenging traditional gender roles and norms in some families can be a complex process. When young family members question these established norms, they may encounter resistance from parents and other family members who may find it difficult to have a more fluid understanding of gender. If family members have different views on gender,

misunderstandings can occur when trying to understand gender awareness. Some family members may be unintentionally hurt or marginalized due to misunderstandings or lack of understanding about gender issues. Cultural or religious beliefs can complicate a family's ability to understand gender diversity. Progressive views can conflict with traditional norms that precisely define gender roles, leading to potential friction and discord within the family unit. Embracing open communication and promoting understanding is critical, to building bridges between different perspectives in the family.

Education serves as an important gateway to fostering healthy family relationships. Explaining the concept of gender as a continuum and highlighting the challenges faced by people with identities different from traditional expectations, has become necessary for families. This understanding is critical to dispelling rumors and dispelling misconceptions about gender diversity.³ Further encouraging open and respectful discussions about gender issues in the family provides space for dialogue. It is essential to create an environment where family members can express their feelings, without fear of retaliation. By equitably distributing household responsibilities, promoting open expression, and demonstrating acceptance of different gender identities, parents can be positive role models and demonstrate progressive attitudes toward gender. Embracing these changes not only fosters more inclusive family dynamics, but also contributes to broader societal changes toward greater understanding and accepting attitudes toward gender diversity⁴.

Every area of our life is profoundly impacted by gender, a key component of human identity. Our jobs, interactions, opportunities, and

³ Gerry Veenstra, *Race, gender, class, and sexual orientation: intersecting axes of inequality and self-rated health in Canada* (Canada, 2011)

⁴ Vaanya Mathu, *Equal Pay for Equal Work? Gender Pay Gap and Maternity Benefits in India* (India, 2023)

expectations are shaped by it. Gender studies, often known as gender and sexuality studies, go beyond just comprehending the binary idea of the 'male' and 'female.' It explores the nuances of how gender interacts with many circumstances, and explains why this understanding is essential for creating a society that is more egalitarian and inclusive.

Gender studies has a vital role to play in encouraging critical evaluation and questioning of deeply rooted preconceptions and conventions associated with masculinity and femininity. Through the lens of gender studies, individuals gain tools to break down social norms and expectations about gender roles. By examining the ways in which societies construct and perpetuate these roles, gender studies provides a valuable insight into the complex interactions between culture, identity, and expectations. Moreover, research conducted by gender studies can help people become aware of the negative effects of rigid gender roles on both individuals and society, as a whole. This increased awareness allows for a more accurate understanding of how these roles contribute to inequality, discrimination, and limited opportunities, for personal and social growth.

But it is also important to note that gender interacts with various facets of identity, including race, class, sexual orientation, and ability. We can recognize the exacerbated difficulties that some people or groups have, because of their numerous identities by studying gender within the intersectionality of these identities. For instance, due to the additional layer of racial discrimination, a black woman's experience of gender differs from that of a white woman. Knowing intersectionality aids in our comprehension of the range of human experiences.

Additionally, insights gained from gender research help to remove barriers associated with development – both individual and social. Gender studies contributes to a more inclusive and just society, by promoting an environment in which diverse gender identities and expressions are recognized and respected. Ultimately, the transformative power of gender studies lies in its

ability to reshape perceptions, advance understanding, and pave the way for progress in the continued pursuit of gender equality and social justice.

The potential for gender research to advance gender equality is among the most important justifications for doing so. The gender wage gap and gender-based violence are only two examples of the many ways that gender-based discrimination and inequality still exist. Formulating successful methods to eliminate these discrepancies requires a thorough knowledge of their underlying causes and the social structures that support them. Studying gender gives us the information we need to support laws and practices that advance equal rights and opportunities for people of all genders.

Within a complex set of social norms and family expectations, it is clear that gender has a profound effect on a person's roles, responsibilities, and identity. The pervasive influence of traditional gender roles often leads to the perpetuation of harmful gaps in the family structure. This article stresses the importance of questioning deep-rooted preconceptions through gender studies, and that gender studies can eliminate harmful stereotypes, promote true self-expression, and remove barriers to personal and social development. By encouraging open dialogue and promoting progressive attitudes toward gender, families can contribute to a more inclusive society. Additionally, this article also emphasizes the importance of raising children free of restrictive gender roles and advocates for a more equal society that respects different gender expressions. Furthermore, the historic struggle for women's rights and the ongoing struggle for gender equality highlights the need for continued efforts. Legislative measures and initiatives such as the *Maternity Benefit Act* and #MeToo movement show positive progress. By promoting gender awareness and embracing the transformative potential of gender studies, we pave the way for an inclusive, understanding and just future for all genders.⁵

⁵ IDENTITY, STEREOTYPES AND PREJUDICE (Russia, 2016)

नारी की गरिमा

अमीष वर्मा¹

संकेत शब्द : परंपरा, पारंपरिक भूमिकाएं, गृहणी, जीवनशैली।

हर सफल पुरुष के पीछे एक नारी का हाथ होता है। चाहे वह एक माँ, पत्नी या बहन हो। नारी एक परिवार का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा होती है। जिस प्रकार हमारा दिमाग हमारे पूरे शरीर को चलाता है वैसे ही एक परिवार को चलाना घर की नारी की ज़िम्मेदारी होती है। परंपरागत रूप से महिलाएं पारिवारिक संरचना के लिए काफ़ी आवश्यक हैं। वह परिवार को एकजुट और स्थिर रखने में मुख्य भूमिका निभाती हैं।

ईश्वर ने सृष्टि की रचना करते समय नारी को संतान को जन्म देने की ऐसी शक्ति प्रदान की जिससे उनकी गरिमा बढ़ गई। भारत में उपस्थित तीन प्रमुख धर्मों और उनके धार्मिक ग्रंथों में भी नारी सम्मान की बात कही गई है -

1. श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता में लिखा है कि -

‘एवं प्रवर्तितं चक्रं नानुवर्तयतीह यः’

अष्टाशुक्लिन्यायामो मोघं पार्थ स जीवति²

(जो अपने जीवन के कर्मों को पूरा ना करे वह एक पापी है, वह केवल अपने सुख के लिए जी रहे हैं और उनके जीवन का कोई अर्थ नहीं है)

इससे हमें यह समझ आता है कि परिवार और पारिवारिक सिद्धांतों को सबसे श्रेष्ठ रखना व्यक्ति का धर्म होता है इसलिए कोख से होने के उन 9 महीनों में एक परिवार को और ख़ास कर माँ को बहुत बलिदान देने पड़ते हैं परंतु वह उस परिवार की भलाई के लिए ही होते हैं।

2. सूरह लुकमान में लिखा है कि -

“और हमने आदेश दिया है मनुष्यों को अपने माता-पिता के संबन्ध में, अपने गर्भ में रखा उसे उसकी माता ने दुःख पर दुःख झेलकर और उसका दूध छुड़ाया दो वर्ष में कि तुम कृतज्ञ

¹बी ए प्रोग्राम, द्वितीय वर्ष, 22/49048

²श्रीमद् भगवद्गीता (३:१६)

³सूरह लुकमान(३१:१४)

रहो मेरे और अपने माता-पिता के और मेरी ओर फिर आना है।’³ अर्थात् गर्भावस्था के वे 9 माह एक नारी के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण होते हैं। उसका कर्तव्य होता है कि वह अपनी संतान के पालन-पोषण को सबसे ऊपर रखे।

3. इसैयाह में लिखा है कि -

“जब मैं किसी स्त्री को बच्चा जनने की पीड़ा देता हूँ तो वह बच्चे को जन्म दे देती है। तुम्हारा यहोवा कहता है, मैं तुम्हें बच्चा जनने की पीड़ा में डालकर तुम्हारा गर्भद्वार बंद नहीं कर देता। मैं तुम्हें इसी तरह इन विपत्तियों में बिना एक नयी जाति प्रदान किये, नहीं डालूँगा।”⁴ अतः इसाई ग्रंथ के अनुसार संतान उत्पन्न करना सबसे पवित्र कार्य है। यहाँ ईश्वर यह कहते हैं कि भले ही गर्भावस्था बहुत कठिन समय होता है परंतु वह एक नारी को शक्तिशाली बनाता है।

हमें भगवद् गीता, कुरान शरीयत, गुरु ग्रंथ साहिब, यहूदी तोरह और इसाई इंजील सब से यही सीख मिलती है कि कैसे एक नारी कई परिश्रम और बलिदान के बाद एक संतान को इस सृष्टि में लाती है। इस पूरी प्रक्रिया में ईश्वर हमेशा उसका साथ देते हैं। इसे हम दैवीय योगदान कह सकते हैं।

आज-कल समाज में नारी शक्ति के नाम से चलने वाले आडंबर और छद्म नारीवाद की संख्या बढ़ रही है। क्या केवल धरना प्रदर्शन और नारे लगाने से ही नारी जाति का विकास हो सकता है? आज-कल अत्याधिक फुहड़ता और अभद्रता को नारी गरिमा कह कर सोशल मीडिया पर प्रचारित किया जाता है। इनपर काफ़ी टिप्पणियाँ भी की जाती हैं, पर क्या इससे सच में हमारे समाज में महिलाओं की इज़्जत बढ़ रही है? मेरे ख़्याल से नहीं। उन महिलाओं का क्या जो सुबह से लेकर शाम तक किसी ना किसी प्रकार से काम कर रही होती हैं, चाहे वह किसी तरह की नौकरी कर रही हों या फिर घरेलू काम? पारंपरिक भूमिकाओं को अपनाने और गृहिणी के रूप में महिलाओं की भूमिका की अपनी विशेषताएं हैं। यह परिवारों के लिए एक स्थिर और पोषणकारी वातावरण प्रदान करता है। सुरक्षा और निरंतरता की भावना को बढ़ावा देता है। एक स्वागत योग्य घर बनाने के लिए खुद को समर्पित करके महिलाएं अपने परिवार के भावनात्मक और मनोवैज्ञानिक कल्याण में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देती हैं। पारंपरिक पारिवारिक संरचना में जो महिलाएं गृहिणी बनना चुनती हैं वे अक्सर एक सामंजस्य-पूर्ण रहने की जगह बनाने में उत्कृष्ट होती हैं। संगठनात्मक

³इसैयाह(६६:९)

कौशल और स्वच्छ व आरामदायक घरेलू वातावरण बनाए रखने की प्रतिबद्धता पर उनका ध्यान रहता है जिससे सुखद और तनाव-मुक्त पारिवारिक जीवन का जन्म होता है तथा परिवार के अन्य सदस्यों को सहजता के साथ अपनी-अपनी भूमिकाओं और जिम्मेदारियों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने का मौका मिलता है।

गृहिणी छोटे बच्चों की प्राथमिक देखभाल करती है जिससे माताओं और उनके बच्चों के बीच मजबूत बंधन को बढ़ावा मिलता है, जो बच्चों के भावनात्मक और बौद्धिक विकास के लिए एक ठोस आधार प्रदान करता है। घर में माँ की निरंतर उपस्थिति सुरक्षा और स्थिरता की भावना प्रदान करती है जो बच्चे के प्रारंभिक वर्षों के लिए अमूल्य है।

पारंपरिक भूमिकाएँ महिलाओं पर सामाजिक दबावों को कम कर सकती हैं। अपनी इच्छानुसार घर के भीतर रहकर अपनी भूमिकाओं पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने का चयन करने वाली महिलाएं अपने परिवार का पालन-पोषण करने और मजबूत रिश्ते बनाने में संतुष्टि पाती हैं। उद्देश्य और पूर्ति की यह भावना संतुष्ट और संतुलित जीवन की ओर ले जाती है। पारंपरिक भूमिकाओं को अपनाने का मतलब महिलाओं के लिए विकल्प की कमी नहीं है। व्यक्तिगत प्रार्थमिकताएं एक गृहिणी की जिम्मेदारियों के अनुरूप हो सकती हैं। इस भूमिका में महिलाओं को महत्व देकर और उनका समर्थन करके, हम पारिवारिक इकाई और समग्र रूप से समाज में उनके अद्वितीय योगदान को स्वीकार करते हैं। पारंपरिक भूमिकाओं के संदर्भ में गृहिणी की भूमिका अपनाने वाली महिलाओं के पक्ष में कई तर्क हैं। एक स्थिर और पोषणपूर्ण वातावरण बनाकर महिलाएं अपने परिवार की समग्र भलाई में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान देती हैं।

भारतीय संस्कृति की समृद्ध परंपरा में परिवार के भीतर महिलाओं का समाजीकरण समय - सम्मानित परंपराओं में डूबा हुआ है जो समय की कसौटी पर खरी उतरी हैं। कम उम्र से ही लड़कियों में श्रद्धा, सम्मान और भक्ति जैसे मूल्यों का संचार किया जाता है। जो पोषणकर्ता, देखभाल करने वाली और पारिवारिक परंपराओं के रखवाले के रूप में उनकी भूमिका के आधार के रूप में काम करते हैं जो पीढ़ी दर पीढ़ी आगे बढ़ती है और समाजिक संस्कृति को सशक्त करती हैं। पारिवारिक इकाई इन पोषित मूल्यों को प्रदान करने के लिए एक अभ्यारण्य के रूप में कार्य करती है जहां महिलाएं रिश्तों के जटिल जाल के भीतर अपनी भूमिकाओं में सामंजस्य बिठाना सीखती हैं। पारिवारिक एकता और प्रियजनों की भलाई पर जोर देने से उनमें उद्देश्य और पूर्ति की गहरी भावना पैदा होती है।

पारम्परिक आदर्श इस समाजीकरण प्रक्रिया की आधारशिला रहे हैं जो पारिवारिक संरचना को मजबूत करते हैं और समय-सिद्ध सिद्धांतों को कायम रखते हैं। इन मूल्यों

की पवित्रता न केवल परिवार के भीतर स्थिरता को बढ़ावा देती है बल्कि बड़े समुदाय में अपनेपन की भावना को भी बढ़ावा देती है। समकालीन परिवर्तनों के सामने पारंपरिक मूल्यों द्वारा प्रदान किए जाने वाले स्थायी ज्ञान की सराहना करना आवश्यक है। भारतीय परिवारों की शाश्वत परम्पराएँ एक दृढ़ आधार प्रदान करती हैं जिससे यह सुनिश्चित होता है कि महिलाओं को परिवार और समाज में बड़े पैमाने पर अपनी महत्वपूर्ण भूमिकाओं में पूर्णता और उद्देश्य मिलता रहे।

समग्रतः संतुलित समाज के निर्माण में पुरुष और महिला दोनों समान रूप से महत्वपूर्ण हैं परंतु नौकरी पेशा महिलाएं निश्चित रूप से अधिक महत्वपूर्ण हैं। पहले के समय में किसी समाज की भलाई और प्रगति महिला भूमिकाओं पर निर्भर करती थी। तब कई कारणों से महिलाओं को दबा दिया जाता था। समय के साथ इसमें बदलाव आया है जैसा कि जनसांख्यिकीय, शिक्षा और नौकरियों से स्पष्ट है। यह समझने की आवश्यकता है कि पारंपरिक लैंगिक भूमिकाओं का आंकलन कम नहीं करना चाहिए या पुरुष-विरोधी आंदोलन के रूप में उनका प्रयोग नहीं किया जाना चाहिए। पुरुषों और महिलाओं दोनों को अपनी पेशेवर और घरेलू भूमिकाएँ चुनने का अधिकार है और उन्हें जीवन विकल्प के अनुरूप परिणाम भी देखने को मिलते हैं।

UNRAVELING THE PARADOX OF WOMEN'S INDEPENDENCE: BALANCING AUTONOMY AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS

Ashutosh¹

Key Words: Women's Independence, Autonomy, Societal Expectations, Gender Roles, Equitable Society

ABSTRACT

This article delves into the intricate phenomenon of women's independence, aiming to decipher the underlying paradox that arises from the interplay between autonomy and societal expectations. The article examines the historical context of women's rights movements and their impacts on shaping perceptions of independence. It scrutinizes the diverse cultural, social, and economic factors that influence women's pursuit of autonomy, while navigating the constraints imposed by traditional norms and expectations. Furthermore, the article analyses the psychological and emotional aspects that contribute to the complex balance between individual empowerment and the pressures to conform to established gender roles. The study sheds light on the dynamic and nuanced nature of women's independence, ultimately offering insights into fostering a more equitable and inclusive society, for all genders.

INTRODUCTION

In the pursuit of societal progress and gender equality, the independence of a women has emerged as a central theme, reflecting the evolution of women's roles and rights, throughout history. As the author, as I take a closer look at this intricate phenomenon, it becomes evident that the concept of autonomy, empowering women to make choices and lead self-directed lives, has witnessed remarkable advancements in recent times, driven by the relentless efforts of women's rights movements. Yet, beneath

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the surface of this seemingly empowering phenomenon, lies a profound paradox, one that demands deeper exploration and understanding.

As we embark on this exploration, we invite readers to join in unraveling the layers of complexity surrounding women's independence. This article not only presents a comprehensive analysis of historical perspectives, but also integrates my viewpoint at crucial junctures, enhancing the narrative with personal insights. The call for an equitable society is not a distant dream, but subject of a collective responsibility, echoing my vision for a world where women's independence is celebrated, unrestricted by paradoxes.

OBJECTIVES

- Examine the historical context of women's rights movements and their impact on shaping perceptions of women's independence.
- Analyze the cultural, social, and economic factors influencing women's pursuit of autonomy, amidst societal expectations and gender roles.
- Investigate the psychological and emotional aspects that contribute to the complex balance between individual empowerment and conformity to societal norms.
- Provide insights into fostering a more equitable and inclusive society for all genders, addressing the challenges and barriers that limit individual autonomy.
- Unravel the complexities that women navigate in their journey towards autonomy, offering insights into the multifaceted dimensions of this phenomenon.

I. Understanding the Historical Context of Women's Rights Movements and Their Impact on the Independence of Women¹

The historical context has played a significant role in shaping women's independence, with systemic barriers historically limiting their autonomy.²

¹ Iannello, Katherine P. (1998). "Third-Wave Feminism and Individualism: Promoting Equality or Reinforcing the Status Quo?" 315-320

² Stewart, Rebecca; Wright, Breanna; Smith, Liam; Roberts, Steven; Russell, Natalie (2021). "Gendered stereotypes and norms: A systematic review of interventions designed to shift Attitudes and Behaviour" <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e06660>

Women's rights movements, notably the suffragette movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, challenged these norms and secured voting rights, serving as a foundation for future gender equality efforts.

The 20th-century second wave of feminism addressed issues like workplace discrimination and reproductive rights, spotlighting restrictive gender roles. These movements prompted attitudinal shifts and legal changes that progressively expanded the choices of women.

The third wave of feminism, seen in recent times, goes beyond by incorporating intersectionality, recognizing diverse experiences and advocating inclusivity. It focuses on understanding the unique struggles faced by women of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with disabilities. This approach aims for a comprehensive and equal path, toward women's autonomy and empowerment.

II. Influential Factors Shaping Women's Pursuit of Autonomy amidst Societal Expectations and Gender Roles

The pursuit of autonomy for women is influenced by a range of complex factors, despite advancements in women's rights. Cultural norms, gender roles, and societal pressures still shape women's decisions. Traditional caregiver and homemaker roles clash with desires for personal and professional progress, causing both inner conflict and external challenges. In societies with patriarchal norms, unequal power dynamics persist, limiting women's access to education, jobs, and property. Economic barriers like the wage gap, restricted financial access, and discriminatory work practices also hinder women's independence. Media and social norms further enforce gender stereotypes, affecting self-perception and choices. Media's emphasis on women's appearance and sexuality can lower self-esteem and agency, reinforcing societal expectations.

III. The Psychological and Emotional Aspects of the 'Women's Independence' Paradox

The pursuit of women's independence involves navigating the tension

between personal empowerment and societal norms. This journey often triggers emotions like guilt, fear, and anxiety, especially when it challenges traditional gender roles. Women might doubt themselves and fear judgment for straying from norms. This conflict can result in an imposter syndrome, where accomplishments are undervalued due to societal narratives. The pressure to "have it all" can create immense stress for women, as they try to balance careers, family responsibilities, and personal interests. The fear of not living up to societal expectations can impact mental health and well-being, leading to burnout and a sense of inadequacy.

IV. Societal Expectations and Gender Norms: Navigating Challenges to Autonomy³

The autonomy of women is frequently restricted by enduring societal expectations and gender norms, despite advancements in women's rights. These norms enforce traditional roles like caregiving and submissiveness, limiting women's choices and compelling conformity. The pressure to prioritize family, marriage, and motherhood is especially tough for those seeking independence. Gender norms also sustain male dominance, causing imbalances that impede women's autonomy by linking it to male provision and decision-making. Women must navigate between societal expectations and personal autonomy, leading to emotional strain, as they strive for self-determination amidst potential stigmatization.

V. Cultivating Change: Strategies for Supporting Women's Pursuit of Autonomy⁴

The pursuit of women's autonomy demands a strategic approach to reshape societal norms. Several key strategies can effectively support women in this endeavor:

- a. Education and Awareness: Raising awareness regarding the impact of

³Gray Group International Insights (2023) "Gender Roles: Navigating the Dynamics of Societal Expectations"

⁴Hunt, Juliet (2004). "Effective Strategies for promoting Gender Equality" 02-06

gender norms and societal expectations is pivotal. Education has the potential to challenge ingrained biases and foster understanding, ultimately leading to a more equitable society.

- b. **Empowering Role Models:** Showcasing the achievements of women who have defied traditional roles serves as inspiration for others. By countering gender stereotypes, these role models pave the way for women to fearlessly pursue their ambitions.
- c. **Policy Reforms:** Implementing gender equality-driven policies like parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and equal pay is vital. Such policies cultivate a supportive environment that aids women in their quest for autonomy.
- d. **Challenging Gender Roles:** Initiating open dialogues about gender roles and expectations is essential. This approach deconstructs stereotypes and redefines conventional concepts of femininity and masculinity.
- e. **Supportive Networks:** Establishing networks and communities that provide women a safe space to share experiences, seek guidance, and garner encouragement is significant. These networks offer valuable support to women in their quest towards independence.⁵

VI. Empowering from Within: The Psychological Journey to Independence⁶

The pursuit of independence for women encompasses both external challenges against societal norms and internal battles against ingrained beliefs. Internalized sexism fosters self-doubt and hampers confidence. Overcoming these barriers mandates self-awareness, compassion, and confronting biases. Societal conditioning breeds fear of judgment for defying norms, causing guilt when prioritizing personal goals. Fostering self-strength and authenticity empowers women to embrace autonomy, confidently.

⁵Sustainable Development Goals "Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/>

⁶"Women Empowerment" https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_empowerment

VII. Balancing Aspirations and Expectations: The Internal Conflict of Women's Independence

The pursuit of autonomy often involves striking a delicate balance between personal aspirations and societal expectations. Women may aspire to ambitious careers, pursue education, or seek unconventional paths, but societal pressure to conform to traditional roles can create internal conflicts. This internal conflict can lead to difficult decisions and trade-offs. Women may face choices between career advancement and family life, between pursuing personal passions and adhering to societal roles. Balancing these aspirations and expectations requires resilience, assertiveness, and the ability to navigate societal norms, while staying true to one's values and aspirations.

VIII. Unraveling Diversity: Women's Independence in different cultural contexts

Women's independence is a multifaceted phenomenon that manifests differently across various cultural contexts, shaped by factors like cultural norms, religion, economics, and history. Conservative societies see women's autonomy hindered by rigid gender roles and societal expectations. Conversely, progressive societies offer more freedom, yet biases persist. To advance global gender equality, it is vital to comprehend these differences for tailored strategies and empowerment efforts.

IX. Fostering an equitable and inclusive society for all genders

The ultimate objective is to contribute to the creation of a more equitable and inclusive society. To address the paradox of women's independence, society must actively foster an equitable and inclusive environment for all genders. This involves breaking down systemic barriers through education, promoting gender sensitivity, and challenging stereotypes. Workplaces can contribute by implementing policies for work-life

balance, parental leave, equal pay, and encouraging women in leadership. Evolving legislation should protect women's rights, addressing

areas like violence, reproductive rights, education, and healthcare. Open dialogues and support networks should be fostered, allowing women to share experiences and promote mutual support on their path to independence.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paradox of women's independence results from the interplay between autonomy and societal expectations. This article discussed the historical impact of women's rights movements on gender roles, and the influence of cultural, social, and economic factors on women's autonomy within traditional norms. The article also explored the psychological struggle women face in balancing empowerment with conformity to gender norms, impacting their well-being. Achieving women's independence is a personal journey amid societal pressures, aided by role models, education, and policy changes. Creating a fairer society requires challenging norms, addressing systemic barriers, and promoting gender equality. Fostering diversity, equal opportunities, and work-life balance is vital for women's empowerment. Understanding the diverse experiences of women in different cultures is essential to unravel the paradox and promote autonomy. Embracing women's independence advances both gender equality and a just, inclusive society. *According to me, the journey toward women's autonomy is not just a research endeavor—it's a personal commitment to unravel paradoxes, challenge norms, and contribute to a world where every woman can navigate her path to independence, with pride and freedom. Research, nonetheless brings out multiple facets around any/every subject, which helps one to engage with it more fruitfully.*

Challenges and their Triumphs: The Role of the Feminine in Indian Families

Chandan Kumar¹

Keywords: Dignity, liberalism, societal, urbanization, progressive

Women play a central role in the household, but they are still considered secondary in the family. This is because of the ancient norms that have prevailed for centuries, that the primary role in the family always belongs to the man, as in most cases, men are the family's bread earners. Usually, people believe women are the ones who should do all the household chores, and men should go outside the house to earn money. And because of this, men are considered the heads of the family. But people tend to forget that it is the women who transform a house into a home, where they are the ones who take care of everyone from their in-laws to their children and many a times, nowadays, even support their family financially. Overall, the health of a family greatly depends on vital roles played by the women. These roles include providing and preparing meals, caring for family members in need, and ensuring everyone knows proper hygiene practices for optimal wellness. Mothers play a significant role for the wellness of their families, especially the child. Not having a mother figure present can lead to a decline in the overall health of the household. It is crucial to recognize the significant role that women play in families, especially in developing countries, where a study conducted revealed that the absence of a mother increases the likelihood of her children passing away within two years.² Therefore, it is essential to ensure everyone's well-being by

¹B.Sc (Programme), Third Year, 21/63081

²Nguyen, D.T.N., Hughes, S., Egger, S. et al. Risk of childhood mortality associated with death of a mother in low-and-middle-income countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis. BMC Public Health 19, 1281 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-019-7316-x>.

acknowledging and utilizing the important potential, women bring to their families.

Dignity in families is a concept that resembles a puzzle with numerous interlocking pieces. Different families have different definitions of dignity for a woman. For some families, allowing a woman to pursue her goal in life with complete independence means living with dignity. This is an approach labeled as liberal. Families where women take care of household responsibilities while prioritizing family over ambitions are considered conservative by majority of the society. Liberalism and conservatism are two different approaches to live by, and both have been debated over centuries, to determine which are better. But if we ask a woman what approach she would like to live by, the answer will be liberal, in most cases. Liberalism allows a woman to embrace herself to her full potential. For a woman, being independent is crucial. Not only does it help them grow in whichever field they want, but it also makes them feel good about themselves, and it also gives them the freedom to make major life choices, without keeping in mind the constraints of gender stereotypes. Some people think that a woman's life is easy as compared to that of a man's, because they think women do not have to earn to survive. But those people do not understand that they are not living in the bygone days.

In today's world, women are pursuing higher education in order to seek employment, and become self-sufficient for their survival. In the present time, a woman is capable of achieving everything a man can achieve. Many people sometimes take freedom for granted, as they already have it. But the real value of freedom can only be known by those who do not have complete freedom. Women face limitations at every step in their journey, whether it is education or employment. For thousands of years, women have been suppressed by societal norms that are imposed by society, including those of their family members. If even the elderly women in families do not support their own little girls, how can we expect a man to

understand the problems faced by them? It is like trying to swim against the current. Women face relentless social expectations, when trying to become independent, which is necessary for their self-esteem and overall happiness. But in Indian families, traditional practices only make it harder. Traditionally speaking, homemakers were responsible for taking care of household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and ensuring the well-being of family members. Although this position has not changed entirely, it has undergone changes adapting to the shifting dynamics of society. Nowadays, women who embrace the role of homemakers often find themselves balancing multiple tasks, such as caring for children, handling matters, and supporting their partner's professional endeavors. Despite the voluminous work that they do, homemakers often do not receive the recognition and respect they deserve. At times, their contributions go unnoticed and are taken for granted, or even undervalued.

The idea of family in India has changed over the years and is adjusting to the evolving economic and cultural circumstances. In many regions and in varying times, it was common for Indian families to live together as families, where multiple generations resided under one roof. In these families, the well-being of the family took precedence over individual interests. Nowadays, there is a shift towards nuclear families, comprising parents and their children. The concept of family in India has evolved over the years. In families, women played significant roles in maintaining harmony within family and managing household tasks. However, as family structures have changed, so have the responsibilities and roles of women. Women in families are often expected to balance careers, domestic responsibilities, and personal aspirations. The stability of families that were once seen as unwavering, now face challenges from various sources. The traditional structure of families is being challenged by numerous factors, such as urbanization, changing values, and the impact of technology. This has led many to think about the dynamics of families in the country. Indian

families play a role in the pride of the country. They are widely recognized as the foundation of the society, providing a support system, and shaping norms and values. Beyond their household boundaries, families have an impact on the social world too.

For women, families hold importance by offering security, identity, and a sense of belonging. They provide support and care for the elderly and serve as an essential safety net, during tough times. Whether families liberate or restrict women today is not a question that can be answered by a ‘yes’ or ‘no’. It requires consideration of circumstances, family dynamics, and evolving societal expectations. Families offer a place for women, where they can find love, acceptance, and encouragement to pursue their aspirations, while being able to express themselves and seek guidance when needed; families can have an impact by offering women a chance to discover their abilities, and follow their aspirations as well. Despite this, families can be a source of limitations for some. Expectations of traditional gender roles may hinder women's potential, constraining their ambitions and forcing rules and regulations.

Indian society is a patriarchy-driven society. Patriarchy in India is far too common. Mostly done in the name of protecting women, it has the implicit support of the major population in the country because it is widely believed that women need protection. It is not only males who help propagate this system, across generations. The mothers who once bemoaned the lack of independence and a say in decision-making expect their daughters to live up to the same standards of subjugation. The choice of daughter-in-law is based on the parameters of how ‘adjusting’ she would be to the environment in the boy’s family. On the other hand, the flexibility of the groom and his family to adjust to the new member of the family is never a serious consideration. These household dynamics then spill into public life, where the independence of women is often seen as a threat to male dominance. It is high time we get our house in order, before we aim

to undertake a mission to get rid society from the shackles of patriarchy. There are far too many men and women putting up social media posts about feminism, but failing to stand against patriarchy in their own homes. After all, charity begins at home. If anyone is likely to understand your point, it is your parents and brothers, rather than a male chauvinist stranger online.

To sum up, dignity, independence, the role of the homemaker, family development, patriarchy in society, and the centrality of the Indian family in society are complex issues, that cannot be assessed in any one way. These issues have deep and complex patterns, and there can be no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution. It all comes down to understanding the issues and adjusting to the shifting roles, freedom, and dignity of women in Indian families. Each family is unique and needs to balance traditional values with progressive thinking, for a better future for everyone. In family dynamics, women play a crucial role as caregivers and provide support. Women are very important in ensuring peace within the family, even during the most challenging of moments. Those who appreciate and acknowledge the various roles played by these women will not only boost individual well-being in their families, but also help build a world that values fairness and collective care for one another. Every woman deserves due recognition for the multi-faceted role she plays in every family. There is a quote that many must have heard as a child, but as we grew up, it is easier to understand its meaning: “Educate a man, educate an individual. Educate a woman; educate a nation.” This quotation has been reiterated by a Ghanian scholar.³ Let us hope that the Indian family continues to shape and be shaped by the lives of the women it embraces.

³ Dr. James Emmanuel Kwegyir-Aggrey (1875-1927)

Beyond Expectations: Unraveling the Multifaceted Roles of Women in Indian Families

Pooja¹

The Indian family, a microcosm of the nation's rich and diverse culture, is a tapestry woven with threads of tradition, warmth, and interconnectedness. Rooted in centuries-old customs, the Indian family remains the cornerstone of societal structure, serving as a nurturing environment where values are instilled, relationships are forged, and individuals find a sense of belonging. At the heart of these values lies the pivotal role of women, who contribute significantly to the intricate tapestry of the Indian family structure. Over the centuries, women in Indian families have played multifaceted roles as nurturers, caretakers, educators, and catalysts for social change. In the heart of every Indian family lies a deep connection to tradition and culture, and women are often the torchbearers of these cherished values. From observing religious rituals to celebrating festivals, women play a central role in maintaining the cultural identity of the family. Their involvement in these practices not only sustains age-old customs but also imparts a sense of continuity to the younger generations.

¹In the historical context of Indian families, women have been revered and respected, often personifying the embodiment of *Shakti*, the divine feminine energy in Hinduism. Modern India witnessed the existence of powerful female figures like Rani Lakshmbai, remembered for her bravery in the battlefield and her commitment to protecting her people. Her legacy as *Jhansi Ki Rani* has become a symbol of resistance against colonial oppression. Despite facing opposition and conspiracies due to her gender, *Razia Sultana* remains an icon of woman's leadership in medieval India. Her brief but impactful reign left an enduring legacy as an early example of a woman ruler in a predominantly male-dominated era. However, the medieval

¹ B.Com (Programme), Third Year, 21/50180

period ushered in a more restrictive phase, with societal norms emphasizing women's roles as homemakers and caregivers. The British colonial era further influenced societal structures, introducing Victorian values that perpetuated gender stereotypes. Despite this, the resilience of Indian women prevailed, and the national movement saw their active participation. Post-independence, the vision of a progressive and inclusive society laid the groundwork for women, to participate in various domains of life.

Beyond the confines of the household, Indian women are increasingly contributing to the economic landscape. While traditional and powerful roles as homemakers persist, women are now contributing substantially to the family income. This economic empowerment not only enhances financial stability but also elevates the status of women within the family and society. The corporate sector, entrepreneurship, and various professional fields now witness a significant female presence. Women entrepreneurs, professionals, and workers are breaking the glass ceiling, establishing themselves in sectors traditionally dominated by men. The economic contributions of women extend beyond immediate family needs, influencing the education, healthcare, and overall well-being of the family unit. Women are not merely contributors to the family income; they are active decision-makers, shaping financial strategies and investments. Educated women bring a fresh perspective to family decisions, participate actively in discussions, and often challenge societal norms, that were in some ways, limiting their potential. The emphasis on education for girls is gradually reshaping family expectations, with parents recognizing the importance of providing their daughters with the same opportunities as their sons.

References to notable figures like Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw², founder of Biocon, and Chanda Kochhar, former CEO of ICICI Bank, underscore the transformative impact of women in the professional realm. Their success

² IIMB Management Review, Volume 23, issue 4, Dec 2011, 223-233p
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0970389611000991>

stories inspire a new generation of Indian women to aspire for and achieve leadership positions, challenging stereotypes and redefining societal expectations. Women are also agents of social change. Organizations led by women, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) founded by Ela Bhatt, have been instrumental in empowering women in rural areas. Grassroots movements, driven by women, aim to eradicate social evils like child marriage, dowry, and discrimination.³

As good as women are in economic pursuits, they are just as good when it comes to motherhood. The role of motherhood holds a unique position in the Indian family structure. *Jijabai*, also known as *Rajmata Jijabai*, through her leadership, vision, and commitment to preserving culture and traditions, shattered societal ceilings for women in her time. Her influence on the Maratha king, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the great emperor's character and the Maratha Empire's early years is a testament to her indomitable spirit and the significant role that women have played in shaping India's history. Jijabai's teachings played a crucial role in shaping Shivaji's character, inspiring leadership, and guiding his commitment to the welfare of his kingdom.

Mothers are not only nurturers but also influencers who shape the values and perspectives of the next generation. As primary caregivers, they play a pivotal role in instilling principles of empathy, equality, and respect for diversity. They are proactive in fostering a sense of independence and ambition in their children irrespective of the gender identity. They challenge stereotypes and encourage their daughters to aspire for careers beyond the conventional roles assigned to women. In doing so, they contribute to breaking the cycle of gender-based expectations. Women in Indian families are not only contributors to economic and domestic spheres; they are also agents of cultural retainment. For instance, the preparation of traditional

³ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ela-Ramesh-Bhatt>

dishes during festivals or ceremonies is not just a culinary activity; it is a transfer of cultural knowledge and heritage from one generation to another. The meticulous attention to detail, the passing down of recipes, and the shared experiences during these moments forge a bond that transcends time.

An Indian woman is often engaged in a delicate balancing act, navigating between traditional expectations and modern aspirations. While she might be a career-oriented professional during the day, her evenings may be dedicated to maintaining the cultural fabric of the family through rituals and traditions. For many women in Indian families, navigating the delicate balance between tradition and modernity is an ongoing challenge. The expectations of conforming to cultural norms while pursuing personal and professional aspirations, expectations of being the ideal daughter, wife, and mother can sometimes be overwhelming and daunting. However, many women navigate this terrain with resilience and adaptability, embracing both tradition and modernity in their unique ways. The challenge lies with not just finding this equilibrium within the family but also in negotiating societal expectations. The support of progressive family members and communities becomes crucial in empowering women, to transcend traditional boundaries and explore their full potential.

While the evolution of women's roles in Indian families is undoubtedly positive, challenges persist. Gender-based violence, discrimination in the workplace, and societal expectations often impede the full realization of women's potential. Recognizing the challenges faced by women in Indian families, both the government and civil society have implemented various policy interventions and support systems such as constitutional equality (Article 14) Enforcement of equal protection under the law for women. gender-specific policies (Article 15) developing in laws promoting gender equality, prohibiting discrimination. special provisions (Article 15(3)) Implementation of affirmative action to uplift women in education and employment. right to life and liberty (Article 21) Safeguarding women's

rights to life, dignity, and personal liberty. political representation (Article 243) ensuring women's participation in local governance through reserved seats. legal frameworks addressing issues such as domestic violence, dowry, and workplace harassment are in place. However, the effective implementation and enforcement of these laws remain areas that require continuous improvement.⁴

As we navigate the twenty first century, acknowledging and supporting the diverse roles of women within the family, is not only a societal necessity but a key driver of sustainable development. Empowering women within the family is not just a matter of women's rights; it is an investment in the collective progress and prosperity of the nation.

Women in Indian families have not only been the custodians of cultural heritage, but have also emerged as catalysts for change, breaking through societal ceilings and reshaping familial dynamics. The traditional roles of women as nurturers and caregivers have evolved, allowing them to embrace educational, economic, and leadership opportunities. As women navigate the delicate balance between tradition and modernity, they bring with them a wealth of strength, wisdom, and transformative power. The evolving roles of women within the family, from educators to economic contributors, from cultural preservers to agents of change, underscore the dynamic nature of Indian familial structures. Women, as the torchbearers of culture and agents of change, navigate the intricate tapestry of familial dynamics with resilience and determination. From being confined to the domestic sphere, women have emerged as architects of change, influencing every facet of society. Education, economic independence, and a commitment to social causes have propelled Indian women into diverse roles, challenging stereotypes and contributing significantly to the nation's progress.

Challenges persist, ranging from gender-based discrimination to societal

⁴ Law Pedia, 13 Mar 2023

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/lawpedia/status-of-women-in-india-51422/>

expectations, but the resilience exhibited by women in Indian families is a testament of their ability to overcome obstacles. Grassroots movements led by women, historical figures who shattered norms, and the everyday stories of women navigating familial expectations, all contribute to the rich narrative of women's roles within Indian families. Need to add that today's men has played, mostly, an inherent part in this journey.

Ultimately, the story of Indian families and women is a story of adaptation, growth, and the collective journey towards a more equitable and inclusive society. The resilience, wisdom, and transformative impact of women within the familial unit will undoubtedly shape the narrative of India's progress, making the family not just a reflection of tradition, but a catalyst for positive change in the ever-evolving landscape of the nation.

Reticent Yet Eloquent : Unveiling the Silent Contributions of Women in Indian families

Amit¹

Keywords: Homemaker, Balance, Harmonious Living, Culture, Nuclear Family

“There are about 160 million women in India who are occupied as homemakers. On average, a woman spends 297 minutes daily engaged in household chores while a man contributes only 31 minutes daily, according to data from the National Sample Survey Organization ”²

In Indian societies, the role of a homemaker has been traditionally significant and is still highly valued. The term "homemaker" refers to a person, usually a woman, who takes care of the household and its members. While gender roles are evolving in modern India, it is essential to recognize the historical context in which the aspect of the homemaker has been shaped. The concept of homemakers in India has a deep-rooted history that has its traces from ancient times. In Indian culture, the role of a homemaker is traditionally associated with women, who take on the responsibility of managing the household and caring for the family. While the roles and expectations have evolved over time, the importance of homemakers in Indian society remains significant. Historically, Indian society has organized around the concept of the family and community, where the household was considered the cornerstone of social life. Women played a crucial role in nurturing and maintaining the family unit, which was highly valued and respected.

The homemakers have strong shoulders as they take responsibility for taking care of their family needs, including cooking meals, cleaning the

¹B.A. (Programme), Third Year, 21/49110

²The Hindu, 26 March 2023

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/life-of-homemakers/article66636727.ece>

house, and managing household chores. They play a vital role in maintaining a comfortable and harmonious living environment, for all family members. In Indian culture, the responsibility of raising children is predominantly attributed to the homemaker, especially in the early years of a child's life. This role involves nurturing, teaching values, and ensuring the overall well-being of the children. Homemakers often serve as custodians of cultural and traditional values within the family. They pass down customs, rituals, and family traditions to the younger generations. Homemakers offer emotional and moral support to family members, helping them cope with the challenges of daily life, and act as strong pillars in times of distress.

In Indian families, the primary bread earners usually handle financial matters and the homemaker often manages the day-to-day household budget and ensures wise spending and saving practices. We can consider homemakers as embankments, who plays the role of a catalyst, hence accumulating the income flow and providing sustainable channelization. Hence, they are efficient in financial management too. Homemakers are instrumental in building and maintaining social connections within the extended family and community. They often play a pivotal role during family gatherings and festivals. They take care of the family's health-related matters, ensuring the well-being of all family members. Additionally, they are involved in their children's education and may assist with homework and school-related activities, this in turn improves the bond between a mother and her child and collectively contributes to the development of a child's moral quotient.

If looked at from a different perspective our mothers contribute to the economy whether it's India or any other country, They take care of our health which is the basic criteria for the workforce to work efficiently and their efficient working contributes directly to the nation. It is important to note that the traditional roles of homemakers are evolving in modern Indian society. With increasing educational opportunities and changing gender dynamics, many women are now balancing their responsibilities as

homemakers with pursuing careers outside the home. Also, there is a growing recognition of the importance of sharing household responsibilities among all family members, regardless of gender, fostering a more equitable and inclusive society which surely is a result of increasing literacy rates all along the country. If we analyze the role of a homemaker in the modern world, we can see that it has undergone significant changes in many societies, including India. These changes can be attributed to various factors, including social, economic, cultural, and technological developments. With increased access to education, women have gained more knowledge and skills, which have influenced their aspirations and roles. Many women now pursue higher education and professional careers, which has led to a shift in the traditional role of being solely a homemaker.

Over the years, there has been a gradual transformation in societal attitudes towards gender roles. The traditional expectation that women should solely take care of the household and family has been challenged, leading to a more equitable distribution of responsibilities between men and women. Economic realities, such as the rising cost of living, have made it necessary for many families to have both partners (if a couple is present) working outside the home, to sustain a decent standard of living. As a result, homemakers are increasingly balancing their household duties with part-time or full-time employment. The advent of modern household appliances and technology has significantly eased the burden of household chores. This has freed up time for homemakers to explore other pursuits, including personal hobbies or professional interests.

With the rise of nuclear families, the responsibilities within the household have changed. Homemakers in nuclear families often need to adapt to the absence of extended family support and take on more diverse roles to educate their children both morally and practically. Exposure to diverse cultural norms through media and globalization has influenced societal perspectives on gender roles and legal reforms, such as maternity leave policies and anti-discrimination laws, have contributed to enabling women to manage both their professional and family responsibilities more

effectively. It is essential to note that while significant progress has been made, gender norms and expectations can still vary widely depending on the region, socio-economic status, and cultural background in India. While some families have embraced more progressive values, others may continue to take upon more traditional roles for homemakers. The ongoing evolution of the role of homemakers reflects the complexities of social change and the diverse perspectives present in Indian society.

In recent times, there has been a growing recognition of the dignity and value attached to the role of homemakers. Efforts are being made to acknowledge and appreciate their work, both within the family and in the broader society. Moreover, there are ongoing discussions about gender roles, work-life balance, and the need for equitable distribution of responsibilities within households. The question of dignity attached to a homemaker is a matter of importance and has been a subject of debate in many societies, including India. It revolves around recognizing and valuing the essential contributions of homemakers to their families, communities, and society, as a whole. The actions of the homemakers can be appreciated and recognized in endless ways homemakers often perform numerous tasks that are vital for the well-being of their families, but these contributions go unnoticed or undervalued. Activities such as cooking, cleaning, childcare, emotional support, and maintaining social connections are all part of their responsibilities. Acknowledging and appreciating these efforts is crucial for preserving their dignity, which more or less should be linked to the idea that all roles and contributions in a family should be respected and regarded as equally important. Whether a person works outside the home or manages the household, their efforts should be valued without discrimination, based on gender or societal norms.

Managing a household requires a diverse skill set, including organization, time management, problem-solving, and multitasking. Recognizing and appreciating these skills are essential for the morale of homemakers. For many homemakers who also work outside the home or have other personal pursuits, finding a balance between various responsibilities can be

challenging. Acknowledging and supporting their efforts in managing this balance adds to their dignity. Societal attitudes play a crucial role, where homemaking is perceived as a valued and respected role. Recognizing the dignity of homemakers also involves advocating for their rights, such as access to education, financial independence, and social protection.

In conclusion, It is essential to recognize that some individuals choose to be homemakers and find fulfillment in this role. Respecting their choice and acknowledging their agency in deciding their path in life is a crucial aspect of preserving their dignity. There also can be many instances when homemakers may not receive financial compensation for their work, but their contributions have significant economic value. If the same tasks were outsourced to paid services, the cost would be considerable. Recognizing the economic importance of their work is part of dignifying their role. Homemakers often create a nurturing and supportive environment that positively affects the emotional and social well-being of their family members. This emotional labor should be appreciated, as it helps foster strong family bonds, and contributes to the overall happiness and mental well-being of everyone involved. Ensuring that homemakers have a voice and agency in decision-making processes is crucial for upholding their dignity. We should recognize and respect the contributions made by our nurturers, appreciating the various skills they possess and advocate for their rights. It is essential to foster a society where all individuals, regardless of their roles, are treated with dignity and respect. Homemakers in India reflects the rich cultural tapestry of the nation, where family, community and nurturing relationships have been cherished, for generations. As Indian society continues to evolve, the role of homemakers will undoubtedly continue to adapt to the changing dynamics, emphasizing the importance of dignity, respect, and recognition for their invaluable contributions.

Homemaker and the Art of Homemaking

Prerna¹

Keywords: Housewife, Homemaker, Stereotypes, Gendered, Patriarchal, Financial independence

The term 'homemaker' is a recent terminology that means 'maker of home'. This is the broader sense in which we all want to interpret the term. Homemaker is the new-bee term being used in place of the conventional 'housewife'. What is the reason behind such a transition?

The literal meaning of the term 'housewife' refers to a married woman who manages her household, especially as her principal occupation. In modern times, the word 'housewife' has somehow become offensive for being narrow and gendered and so replaced by the 'homemaker' which is more acceptable, as it is relatively gender-neutral. This transition is further legitimized by the Supreme Court of India by compiling a glossary of gender-unjust words to be avoided by judges and lawyers in writing judgments or filing cases before courts and suggested alternative words or phrases to be used while writing judgments. 'Housewife' is one such word which is to be replaced by 'homemaker'. This was a maiden initiative by the Indian judiciary to weed out stereotypes and perceived notions against women.¹

A homemaker is someone who not only manages the household chores and finances and supplies healthy food to all members but who transforms a house into a home, for the family.

Homemaking is a sense of responsibility to create a warm, secure, comfortable and welcoming atmosphere for spouses and children. They make invaluable contributions to their families, dedicating their time and

¹B.A. (Hons) Political Science, Third Year, 21/40009

²From 'Supreme Court unveils handbook to curb stereotypes based on gender'

by Abraham Thomas: HT Media Limited, Hindustan Times(2023), 7. For more information, refer to <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/new-delhi-supreme-court-releases-handbook-on-combating-gender-stereotypes-to-improve-judgements-and-legal-language-101692212464493.html>

³From 'Housewife or Homemaker: Which Am I?' by Clarissa R West: Clarissa R West(2018), 9. For more information, refer to <https://www.clarissarwest.com/housewife-homemaker>

effort to keep the family organized and running smoothly, by ensuring that the house is clean, laundry is done, the family is fed, and the list is unending. To cut a long story short, a homemaker helps men or other family members to be productive. Indeed, looking after such a range of tasks is not an easy job! Not only do they take care of many routine tasks, but also are the sole level approached on occasions of mess in the family, and often counted on to come up with creative solutions. The homemaker looks after the family in normal times, as well as during emergency or crisis like when their child has fever or when one needs to run to a medical shop to fetch medicines. Thus, a homemaker plays the role of a doctor, chef, organizer, meal planner and pet caretaker, all the same time. Indeed, a homemaker is like an adhesive of the family that holds it together, in times of happiness and sorrow, and through all the ups and downs of life.

Traditionally in Indian society, the role of homemakers towards the development of houses and the economy is undermined. Actually, a careful analysis will reveal that the homemakers perform the bulk of activities like care giving, and unpaid domestic household services that contribute to the smooth flow of various economic activities. This work when valued monetarily would run into billions or beyond. The homemakers are contributing greatly to the economy, by saving the expenditure which a family would have incurred on hiring such services from outside, which would never have the same flavour. It is needless to say, homemakers directly or indirectly contribute greatly to the society, of which the family is a major institution.

Despite such an important role of a homemaker in a family and society, it is disheartening to witness that the role of a homemaker is not given as much respect and recognition as he/she deserves. Not everybody appreciates or dreams of being a good homemaker. This is because of various stereotypes attached to homemaking. The most common is that homemaking is not an occupation and that homemakers don't have to clock in and clock out. There is a perception that homemakers sit at home the

whole day with no work to do or are surrounded by kids all day.³ The work of homemakers is simply ignored as less-valuable. On the contrary outdoor work, usually done by males of a family, often appears to be more hardworking.

This perception is long-embedded in our society that negatively impacts the self-esteem and self-worth of homemakers. Sometimes the feeling of resentment develops among homemakers, when their efforts go unnoticed. Future generations appear to be more reserved to be a homemaker, as this job is considered non-ambitious by many.

Our society is still not prepared to accept males as homemakers, because of the patriarchal setup, where conventionally males are required to be breadwinners of a family, and thus should be the ones who go outdoors and earn for the family. This perception resists the advent of the role of a man as a homemaker. This attitude, by implication, makes the role of homemaker gender-biased, which further has various implications for women homemakers, like their personal life, their friends, and even their health becomes secondary to their role as homemakers. This can be seen from the Supreme Court judge, Justice N.V Ramana's reference to the data available from the 2011 census(in a ruling related to a car accident case of 2014, Delhi), according to which, nearly 159.85 million women mentioned 'household work' as their main occupation, as against only 5.79 million men.⁴

Moreover, it is often witnessed that the corporate sector is resistant to giving employment opportunities to homemakers, even if they are highly qualified. It is the harsh reality of our society which is based on the perception that a homemaker having family and children is less devoted to their work life, are less passionate towards their career, or are less productive and so on. Another grim reality is that women themselves

³From 'It's Time to Finally Ditch the Stigma Against Stay-at-Home Moms' by Nikkya Hargrove:Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine (2022),7, <https://www.healthline.com/health/parenting/stigma-stay-at-home-moms>

⁴From 'Value Of Homemaker's Work Same As Hubby's At Office: SC' by Dhananjay Mahapatra: Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd, The Times of India(2021), 3. For more information, refer to https://m.timesofindia.com/india/value-of-homemakers-work-same-as-hubbys-at-office-sc/amp_articleshow/80125241.cms

undermine the role of homemaker. They believe that being a homemaker makes life less worthy and dependent, where women are constantly dependent on their husband's salaries. This financial dependence as perceived by them, often reduces their role and influence in decision-making in the family. Thus, it appears that the mere change of words from 'housewife' to 'homemaker' has not impacted our attitude towards those who manage housework, in such a big number. Though the labels or terms are shifting, to be more acceptable and inclusive, it is well proven that the role of a homemaker is still not given due respect in society. Women performing the task of homemaking are often taken for granted.

Our society needs to realize how significant the job of a homemaker is, whether male or female. How can this be achieved? Firstly, there is a need to clear out stereotypes attached to homemaking. It is time to recognize homemaking as an occupation, both by society and the state. When the perception of the society shifts from a simple housewife to a worthy homemaker, it makes a great difference in boosting their sense of self-respect and self-worth. This can be achieved through engagement in active and comprehensive conversation to raise awareness about the role of homemakers. People should teach the younger ones that being a homemaker is not an inferior role. Rather it should be seen as a life skill, and noble job of spreading love and affection. One should take pride in being a homemaker not undermine this role.

When the state gives recognition to homemaking as an occupation, it gives homemakers, especially females, economic independence. Discussion regarding the remuneration of women's unpaid work has been going around for a long time now, this reflects the gradual movement of our society towards creating a more inclusive environment for our homemakers. Economic independence is not a sufficient measure, but an important means to get them self-esteem. This measure, by giving homemaking an economic status, wards off the stereotypes associated with it. Further, the state can take up initiatives to share some of the responsibilities of homemakers, like providing child care services, elderly support etc to the families, so that homemakers could take a pause from their mundane lives and pamper themselves. This will also

relieve them from any future feelings of resentment, along with allowing them to look after their careers. By implication, society will be more respectful towards homemaking, which will have equal economic and social significance, as other professions.

It is worth mentioning that in the Indian judiciary, there have been efforts to recognize and respect the role of homemakers. The Madras High Court has recently entitled homemakers with the right to equal share in property regardless of whether it was purchased under their husband's name.⁵ Also, the Supreme Court in its recent judgement in *Kirti v/s Oriental Insurance Company* (a car accident case) noted that "the value of a woman's work at home is no less than of her office-going husband". Under the Indian Motor Vehicles Act, of 1988, the Indian judiciary has time and again emphasized on the value of calculating the notional income of a homemaker, while awarding compensation. It is based on factors like the age, income of the deceased, the number of dependents surviving and the like.⁶ This legislation shows the utmost importance of homemakers in a family, and that their absence deeply impacts the family members and society.

It is important to realize that all these efforts are made not only to secure monetary gains for homemaking as a job, but also to give homemakers the respect and dignity they deserve, for the invaluable services they provide, to their families which cannot be computed in terms of money. It is time to realize that homemaking is not an ambition-less work, as homemakers do have an ambition to look after their home and ensure the happy lives for their families. It is time to realize that whether a woman is working or a homemaker, she deserves all the respect, appreciation and recognition. Indeed, Indian society is moving towards that direction.

⁵ From 'Madras High Court says homemakers entitled to equal share in properties' by Pramod Madhav: Living Media India Limited, India Today(2023), 3. For more information, refer to <https://www.indiatoday.in/law/story/madras-high-court-says-homemakers-entitled-to-equal-share-in-properties-2397725-2023-06-25>

⁶From 'Case Study: *Kirti v. Oriental Insurance Company Ltd-Recognition of Notional Income for women working as Home-makers*' by Shivani Chauhan: Legal Wires(2021), 5. For more information, refer to <https://legal-wires.com/case-study/case-study-kirti-v-oriental-insurance-company-ltd/amp>

क्या पितृसत्ता भारतीय समाज में अपरिहार्य है ?

आकांक्षा शर्मा¹

संकेत शब्द : भारतीय परिवार, पितृसत्ता, भारतीय समाज, बदलाव।

किसी भी विचार को अपरिहार्य कहने के लिए उस विचार को मूल से जानना आवश्यक होता है क्योंकि जब हम किसी भी विचार को अपरिहार्य कह देते हैं तब उसका अर्थ होता है कि वह विचार प्राकृतिक है और समाज के हर परिवार में विद्यमान है। यदि कोई विचार अपरिहार्य है तो उसे पूर्ण रूप से समाप्त करना असंभव है। यहीं से सवाल उठता है क्या पितृसत्ता भारतीय समाज में प्राकृतिक है? क्या भारतीय समाज का हर परिवार पितृसत्तात्मक है? यदि वह प्राकृतिक होगी तो वह परिवर्तित नहीं की जा सकती तथा वह अपरिहार्य है। यदि बदलाव लाया जा रहा है तो वह अपरिहार्य नहीं है। इन्हीं सब सवालों के जवाब जानने के लिए हमें सबसे पहले भारतीय समाज व परिवार के ढाँचे को समझना आवश्यक है।

भारतीय समाज बहुत सी जातियों में विभाजित है। भारतीय समाज बहुत सारे धर्मों में विभाजित है। इन सभी के बीच मूल इकाई परिवार है और व्यक्ति का धर्म, जाति सभी परिवार से ही निर्धारित होती है। भारतीय समाज पितृसत्तात्मक है। पितृसत्तात्मक समाज यानी वह समाज जहाँ पुरुषों को सबसे शीर्ष इकाई और नारी को समाज की छोटी इकाई के रूप में देखा जाता है।

सामान्यतः भारतीय परिवार संयुक्त परिवार होते हैं जहाँ परिवार का सबसे वरिष्ठ सदस्य परिवार का मुखिया होता है। पितृसत्तात्मक समाज का मूल कारण अधिकतर विषयों में अर्थ से निर्धारित होता है यानी जिसके पास परिवार में अर्थ पर नियंत्रण होगा या जिसके पास आर्थिक संसाधन होंगे वह परिवार का मुखिया होगा। आर्थिक संसाधन अधिकतर पुरुषों के पास रहें हैं और इसी कारण से पितृसत्ता इतनी अधिक गहराई तक जा पाई है। सवाल है कि क्या यह बेहद स्वाभाविक दिखाई देने वाला सामाजिक भेदभाव- पितृसत्ता सच में प्राकृतिक है? उत्तर है नहीं! क्योंकि इस भेदभाव को दो प्रकार से देखा जा सकता है - (क) प्राकृतिक यानी जो प्रकृति स्वयं करती है व जो मनुष्य के हाथ में नहीं है जैसे सभी मनुष्यों में विभिन्न प्रकार की तार्किक क्षमता। (ख) मानव निर्मित यानी जो भेदभाव प्राकृतिक ना हो कर मनुष्य के विचारों से निर्मित हो जैसे स्त्री पुरुष में भेदभाव। पितृसत्तात्मक समाज में यह भेदभाव

¹कला स्नातक, तृतीय वर्ष, 21/49089

²< <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20210328-why-some-indians-want-more-mens-rights>>

बेहद उचित और प्राकृतिक प्रतीत होता है परंतु यह प्राकृतिक नहीं है क्योंकि प्राकृतिक चीज परिवर्तित नहीं हो सकती। जब भारतीय समाज को देखते हैं तो बहुत से परिवारों में परिवार का मुखिया एक पुरुष ना हो कर एक महिला भी होती है। भारत के पूर्वोत्तर भाग की 'खासी' व कुछ अन्य जनजातियों में मातृसत्तात्मक समाज की अवधारणा देखी जाती है जहां नारी की प्रधानता है।²

पितृसत्ता की नींव शक्ति और समाज में अपना प्रभुत्व कायम करने पर टिकी हुई है इसी कारण यह भेदभाव विचारों पर नियंत्रण करने के बाद शुरू होता है। प्राकृतिक रूप से स्त्री - पुरुष भिन्न हैं यहीं से शक्ति के संघर्ष की शुरुआत होती है। जन्म से ही एक लड़की के विचारों में समाज द्वारा निर्धारित नियमों को डाल दिया जाता है। वह इन्हीं विचारों के साथ बड़ी होती है और उसके व्यक्तित्व का निर्माण होता है। भारतीय हो या कोई भी समाज उसके लिए पितृसत्ता एक बुराई के रूप में उभरती है क्योंकि एक समाज के विकास के लिए आवश्यक है सभी का साथ रहना व एक साथ विकास करना लेकिन पितृसत्ता समाज को दो हिस्सों में बांट देती है - पुरुष और महिला। पितृसत्तात्मक समाज में समझा जाता है कि महिलाएं केवल घरेलू कार्य ही करेंगी। यदि महिलाएं घरेलू कार्य को व्यवसाय में परिवर्तित करना चाहती हैं तो पितृसत्तात्मक समाज उन्हें इसकी अनुमति नहीं देता है। हम समझ सकते हैं कि पितृसत्तात्मक समाज के कारण किसी भी राष्ट्र का एक बड़ा तबका अर्थव्यवस्था में अपना सहयोग नहीं दे पाता है।

प्रश्न उठता है कि क्यों पितृसत्ता भारतीय समाज में अपरिहार्य नहीं है? ऐसा इसलिए क्योंकि हम अपने समाज में निरंतर रूप से सकारात्मक बदलाव देख पा रहे हैं। आज महिलाएं भी राष्ट्र की अर्थव्यवस्था में अपना योगदान दे रही हैं। वर्तमान में हमारे देश की वित्त मंत्री श्रीमती 'निर्मला सीतारमण' जी भी एक महिला हैं। भारतीय सरकारों द्वारा "**महात्मा गांधी राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी अधिनियम**"³ लाए गए हैं जो महिलाओं का अर्थव्यवस्था में योगदान और सक्रिय करते हैं। '**सावित्रीबाई फूले**' जी से शुरू हुए स्त्री शिक्षा के संघर्ष में निरंतर विकास हुआ है व बदलाव आया है। धर्म की बात करें तो हम सबरीमाला मंदिर मामले का उदाहरण देख सकते हैं जहां अब महिलाएं भी प्रवेश कर सकती हैं। आधुनिक भारत की बात करें तो संविधान की प्रारूप समिति में 15 महिलाएं शामिल थीं। उसके बाद भारत की प्रथम महिला प्रधानमंत्री के रूप में श्रीमती '**इंदिरा गांधी**',

³<https://rural.nic.in/en/press-release/women-participation-under-mahatma-gandhi-national-rural-employment-guarantee-scheme#:~:text=As%20per%20the%20Para%202015,registered%20and%20requested%20for%20work>

प्रथम महिला राष्ट्रपति के रूप में श्रीमती 'प्रतिभा पाटिल' और वर्तमान राष्ट्रपति के रूप में श्रीमती 'द्रौपदी मुर्मू' जी को देखा जाता है जो आधुनिक भारत में महिला सशक्तिकरण को दिखाता है।

समग्रता: ये सकारात्मक बदलाव समाज में पुरुषों व स्त्री दोनों के परस्पर सहयोग के कारण ही आ पाए हैं। इन्हीं निरंतर सकारात्मक परिवर्तन व प्राकृतिक ना होने के कारण हम कह सकते हैं कि - पितृसत्ता भारतीय परिवार में अपरिहार्य नहीं है। इसमें और अधिक सकारात्मक बदलाव होते जा रहे हैं जो एक समान समाज की ओर हमें ले कर जा रहे हैं जहां स्त्री व पुरुष दोनों का ही परिवार और समाज के लिए समान दायित्व है। आलोक धन्वा जी की कविता "भागी हुई लड़कियाँ" को उदाहरण लिया जा सकता है जिसमें वे महिलाओं की स्थिति और सामाजिक रूढ़ियों को चित्रित करते हैं जिससे सामाजिक बदलाव को देखा जा सकता है। उन्होंने लिखा है-

"कई दूसरे जीवन प्रसंग हैं

जिनके साथ वह जा सकती है

कुछ भी कर सकती है

महज जन्म देना ही स्त्री होना नहीं है।"

पारिवारिक व सामाजिक संरचना में पितृसत्ता का प्रभाव

अंजलि सिंह¹

संकेत शब्द : पितृसत्ता, परिवार, भेदभाव, धारणा, समाज, समानता।

"खूब लड़ी मर्दानी वह तो झाँसी वाली रानी थी"

उपर्युक्त पंक्ति सुभद्रा कुमारी चौहान जी की एक सुप्रसिद्ध कविता 'झाँसी की रानी' से उद्धृत है जिसका अर्थ है - **वह पुरुषों की भांति लड़ने वाली झाँसी की रानी थीं।** यहां पर उन्हें युद्ध-कौशल एवं रण-निति में निपुण होने व निडरता के साथ अंग्रेजों से लड़ने पर पुरुष समान कहा गया है पर यहीं अगर स्थिति ऐसी हो जहां एक राजा अपने बच्चों का पालन पोषण करे तो उन्हें नारी समान नहीं कहा जाता क्योंकि यह उनके लिए सराहना नहीं बल्कि अपमान सूचक माना जाएगा। **पितृसत्ता एक ऐसी सामाजिक व्यवस्था है जहां पुरुष की प्रधानता होती है** अर्थात् पिता या घर के सबसे वरिष्ठ पुरुष को परिवार का मुखिया माना जाता है। पत्नी एवं बच्चे उन पर आश्रित होते हैं और परिवार के वंशज पुरुष ही होते हैं जिसके कारण पारिवारिक व सामाजिक स्तर पर नारी और पुरुष में बहुत ज़्यादा भेदभाव होता है और नारी को पुरुषों के अधीन माना जाता है।

मानव सभ्यता के प्रारंभिक समय में नारी - पुरुष में कोई भेदभाव नहीं था। दोनों साथ में शिकार करते व ज़रूरत के सामान इकट्ठा करते थे। कालांतर में उन्होंने शारीरिक संरचना के अनुसार आपस में काम बांट लिए। महिलाएं बच्चों की देखभाल, पशु-पालन, एकत्रित हुई संपत्ति की सुरक्षा जैसे काम करने लगीं और पुरुष दूर जाकर संसाधन इकट्ठा करते थे। अपनी संपत्ति बढ़ाने व उसकी रक्षा करने के लिए कई बार उन्हें दूसरे लोगों से लड़ाई भी करनी पड़ती थी। लोगों की संपत्ति बढ़ने के साथ, लोग अपने बेटों को अपना उत्तराधिकारी बनाने लगे क्योंकि पुरुषों के शारीरिक बल को सुरक्षा का प्रतीक और स्त्री की विनम्रता को उनकी निर्बलता का कारण माना जाता था। इस प्रकार पितृसत्ता एक पारिवारिक व सामाजिक व्यवस्था बन गई।

पितृसत्ता का सबसे अधिक दुष्प्रभाव महिलाओं पर दिखाई देता है। इस पितृसत्ता ने महिलाओं से कई मानवाधिकार छीने हैं। उदाहरणार्थ विश्व स्वास्थ्य संगठन के अनुसार **अफ्रीका, मध्य पूर्व और एशिया के 30 देशों में करीब 20 करोड़ से अधिक महिलाओं**

¹राजनीति विज्ञान (विशेष), तृतीय वर्ष, 21/40066

²< <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/female-genital-mutilation>>

को महिला जननांग विकृति (फीमेल जेनिटल म्यूटिलेशन) से गुजरना पड़ा है।³ विश्व के किसी भी भाग में युद्ध और सशस्त्र संघर्ष से महिलाओं के विरुद्ध अपराधों में वृद्धि होती है जैसे अपहरण, यौन उत्पीड़न, बलात्कार आदि। भारत में पूर्व गर्भाधान और प्रसव पूर्व निदान तकनीक (पीसीपीएनडीटी) अधिनियम के अंतर्गत भ्रूण के लिंग की जांच करवाना गैर-कानूनी है। अतः आज भारत में लिंग-अनुपात 985 महिलाएं प्रति 1000 पुरुष है, यह 1991 के समय में 927 महिलाएं प्रति 1000 पुरुष था।³

पितृसत्तात्मक व्यवस्था को सिर्फ पुरुषों ने ही नहीं, महिलाओं ने भी पोषित किया है। विवाह के बाद सास का अपनी बहू पर बेटे को ही जन्म देने के लिए दबाव डालना उनकी सोच को प्रदर्शित करता है। घरेलू हिंसा के मामलों में भी घर के पुरुषों के साथ महिलाएं भी बराबर की दोषी होती हैं क्योंकि सब देखते समझते हुए भी वे पीड़िता को बचाने का प्रयास नहीं करतीं और उस हिंसा की भागीदार बनती हैं। जिस समय बेटे को पढ़ाई के साथ खेल - कूद के लिए प्रेरित किया जाता है, उस समय बेटी को माँ द्वारा यह सिखाया जाता है कि पढ़ाई - लिखाई से अधिक उनके लिए खाना बनाना सीखना आवश्यक है। 'पढ़ - लिखकर क्या ही कर लोगी? चूल्हा - चौका सीखो आगे काम आएगा।' भारत में ऐसे कथन समाज में हो रही बातचीत में बहुत बार लड़कियों के लिए प्रयोग किए जाते हैं। यह स्पष्ट दर्शाता है कि 21वीं सदी में भी पितृसत्ता हमारे बीच है। इसको और गहराई से समझने के लिए हम भारतीय समाज को तीन काल-खंडों में विभाजित कर सकते हैं - प्राचीनकाल, मध्यकाल और आधुनिककाल।

प्राचीनकाल में नारी-पुरुष के बीच कोई सामाजिक भेदभाव नहीं था। महिलाएं वेदों के ज्ञान से लेकर प्रशासन तक हर कार्य में भागीदार थीं। महिलाओं को सभी अधिकार प्राप्त थे, किन्तु उनसे अपेक्षा की जाती थी कि वे अपने पुरुष सहयोगी की सुरक्षात्मक देखरेख में रहें। महिलाओं को अपने वर का चयन स्वयं करने का अधिकार (स्वयंवर) था। वैदिक ग्रंथों में दो प्रकार की महिला विदुषियों का पता चलता है - (क) ब्रह्मवादिनियाँ- वे महिलाएँ जिन्होंने ब्रह्मचर्य का पालन किया व जीवन भर वेदों का अध्ययन किया और (ख) सद्योद्वाह- जिन्होंने विवाह होने तक वेदों का अध्ययन किया। मेगस्थनीज ने प्रशासन चलाने वाली पांड्य राजरानियों का उल्लेख किया है। सातवाहन रानी, **नयनिका** ने अपने किशोर पुत्र के स्थान पर राज्य संभाला था। इसी प्रकार **राजकुमारी**

³ <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12158007/#:~:text=The%20sex%20ratio%20in%201991,per%20100%20males%20in%201991> < <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12158007/>

⁴ <https://magazines.odisha.gov.in/Orissareview/2016/Jan/engpdf/43-48.pdf>

प्रभावती चन्द्रगुप्त द्वितीय की पुत्री ने किशोर वाकाटक राजकुमार के स्थान पर राज्य संभाला था।⁴ उस समय की व्यवस्था ऐसी थी कि यदि राजा या राजकुमार किसी अवस्था में राज्य संभालने योग्य न हों तो रानियाँ व राजकुमारियाँ उनके स्थान पर (जब तक वह योग्य न हो जाएँ) पूरा राज्य संभालती थीं। हड़प्पा सभ्यता के स्थलों पर पाई गई अनेक कलाकृतियों से देवी पूजन का पता चलता है जिन्हें जीवनदायिनी शक्ति माना जाता था। मोहनजोदड़ो, हड़प्पा और लोथल से मिले अवशेष एक कृषि और वाणिज्यिक समृद्ध समाज का वर्णन करते हैं जो पारिवारिक जीवन को महत्व देता था। प्राचीनकाल के अंत तक समाज में कठोर रूप से वर्ग विभाजन का पालन किया जाने लगा। महिलाओं की भूमिका सीमित होने लगी।

मध्यकाल में महिलाओं की स्थिति उनके सामाजिक वर्ग द्वारा निर्धारित होती थी। उच्च वर्ग की महिलाएं सुशिक्षित थीं, राजनीति व प्रशासन में भाग लेती थीं और निम्न वर्ग की महिलाओं की तुलना में उन्हें अधिक अधिकार प्राप्त थे। निम्न वर्ग की महिलाओं की भूमिका बड़े पैमाने पर घरेलू कर्तव्यों तक ही सीमित थी और उनकी शिक्षा भी सीमित थी। 'मध्यकालीन भारत में महिलाएं और कानून' में उमा चक्रवर्ती ने इस बात पर प्रकाश डाला है कि "जाति, वर्ग और अन्य सामाजिक कारकों के साथ लिंग अंतर्संबंधित था जो न्याय व कानून से जुड़े महिलाओं के अनुभवों को आकार देता था। हालाँकि महिलाओं को कुछ कानूनी सुरक्षाएँ प्राप्त थीं, लेकिन यह अक्सर पूर्वाग्रहों और भेदभाव के अधीन थीं।"⁵ उस समय भारत में कई विदेशी आक्रमणकारी आए जिसके कारण समाज में महिलाओं और उनके आत्मसम्मान की सुरक्षा के लिए '**सती-प्रथा**' और '**बाल-विवाह**' जैसी रीतियों का प्रचलन हो गया। लोगों ने अपनी संस्कृति को बचाने के लिए रात्रि में विवाह व धार्मिक कार्यक्रमों का आयोजन शुरू कर दिया। मुगल अपने साथ **पर्दा-प्रथा** लेकर आए। इस समय लिंग के आधार पर होने वाला भेदभाव अपने चरम पर था। जो रीतियाँ महिलाओं व उनके आत्मसम्मान की रक्षा के लिए शुरू हुई थीं वे आगे चलकर उन पर बलपूर्वक थोपे गए नियम बन गईं। इस कालावधि की कुछ महिलाओं को उनके परिवार से सहयोग मिला और उन्होंने इतिहास रचा। जैसे, '**रज़िया सुल्तान**' (दिल्ली सल्तनत की पहली महिला शासिका), **मुगल शाहजादियाँ 'रोशनआरा और जहांनारा'** (अपने पिता शाहजहां के प्रशासनिक कार्यों में सक्रिय रूप से सहायक)। राजपूत राजकुमारियों को प्रशासन, कला, तीरंदाजी, राजनीति आदि का उचित ज्ञान होता था।

⁵ <https://www.epw.in/journal/1993/14/special-articles/conceptualising-brahmanical-patriarchy-early-india-gender-caste>

‘राजमाता जीजाबाई’ (छत्रपति शिवाजी की माँ) जिन्होंने अपने बेटे को एक कुशल योद्धा बनाने में अपना जीवन न्यौछावर कर दिया, ‘झाँसी की रानी लक्ष्मीबाई’ ने अपने पति की मृत्यु के बाद न सिर्फ अपना राज्य संभाला बल्कि अंग्रेजों से निडरता पूर्वक लड़ीं और वीरगति को प्राप्त हुईं।

आधुनिककाल में पितृसत्ता ने आधुनिक स्वरूप लिया है। बचपन में बेटियों के लिए गुलाबी रंग की वस्तुएं और बेटों के लिए नीले रंग की वस्तुएं ही उपहार के रूप में देकर उनकी सोच को संकीर्ण आकार दिया जाता है। दोनों के लिए रंग व खिलौने बचपन से अलग कर दिए जाते हैं और यदि कोई भी एक - दूसरे के खिलौनों से खेलने का प्रयास करे तो उसे डांटा जाता है - ‘लड़के गुड़िया से नहीं खेलते और लड़कियाँ हेलीकॉप्टर से नहीं खेलतीं।’ कालान्तर में बच्चों के बड़े होने पर बेटियों को इसलिए पढ़ाया जाता है कि वे पढ़ी - लिखी बहू बन सकें। उनमें आत्मसम्मान व आत्मनिर्भरता आए इस ओर किसी का ध्यान नहीं जाता।

वर्तमान समय में काफी सकारात्मक बदलाव हो रहे हैं। महिलाओं को हर क्षेत्र में आगे बढ़ने का मौका मिल रहा है और वे अपनी योग्यता का प्रमाण भी दे रहीं हैं, किंतु अभी भी सुधार की आवश्यकता है। भारत में अधिकतर सार्वजनिक जगहों पर महिला शौचालय नहीं हैं और जहां हैं वहां या तो ताले लगे हैं या वे ऐसी स्थिति में नहीं होते कि उनका उपयोग किया जा सके। ऐसे में वे महिलाएं जो वृद्ध, मरीज, गर्भवती या मासिक धर्म में होती हैं उन्हें कठिनाइयों का सामना करना पड़ता है। आंकड़ों के अनुसार, भारत में तकनीकी क्षेत्र में वरिष्ठ स्तर पर लिंग वेतन अंतर **28 - 30%** प्रतिशत है, जो कोविड-19 महामारी के दौरान **34 - 35%** तक बढ़ गया था।⁶ असंगठित क्षेत्रों में यह अंतर और अधिक है।

पितृसत्ता ने पुरुषों को अपने बनावटी मापदंडों में दबाया हुआ है। उन्हें ‘शारीरिक व मानसिक रूप से कठोर’ होना पड़ता है और अपने परिवार की सारी आवश्यकताएं स्वयं पूरी करनी होती है। उन्हें अपने ‘चेहरे पर निराशा या आंखों में आंसू आने की अनुमति ही नहीं होती’ और यदि वे ऐसा करें तो वे पुरुष की तथाकथित परिभाषा के विरुद्ध हैं और उन्हें समाज में उपहास का कारण माना जाएगा। पितृसत्ता के कारण ही जब भी किसी की पत्नी काम करने की इच्छा रखती है तो पुरुष स्वयं को असमर्थ समझने लगते हैं क्योंकि सामाजिक जिम्मेदारियों के दबाव ने उनकी सोच को ऐसा रूप दे दिया है।

⁶ <https://www.livemint.com/technology/tech-news/gender-pay-gap-2023-women-disclose-the-current-scenario-challenges-gap-widens-in-leadership-position-says-report-11700563871966.html>

बचपन से लड़कों को सिखाया जाता है कि 'लड़के रोते नहीं', वे मज़बूत होते हैं। 'मर्द को दर्द नहीं होता' जैसी बातें भी पुरुषों को कंठस्थ करा दी जाती हैं जिसके कारण वे अपने भावों को कभी सही से व्यक्त नहीं कर पाते। हर परिवार में आर्थिक ज़िम्मेदारी पुरुष की ही होती है। जिसकी कमाई पर पूरा परिवार निर्भर होता है।

अतः पितृसत्ता से लड़ाई किसी लिंग - विशेष की नहीं अपितु हर उस व्यक्ति की है जिसने जीवन में कभी भी लिंग के आधार पर भेदभाव का सामना किया है क्योंकि पितृसत्ता ने सभी पर अत्याचार किए हैं। वास्तविक लैंगिक समानता से हर वर्ग की जीत सुनिश्चित होगी और ऐसे परिवारों व समाज का निर्माण होगा जहां किसी भी प्रकार का सामाजिक दबाव नहीं होगा और सभी को अवसर, अभिव्यक्ति व चयन का पूरा अधिकार होगा।

The Clasp of Patriarchy on Indian families

Kritika¹

Introduction

In a powerful act of defiance and unity, women in Kerala, India, marked the first day of 2019 by forming a 385-mile-long "Women's Wall." This monumental event starkly exemplified the collective strength of women challenging the deeply entrenched norms of patriarchy, that have shaped Indian families for generations.² Across the decades, women activists have stood at the forefront of advocating for women's rights, equality, justice, and social progress in a nation marked by complex cultural dynamics.

Patriarchy: A global and local phenomenon

Patriarchy is a social construct that has been deeply ingrained in many societies across the world, where men are given primary power and authority. This hierarchical system assigns men with privileges and control, while suppressing women's agency and opportunities. It is a phenomenon that transcends borders and eras, persisting across centuries, and manifesting in various forms worldwide. Patriarchy has played an integral role in shaping societal norms, behaviors, and power dynamics, perpetuating gender-based inequalities and creating an uneven playing field. In the case of India's diverse cultural landscape, the imprint of patriarchy is particularly pronounced. From traditional gender roles and responsibilities to the pressing issues of dowry and female infanticide, the effects of patriarchy resonate across every corner of Indian society. It is within the intimate realm of family dynamics that these patriarchal norms find their most potent expression. The complex interplay of patriarchal

¹ B.Sc (Programme) Life Sciences, Third Year, 21/23164

² Women and Girls, Kamala Thiagarajan, Goats and Soda, 2019, Millions Of Women In India Fan Out For 385 Miles To Champion Gender Equality : Goats and Soda : NPR

dynamics becomes apparent in various facets of Indian family life. Men frequently assume the roles of primary breadwinners and decision-makers, while women are often relegated to the sphere of domesticity, with responsibilities centering around caregiving and homemaking. The preference for sons over daughters, deeply ingrained in societal consciousness, further widens the gender gap, perpetuating disparities in education, opportunities, and life trajectories.

Violence against marginalized genders is another deeply troubling issue in patriarchal societies. It refers to harmful actions, abuse, or mistreatment directed at individuals, who identify as women or belong to gender minorities (such as transgender and non-binary individuals) within a society, that enforces male dominance and traditional gender roles.

Examples of patriarchy

One example of patriarchy's impact is the gender pay gap. Despite significant progress in recent decades, women continue to earn less than men for the same work, or work of equal value. This pay gap is influenced by various factors, including occupational segregation, where energy of women are often channelised towards lower-paying jobs, and the constant undervaluing of work traditionally performed by women, such as caregiving and teaching. The result is a persistent economic inequality that affects women's financial independence and security.

Another illustration of patriarchy is the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Whether in politics, business, or academia, women remain significantly underrepresented in positions of power and decision-making. This lack of representation translates into policies and decisions that do not adequately address women's needs and concerns. It perpetuates the idea that leadership and authority are inherently male attributes. Usually, people argue that women are too emotional to be in positions of power. Labeling women as "too emotional" can be a way of invalidating their

feelings and experiences. It suggests that their emotions are excessive or irrational, which can lead to women's voices and concerns being dismissed or belittled. A debate arguing the role of Dr. Rosalind Franklin as an 'equal contributor' in the discovery of DNA Double Helix alongside Noble Prize winners Watson and Crick has become quite popular in recent years questioning the credit and the extent to which she was wronged.³

Dowry deaths are a tragic consequence of patriarchy in Indian society. In this practice, the bride's family is expected to provide a substantial dowry (money, goods, or property) to the groom's family, as part of the marriage arrangement. When the dowry demands are not met, it can lead to violence against the bride, sometimes resulting in her death. A lot of families fear that if they do not provide dowry, their daughter may face abuse, harassment, or even abandonment in her marital home. In many cases, the groom's family demands dowry as a way to establish dominance and control over the bride and her family. This leads to further bridge and gender inequality. In addition to these concrete examples, patriarchy also influences cultural attitudes and expectations. Media and popular culture often perpetuate harmful stereotypes and objectification of women, reducing them to mere objects of desire, rather than complex individuals with their aspirations and agency. These representations reinforce the idea that women exist for the pleasure and service of men, which is a fundamental tenet of patriarchy.

Patriarchy: A Necessary Evil?

The debate surrounding the necessity of patriarchy is multifaceted and layered with complexity. Advocates argue that patriarchal structures offer women a degree of protection and security in societies, affected by gender-

³Untangling Rosalind Franklin's Role in DNA Discovery, 70 Years On, Emily Anthes, The New York Times, 2023, Untangling Rosalind Franklin's Role in DNA Discovery, 70 Years On - The New York Times (nytimes.com)

based violence. Within this framework, the established system provides an organized and stable approach. To say patriarchy is all bad might not be correct. A universal experience observed is how family as a whole but especially fathers are rightfully protective of their daughters, asking them not to be out late is an act of looking out for them instead of being seen as controlling.

However, a deeper question reveals the limitations of this protection. The argument in hand states that society simply is not being safe enough for women to walk freely at night. While women may find temporary security within the confines of patriarchal structures, this protection often comes at the cost of adding to the perception that women are inherently vulnerable and constantly dependent on male guidance, and asserting the fact that women might just never be able to have an individual identity truly and might always be seen connected to a man's identity. On the other hand, critics assert that patriarchal norms perpetuate a cycle of gender-based inequalities, stifling women's autonomy, and restricting opportunities. Under this lens, the claiming of protection offered by patriarchy is conditional, binding women to a system that does not prioritize their empowerment and self-determination. The very essence of empowerment and equality is compromised, and the potential for growth and progress for women living in a patriarchal society is often stifling.

Challenging the notion of patriarchy in Indian families

Amid a transformative era characterized by increased education, awareness, and evolving cultural values, the foundations of traditional patriarchy are gradually eroding. Women are assuming more active roles in challenging established norms, asserting their agency, and reshaping their identity. This transformation signifies a withdrawal from the rigid confines of gender roles and an embrace of individual aspirations and capabilities. A rising number of women are entering the workforce, pursuing higher

education, assuming leadership roles, and debunking gender stereotypes that have for a constrained their potential.

This long time shift is symbolic of the evolving dynamics within Indian families, as the traditional roles of "breadwinner" and "homemaker" are redefined, to accommodate the diverse talents and aspirations of all family members. This shift further indicates an increasing recognition of shared responsibilities and mutual respect. Families are gradually embracing the notion that every member, regardless of gender, possesses the ability to contribute meaningfully to the family's well-being and success. This realization challenges patriarchy as a necessary framework for family relationships, revealing that these structures designed to safeguard and keep the family together are not indispensable and a family can very well function together, even without the strict gender roles.

Social impact and breaking free from patriarchy:

The societal impact of patriarchy is profound, entering various dimensions of life and prolonging gender inequality. Gender-based roles and expectations continue to mould individual trajectories, contributing to a culture that often normalizes violence against women. Alarming rates of domestic violence, sexual harassment, and assault persist, serving as a grim reminder of the repercussions of a system that perpetuates power imbalances. Economic disparities within the workplace in terms of pay and limited reproductive rights and power to make individual reproductive decisions underline the broader consequences of patriarchal norms. In many instances, male family members retain decision-making authority over critical matters such as family planning, especially making the situation of marginalized genders' and women's voices and autonomy worse.

While supporters of patriarchal norms may argue that departing from established traditions could disrupt the temporary sense of security they offer, the benefits of debunking such systems are far more substantial, in the

long run. Foremost among these benefits is the promise of achieving greater gender equality—an aspiration that makes challenging and breaking societal norms necessary as they restrict opportunities and rights, based on gender. By challenging patriarchal norms, societies can also significantly reduce violence against women and marginalized genders. The removal of barriers erected by patriarchal structures opens the door to a more inclusive society—one that recognizes and elevates the voices and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, people with disabilities, and other marginalized groups. Educated and empowered women play a transformative role in breaking the cycle of poverty and driving forward the purpose of sustainable development. Equipped to make informed decisions about their families' health, education, and overall well-being, women emerge as catalysts of progress, contributing to a more just and equitable society for all.

Is a matriarchal society better?

Matriarchal societies are characterized by women holding primary roles in leadership, decision-making, and economic activities. The question of whether a matriarchal society is "better" is subjective and depends on various factors, including cultural, social, and individual perspectives. It is essential to recognize that both matriarchal and patriarchal societies have their own strengths and weaknesses, and what might be considered "better" can vary from one context to another.

Even though gender equality, reduced gender-based violence, balanced decision-making, and diverse leadership roles might be some advantages, many argue that there are more disadvantages. Ultimately, whether a matriarchal society is considered "better" depends on one's values and priorities. It is worth noting that in contemporary discussions of gender equality, the goal is often not to replace a patriarchal system with a matriarchal system, but to move towards gender-inclusive societies where all individuals, regardless of gender, have equal rights, opportunities, and

representation.

Conclusion

In the intricate journey toward social progress, the question of patriarchy's inevitability in Indian families remains a complex and evolving debate. While deeply rooted in historical and cultural narratives, patriarchy is not an invincible force. The tides are turning, and a glimmer of hope emerges as conversations on gender equality gain momentum. With every empowered woman challenging the *status quo*, the grip of patriarchy weakens. It allows for challenges and reforms that pave the way towards a more equitable and just future for every human being. Through the dismantling of traditional norms, the promotion of education, and the cultivation of awareness, Indian society can forge a path toward transformation. As younger generations and families embrace more inclusive and open mindsets, they will play a pivotal role in reshaping the landscape of gender-based norms, fostering an environment rooted in respect, consent, and equality. Although the journey to gender equality may be one with challenges, the potential for transformation holds the promise to a just and inclusive society, for all.

Amid this ongoing struggle, India stands at a critical juncture. With the power to break free from the chains of patriarchy and embrace a future that celebrates individual potential and equality, the nation holds the key to becoming a beacon of progress and there is evidence that by breaking away from patriarchy, we can win over the societal constraints. Through activism, conscious education, and collaborative endeavors, India can illuminate the path toward a brighter future—one where family dynamics, societal structures, and cultural values are rooted in equity and justice.

THE BITTER TRUTH OF PATRIARCHY IN INDIA

Shevani Sri R K¹

The word "patriarchy," which means "father's reign," was first used to describe a "male-dominated household". Men held the attention of ladies, younger men, kids, slaves, and domestic servants. Today, it is most frequently used "to refer to male dominance, to the power relationships through which men dominate women. It is a typical approach that has been used in the majority of nations for a very long period. This system is dominated by men, and women are largely shut out of it. It was also tolerated for a very long time, because women were not taught how to fight for their rights. It has an impact on a variety of facets of society, including property-ownership, economic systems, religious institutions, political leadership, and business management. It even has an impact on the family home, where men are traditionally seen as the head of the household.



PATRIARCHY – EXISTENCE IN ANCIENT INDIA



India has had a patriarchal structure even centuries before our country attained freedom. Back in time, every household had land ownership and surplus food production, which became central to power and wealth. Consequently, men, who typically performed

¹Business Economics (Hons), Third year, 21/2098

physically demanding tasks, such as ploughing and hunting, gained a dominant position. This new found control over resources led to the subjugation of women, who were often relegated to domestic roles, deemed less valuable in the eyes of society.¹ Consequently, women were often relegated and subjected to pre-existing societal roles that limited their opportunities and autonomy.² Not surprisingly, ladies back then, were not reluctant to speak up against this injustice because they were more concerned and focused about taking care of their family.

MODERN CHANGE IN THE INDIAN SOCIETIES

In the twenty-first century, the role of patriarchy in India is slowly diminishing. In many developing towns and cities, the attitude of men is slowly changing in the case of women, and women are provided with way more opportunities than there were, a few decades ago. The identity of Indian women experienced profound changes, when our nation attained



independence. The government has significantly tried to promulgate measures which would lead to reduction in the exploitation of women, and they now have equal opportunities in many fields. The women are now

¹<https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.api-gbv.org/about-gbv/our-analysis/patriarchy-power/&ved=2ahUKEwit4u6Y3tSDAxWxU2wGHd-qC2k4ChAWegQIBBAb&usq=A0vVaw3HCsWHzG6T1KqTj7A9nqfv>

²https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://repository.uel.ac.uk/download/e4833095388ee390e280672443d26e193b3f9c5ee389c151ad47603aa6fa65d2/550069/7721.pdf&ved=2ahUKEwipz9_u3dSDAxUPb2wGHbjnCswQFnoECBUQBg&usq=A0vVaw09rtgMA30MI1Pz6aWh3tzo

fully equipped with their powers on the battlefield of life, after leaving the safe haven of their homes.

Women still confront difficulties even in the ‘modern’ world, where their standing seems to have significantly increased. They must strike a balance between their commitments at home and at work. They are being able to cooperate without the aid of their husbands. The situation is made worse when family members torture women instead of providing assistance. The prevalence of sexual harassment by family members, relatives, neighbours, friends, bosses, and others is widespread at home as well as in the workplace. They are being put through a lot in their daily lives, in order to retain both their careers and their familial ties. The role of women is one of the first things that comes to mind when we think of social and economic modernization. In a society that does not recognise the contributions of women, the workforce is underutilised by 50%. One would anticipate that more gender equality will cause growth. Women in leadership roles are common in India, yet men have a tendency to be complacent about their roles, but we are slowly reaching the state of equality.

NEED OF PATRIARCHY IN INDIAN FAMILIES



Understanding the role of family becomes very crucial, when it comes to analysing the need of patriarchy in the modern generation. The fathers asking the daughters not to go outside late at night can come across as him trying to establish his control over her, but in reality, it comes

from a place of love and looking after them with care and safety, which might be often misunderstood by the sections working towards the cause of women development. The modern women are so competent and self-sufficient that they can easily be assigned as a superwoman, handling multiple tasks by their own self. Women are now fiercely ambitious, proving their worth not just at home, but also at work or in their chosen careers. Women are breaking barriers in India in many areas of life. The man and the woman can play complimentary roles in the family and walk the path of development. The saying of ‘behind every successful man, there is a woman who supported him through it all’ could also be read as ‘behind every successful woman, there is a man who supported her through it all’.

FEMINISM IN PATRIARCHY

Feminism is about all genders having equal rights and opportunities. It is about respecting women's diverse experiences, identities, knowledge and strengths, and striving to empower all women to realise their full rights. It is the conscious action of both men and women to change the current situation. It is an awareness of patriarchal control, exploitation, and oppression at the material and ideological levels of women's labour, fertility, and sexuality, in the family, at work, and in society at large. Women are largely understated by men in the work they do. They have experienced unfairness, humiliation, exploitation, oppression, dominance, and violence in addition to being considered as inferior by men. Women were an underutilised "resource" in the global fight against poverty and violence, and though their potential was repeatedly and clearly shown in difficult situations, men have all too often lost sight of it in times of stability. A woman who feels empowered, thinks she can handle situations, events, and/or other people well. So having a thorough understanding of feminism can help to prevent women from becoming victims of patriarchy in our culture.

SOCIAL IMPACT OF PATRIARCHY

The patriarchal system still has a significant social impact and is to blame for the following problems.

- **Domestic violence:** According to a survey, 85% of men admit they had engaged in violent behaviour against their wives at least once in the last 12 months. The men said that they mostly "indulged in violence" to establish their dominance over the "weaker" sex.
- **Female foeticide:** According to a 2011 study, up to 12 million female foetuses were terminated in India over the course of the previous three decades. The patriarchal family system, which encourages women to be consumers and unpaid labourers rather than direct earners, are seen as a burden in the family and this is the main cause of female foeticide in our country.
- **Dowry Deaths:** 21 people a day in India lost their life as a consequence of dowry in 2015, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB). A woman is expected to live with her husband's family after marriage, hence the bride's family often pays the bridegroom and his family dowry, as a condition of the marriage. Dowry has its roots in this patriarchal culture.
- **Sexual crimes against women:** According to data made public by India's NCRB, rape, molestation, and other forms of violence against women are on the rise, nationwide.
- **Gender inequality at work:** According to the Monster Salary Index 2016, women in India continue to earn 25% less than males do. The



report suggests that this gender wage disparity may be the result of male employers favouring their workers over female workers, as a result, causing obstruction in the latter's career pauses, caused by "socio-cultural factors" or to perform "parenthood" responsibilities.³

- **Mental Health Issues:** The most recent World Health Organisation research estimates that 38 million Indians have an anxiety illness and 56 million.
- experience depression. Mental health is not a topic that is publicly discussed in a patriarchal society. Being indoctrinated from an early age that expressing one's feelings or being sensitive is "unmanly" causes men the most suffering.
- **Child sexual abuse:** According to the most recent NCRB data, a child in India experiences sexual assault every 15 minutes.
- **Poverty:** One in five Indians, according to the country's poverty profile (source: World Bank group), live in poverty. The Global Gender Gap Report 2017 from the World Economic Forum estimates that on average 66% of women's labour in India is unpaid, compared to 12% for males.⁴ Many women are prevented from finding full-time employment and hence from contributing to household finances by traditional patriarchal conventions. Men are now left to carry the entire financial responsibility for the family.

Thus, patriarchy is still very much prevalent in our society and our country. It should be obviously eliminated in ways which could help in the

³https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.insightsonindia.com/2023/04/04/the-impact-of-patriarchy-on-women-can-be-significant-and-pervasive-affecting-their-personal-social-economic-and-political-lives-in-many-ways-examine/&ved=2ahUKEwipz9_u3dSDAxUPb2wGHbjnCswQFnoECBwQAQ&usg=AOvVaw2Paadg8riHYsbl53U74PzR

⁴https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/social-sciences/patriarchy&ved=2ahUKEwipz9_u3dSDAxUPb2wGHbjnCswQFnoECB4QAQ&usg=AOvVaw3uo3LfdDrodNwr8oZ71Xzr7

development of women as a whole, also keeping in mind not to confuse the term with protection love and care provided by the men in the family, to help motivate and boost the interests of the budding girls in their household.

Exploring the Dynamics of Patriarchy in Indian Families

Vanshika Tomar¹

Keywords- Patriarchy, masculine, inequalities, media, resistance, empowerment

Deduced from the Greek word “patriarkhēs,” patriarchy means "the rule of the father" and is used to describe a social system where men control a disproportionately large share of social, profitable, political, and religious power, and heritage generally passes down the male line.¹ Society is patriarchal to the degree that it promotes male honour by being male-dominated, and male-centered. It is also organized around a preoccupation with masculine control and involves as one of its crucial aspects, the oppression of women. This system of inequitable social relations is embedded in the political, social, artistic, and profitable institutions of society as well as in, and through, private domestic relations. In these systems of gender inequality, women find themselves underprivileged in several ways, within social relations and associations. In a patriarchal system, women are barred from reaching the upper reaches of hierarchy. Some men also are banned because of social class, culture, and fornication. Patriarchy has negative consequences for both men and women, in the ultramodern world. The familial system, where the role of the women were confined to household duties and bearing children further rooted the scale. Social rule introduced new gender dynamics, affecting traditional morals and contemporizing society, but frequently in a way that still marginalized women.

In Indian society, the patriarchal testament is homogenized and executed

¹History (Hons.), Second Year, 22/35049

¹<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarchy>

through laws, customs, and rituals and is substantiated by power relations within homes. For illustration, only 15% of the total number of homes in India have a woman as head of the house.² Household stewardship, especially for males, imparts control over domestic expenditures and is reflective of power relations. These power relations extend across generations, which plays a pivotal part in determining familial authority. Similarly, the oldest male relative in a household is traditionally considered to be the head. Relatedly, sons are infrequently permitted to establish their own independent homes after marriage, and, once married, women are traditionally expected to live with their husbands in the home of their in-laws.

One of the most disturbing representations of patriarchy in India is the frequency of gender-based violence. Incidents of domestic violence, sexual importunity, and dowry related murders remain a significant concern. While there are laws in place to cover women, perpetration and enforcement remain gruelling. Patriarchal morals and conceptions continue to mandate women's actions and choices. Prospects of modesty, submission, and limited mobility are assessed on women. These morals also affect men, obliging them to conform to traditionally manly traits, like being aggressive and dominant.

While India has made significant progress in terms of gender equality over the years, there are still numerous challenges and deeply settled gender morals that immortalize patriarchy. Issues like gender violence, unstable access to education and healthcare, limited profitable openings for women, and discriminative social morals continue to affect women's status and rights in the country. Patriarchy is a system which is evil/ dangerous for both men and women. While it is true that women frequently bear the mass of its negative consequences, patriarchy can also have various outcomes

² Western Michigan University
https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5120&context=masters_theses
<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11205-021-02752-1>

on men and society. As far as women are concerned, they frequently witness the most direct and severe consequences, including limited access to education, employment, and leadership role. This inequality can circumscribe their life choices and opportunities. It also frequently leads to the underrepresentation of women in positions of leadership and authority, in various fields, including politics, business, and academia. This lack of representation can affect programs and opinions that do not adequately consider or prioritise requirements of women and their perspectives. It can also infringe on women's autonomy by imposing restrictions on their mobility, opinions about marriage and family, and access to healthcare. This lack of autonomy can lead to women being treated as dependent and inferior to men.³

However, patriarchy has various negative effects on men as well. Patriarchy defines what men should be – physically strong, less emotional etc. Every time someone says or does something that enforces a stereotype that women are the weaker sex, they are also suggesting to an inversely wrong conception that men are stronger. Over time, this seems to have led to a lack of emotional knowledge or the lack of support in men, to express their emotional quotient. The pressure to fulfil traditional practices and prospects of being the primary breadwinners and providers for their families can be extremely stressful. Men may feel the weight of these liabilities, leading to high situations of stress, anxiety, and indeed depression. Their seeking help for internal health issues can make it indeed more gruelling for men to address their emotional well-being. This can impact career choices of men, obliging them to pursue traditionally masculine professions and careers. This may lead to a lack of diversity in career paths and an under-representation of men in fields that are

³Frontline, February 26, 2020

<https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/power-of-patriarchy/article30911470.ece>

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/readersblog/thoughtsthatstrikesme/breaking-patriarchy-at-its-root-31134/>

traditionally considered "woman-like," like nursing or education. Men who do not conform to traditional gender practices may face taunts and negative comments. For example, men who want to be stay-at-home fathers or express their feelings openly may be judged or scouted. This can lead to a sense of insulation and a disinclination to express one's true tone. Patriarchy can shape prospects about parenthood as well. Men may feel pressure to be distant breadwinners rather than involved, nurturing fathers. It can affect their connections with their children and hamper their capability to play a role in family life, and spend time with their families.

This gives rise to a question so as to ask whether Indian society needs a patriarchal family or not? Traditionally, numerous Indian families have been organized around patriarchal structures where the male head of the household holds primary authority and voices opinions for the family. Men go out and work, whereas the women take care of the house and children. These norms have been communicated to us or have been seen by us from a young age. Patriarchy, a social structure rooted in traditional gender roles, has long influenced familial dynamics. While it has been criticized for perpetuating inequalities, it is essential to recognize the multifaceted nature of its impact, encompassing both negative and positive aspects within the family unit. On the one hand, patriarchy has often been associated with rigid gender norms and power imbalances, restricting opportunities and decision-making for women. However, within the context of family, paternal concern for the safety of daughters, like advising against late-night outings, can be viewed as a protective instinct, rather than a manifestation of control. Fathers, driven by love and a sense of responsibility, may perceive such guidance as a means of safeguarding their daughters in a world where safety concerns persist. In this light, patriarchy takes on a dual role, encompassing protective instincts alongside potential restrictions. It is crucial to navigate these complexities, acknowledging the positive intent behind certain actions, while critically evaluating and challenging the

systemic aspects that perpetuate gender inequalities. By fostering open dialogue and redefining familial roles, families can evolve to embrace a more equitable and supportive environment, transcending the limitations imposed by traditional patriarchal structures.

Patriarchy, which still exists in our society, has a multipronged impact on women. It reinforces gender inequalities by assigning men the role of taking primary decisions. This unstable power distribution frequently results in women having limited access to education, profitable openings, and leadership places in many fields. This inequality hinders the specific professional growth of the women. Women frequently face profitable disadvantages, including lower stipend and smaller openings for career advancement. The gender pay gap persists, limiting women's fiscal independence and contributing to their profitable vulnerability.

Religious beliefs and practices have also played a role in shaping gender relations within families. The role of women in religious rituals, restrictions on entry to certain places of worship and the perpetuation of male-dominated religious institutions contribute to overall patriarchal framework. Patriarchal morals can limit women's autonomy and decision-making in many aspects of life, from choices about marriage and family planning to healthcare. Women may have a lesser say in determining the course of their lives. These morals can circumscribe women's freedom, tone-expression, and capability to pursue their interests. Patriarchy enforces traditional morals and frequently stigmatizes women, who challenge these morals. However, these things are not uniform across all sections of society. Rural areas, where traditional norms may be more deeply entrenched, may experience slower transformation. Moreover, resistance to change can be observed in conservative pockets, where patriarchal norms are seen integral to cultural identity.

Media including films, television, play a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions. Positive and diverse representations of women in media can

challenge stereotypical portrayals and contribute to changing attitudes. However, the media can also perpetuate gender stereotypes, and a critical examination of its impact is necessary. The intersectionality of identities, including caste, class, and religion, adds complexity to the manifestation of patriarchy within Indian families. Women from marginalized communities may experience compounded forms of discrimination, making it essential to address multiple layers of inequality simultaneously.

In conclusion, while patriarchy has deep historical roots and continues to influence familial structures in India, it is not necessarily inevitable. The multifaceted nature of patriarchy requires a comprehensive and nuanced approach to address its various dimensions. Initiatives promoting gender equality, legal reforms, educational empowerment, and changing societal attitudes collectively contribute to challenging and dismantling patriarchal norms. While progress has been made, the journey towards a more equitable society involves navigating complex intersections of tradition, culture, and evolving global perspectives. The ongoing efforts to challenge and transform patriarchal norms within Indian families reflect the dynamic nature of social change, and the potential for a more inclusive and egalitarian future.

Unveiling the Layers: A Perspective on Socialization of Women in the Indian Families

Saurav Kumar¹

Human expectation may be the cause of complexity in life, but it also can help in growing life in a new direction. All that we've known since we began with our senses are expectations, an element of the emotional world that drives a person's ambition, obsession but if not taken care of, destruction. Every scientific or non-scientific study begins with an expectation, structured in a particular manner, to deliberately gain an expected outcome. Gender socializations are somehow revolving around the concept of these so-called scientific expectations. People of respective genders for a long time have been expected to behave in a certain manner, the concept literally established as gender socialisation. Gender socialisation should be seen as the presence of human existence rather than a structural upbringing to help the human society sustain. Division of work according to one's physical and mental abilities were designed into gender roles, gender roles further translated into emotional expectations, and these emotional expectations iterated in the human brains for a long time as the fate of different sexes. With time these iterations did not change, thus posing problems that led to a revision of the societal organisation. Women, for example, for a long time, have been exemplified in the books of history in our country. India, often celebrated as the cradle of civilizations, presents a captivating amalgamation of traditions, cultures, and histories. This kaleidoscopic country, with its myriad hues, has always been a subject of global fascination, not just for its ancient wisdom or its rich heritage, but for its deeply complex societal norms. Central to this complexity is the evolving role of women, especially within the familial context. In this

¹Business Economics (Hons), Third Year, 21/2092

article, we would delve deeper into the socialisation of women in the Indian families, reasons, consequences and aftershocks for the society.

Eligibilities of a woman

Historically, Indian society has been patriarchal, leading to deeply entrenched gender roles. Women in India have been primarily seen as caregivers. Their responsibilities span from childcare to caring for the elderly, embodying patience, love, and sacrifice. From an early age, girls are conditioned to adopt nurturing roles, preparing them for future responsibilities as mothers, wives, and daughters-in-law. Not only this but ironically, a patriarchy driven Indian culture heavily relies on its women to maintain and pass down traditions. From festivals to family customs, women are entrusted with ensuring that cultural and religious practices are upheld and transferred to the next generation. This role not only emphasises their importance in cultural continuity but also subtly presses upon them the weight of keeping above the societal norms.

Across narratives and real-life stories, Indian women often emerge as individuals who put their personal aspirations and desires secondary to those of their families. Whether it is abandoning a promising career for marriage or curtailing personal dreams for the sake of familial harmony, sacrifice has almost always been synonymous with womanhood. A woman's behaviour, choices, and even appearance often become a reflection of her family's honour in many parts of India. As gatekeepers of family honour, women face restrictions, expectations, and scrutiny.

Expectations or an intended move?

The roles women find themselves in are not spontaneous but a result of centuries of societal moulding. While Indian mythology showcases powerful goddesses and characters, many of these figures also perpetuate ideals of virtue, patience, and sacrifice. They wield power, but they also

conform, making them complex role models for women. Goddesses like Sita and *Draupadi* from epic tales are revered not just for their strength, but for their stoicism and ability to endure. On the one hand, these characters set benchmarks for courage and resilience; on the other, they subtly perpetuate certain norms about idealised femininity.

Economically, the agrarian nature of historical Indian society dictated a labour division, with men working outdoors and women tending to homes. As society modernised, many of these roles remained, with women often being relegated to domestic spheres even when equipped with education and skills suited for the professional world. Access to education for women was limited for a long time, narrowing their worldviews. When represented in the media, women were often stereotyped, reinforcing traditional roles.

The Attitude of women in the context of family:

These roles, deeply rooted in society, have directly impacted how women perceive themselves within the family framework. Generations of cultural conditioning have led many women to prioritise family over self. They often derive a sense of identity and self-worth from their roles within the family. With the winds of globalisation and a shift towards more egalitarian values, contemporary Indian women find themselves at a crossroads. They juggle age-old traditions with modern aspirations, leading to a constant negotiation between personal desires and societal expectations. A rising wave of educated, independent women are now challenging traditional norms. While they respect traditions, they advocate for change where it is due, especially in terms of gender equality and personal freedom.

Is the pressure purely social or has It been Ingrained in the minds of women?

The influence of society on shaping women's roles cannot be overstated.

Yet, it is essential to understand that over time, many women have internalised these societal norms. Conditioned by tradition and societal expectations, women often set boundaries for themselves, subscribing to accepted norms even when they have the freedom to challenge them. It is not uncommon for older women, conditioned by their experiences, to pass down these norms to younger generations. They sometimes become the advocates of traditional roles, believing it to be the best path for younger women. Not every woman views tradition as constraining. Many find strength, identity, and pride in their roles and are wary of rapidly changing societal norms. However, there exist examples in history that challenged these gender specifications.

The Queen of Jhansi

The sun never set on the British empire until they entered the space of the fearless, the realms of the indomitable and the lands of pure courage. In the tumultuous year of 1857, when many of the kings feared uttering a word against the British raj, accepted their lives under the masters, no matter how deplorable was their state, a fearless leader entered her name in the books of history, Rani Laxmi Bai, the valiant queen of Jhansi proved to be nightmare for the British colonial government. Her unwavering spirit and resolute leadership serve as a poignant anecdote, illustrating the pivotal role women played in shaping the course of history. Had Rani Laxmi Bai not been given training of swinging swords with courage, practice of riding horses with a command, and understanding tactics of war by her family in her childhood days, a guiding star of indomitable courage would not have come to light in our history. She is not only an example of exceptional courage, but the paradigm of a woman's psychological potential.

A Change in the Picture

Historically, the Indian subcontinent has been a patriarchal society,

where roles were clearly demarcated. Men, typically, were the breadwinners and protectors, while women were the nurturers, caregivers, and torchbearers of tradition and culture. This demarcation, though simple on the surface, has profound implications. It did not just dictate the day-to-day responsibilities but significantly influenced the aspirations, dreams, rights, and opportunities accessible to women. Religious texts and epic tales, which play a pivotal role in shaping Indian ethos, often present women in roles that reflect sacrifice, devotion, and unwavering commitment toward family and society.

However, to believe that the role of women in India is solely defined by tradition would be an oversimplification. Over the years, the nation has witnessed significant socio-political changes. With the rise of education, urbanisation, and global influences, there has been a steady shift in the perception of women's roles. The modern Indian woman is not just the custodian of ancient traditions but also a symbol of change, resilience, and progress.

Today our mighty warplanes “**Rafale**” are flown with a dazzling speed by women fighter pilots like flight Lieutenant Shivangi Singh, changing the very definition of the so-called tale of courage being the presence of a man, Women nowadays are actively participating in Science, Technology Engineering, Mathematics and Artificial Intelligence. When our **Chandrayaan 3** landed on the surface of moon one of the mission’s leader was Kalpana Kalahasti these examples sets the past views to a test and directs us to change the view shapes that primary socialisation eventually affects secondary socialisation and shaping the secondary institutions like schools, college, workplace, playgrounds and eventually all aspects of society. This intricate interplay between tradition and modernity presents a fascinating study. It is not just about roles and responsibilities, but also about identities, aspirations, struggles, and triumphs. The Indian family, a microcosm of the larger society, reflects these dynamics profoundly. Within

its bounds, the woman negotiates her space, navigating the waters of tradition while reaching out toward the horizons of change.

Conclusion:

The socialisation of women in Indian families is a complex and multifaceted process deeply entrenched in tradition, yet it is undeniably evolving with the passage of time. Contemporary India presents a unique amalgamation of honouring age-old customs while simultaneously advocating for societal progress, resulting in a dynamic landscape for the roles and perceptions of women. Traditionally, women in Indian society have been ascribed the roles of homemakers and caregivers, bound by societal norms and expectations and they had definitive though some women choose to be homemakers in their own rights. However, in recent years, there has been a discernible shift as women are increasingly gaining access to education, pursuing careers, and actively participating in public life, marking a departure from traditional gender roles. This transformation reflects a changing societal mindset, with a growing emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment. Furthermore, the portrayal of women in Indian popular culture, including movies, television, and literature, is evolving to depict women as independent, strong, and capable individuals, thereby influencing and reflecting the changing societal perceptions of women. As India strides forward, it carries with it the stories, struggles, and aspirations of its women, who serve as both the custodians of its legacy and the harbingers of its future. Women are actively contributing to the nation's progress, shaping its narrative, and influencing the trajectory of societal development. This ongoing evolution signifies a pivotal moment in the history of Indian society, where the roles and perceptions of women stand at the intersection of tradition and the promise of a more equitable and inclusive future.