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The Orientation of

Educated Working Women of India

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Indian society is experiencing great transformations since independence. Freedom and justice are the two pillars of democratic nation-building project. The Preamble of the Constitution of India states the following about the direction of social change:

We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic and to secure to all its citizens: Justice, social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship; Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all Fraternity assuring the dignity of individual and the unity and integrity of the nation

In other words, the Indian society is engaged in modernization within the constitutional framework of values through a complex combination of the endogenous sources and the contact with forces outside the system, generally identified as 'Westernization'. These changes are promoted by state planned and market mediated conjunctions of urbanization, industrialization, and democratization, including spread of education and empowerment of women. 'Social structure' and 'tradition' are two key concepts to analyze the impact (See; Srinivas, 1966; Singh, 1973, 2003). Marriage and family are two significant sites for the assessment of these changes. Of course, the changing orientation status of women in India is most critical indicator of the impact of modernization and other social changes.

This paper aims at emphasizing that the process of social changes, particularly modernization and development have not created any significant westernization in the

patterns of marriage, motherhood, and family and kinship relations (Uberoi, 1993 (2005). There are several changes in the orientation and status of women but the educated women are not found to be moving in the direction of 'career' at the cost of marriage, motherhood and family as in the Euro-American settings in any significant manner. They find a balance between the imperatives of career and family. On the one hand, the co-provider role of a working married woman has enabled her to share power in decision-making (Ramu, 2003). On the other hand, caring for children is found to be a priority concern among the educated working women and it is creating a new space for the role of the other family members (particularly the grandparents) in the family strategies of the working couples in urban India(Desai, 1986). There is visibility of unmarried educated working women in the Indian cities as teachers, doctors, nurses, journalists, etc. But even they are found to be engaged in contributing towards family maintenance of their parents and siblings (Rathaur, 1990; 2001).

The paper begins with an overview of the major factors of social changes, particularly modernization, which are relevant in understanding the nature of marriage and family system of contemporary India. Then we present some significant studies and their findings about the orientation of Indian educated working women towards marriage, motherhood and family. At the end, there are some conclusions about the continuities and changes regarding marriage, motherhood and family in the Indian context.

Understanding the impact of modernization on marriage and family in India

A democratic Constitution, literacy, urbanization, occupational differentiation and mass communication are five major factors which have contributed towards significant social changes in India. They have also influenced the systems of marriage and family. According to Yogendra Singh, " The basic changes in the micro and macro structures of Indian society have started taking place only after it came into contact with the West." He has underlined that the pre-Western contact phase of change in the micro-structures like marriage and family used to be around pattern recurrence. The scientific and technological innovations which

today constantly accelerate the momentum of changes in social structures towards an evolutionary direction have been inherited by India from the West.” (1973, 27)

It is a well established fact that the forms and functions of family undergo adaptive changes with changes in the technological and economic structures of the society. Traditional peasant societies everywhere in the world had a predominance of extended families. Marriage in such families was governed by rules of kinship rather than courtship. It was considered a matter of inert-familial and not inter-personal concern. Family in such society was also the unit of economic, cultural, religious, and political activities. There was a symbiotic relationship between agrarian peasant societies and extended family type. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, the transition from the extended to conjugal forms of families became much more accelerated and the latter form became a predominant feature of a modernized society.

But a number of Indian sociologists have warned about the tendency to associate nuclearity of family with modernity of society as it can also be there due to negative factors of a traditional society like absence of landed property, lack of sufficient and stable means of livelihood, and shifting mode of occupation . The family system of agriculture labour dependent families has been an example of it in the rural India. Furthermore, it is also pointed out that it is wrong to view modernization everywhere in the world today as essentially a replication of what happened in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Western Europe, Britain and North America. They urge to go beyond the writings of scholars like Louis Wirth (1938), Burgess & Locke (1953) and Goode (1963) to be able to comprehend the complex relationship between social change (modernization) and marriage and family system in India. It may be necessary to go through the writings of I.P. Desai (1964), M. S. Gore (1968), K. M. Kapadia (1966), A. M. Shah (1973), Leela Dube (1974), T. N. Madan (1965), and Yogendra Singh (1973, 2003) for furthering the understanding of the Indian trajectories of changes in the marriage and family.

It is also relevant to have an overview of the changing dimensions of Indian society with reference to i) the constitutional features, ii) population pattern, iii) rural–urban ratio, iv) literacy and education, v) mass media and communication, and vi) occupational differentiation before presenting the picture of marriage and family in the changing India.

i) The Constitutional Features:

The Constitutional commitment of providing justice, liberty, equality and fraternity to all its citizens has created a set of 'fundamental rights and freedoms' for all the citizens of post-colonial India since 1950. It also empowers the state to make 'any special provision for women and children'. Indian women are the beneficiaries of these rights in the same manner as Indian men. It has created a 'paradigm shift' in the context of basic institutions of Indian society including marriage, family, and religion through 'bringing women into the system of power and authority'. During the last 50 years, the constitution has been acting as a catalytic agent for promoting democratization of the socio-political order in various ways as it reflects the high ideals of a liberal democratic polity.

ii) Population Figures:

India's population crossed the 1 Billion mark in the Census of 2001 with 531 million males and 495 million females in the total population of 1,027 million people. Religions wise, these people belong to Hindu (82.6 percent), Muslim (11.4 percent), Christians (2.4 percent), Sikh (2 percent), and the Others (1.6 percent). The religious diversity has significant implications for the rules of marriage and patterns of family. The age structure has also changed due to improvement in the health facilities and campaign for smaller families. The life expectancy has gone up from 36 plus years in 1951 to 62.4 years in 2001. The infant mortality rate has changed from 146 per 1000 live births (1951) to 68 (2001). The couple protection rate has gone up from 10.4 in 1971 to 48.2 in 1998. Finally, the total fertility rate per woman has also changed from 6 in 1951 to 3.2 in 1999.

iii) Rural – Urban Ratio:

In terms of rural – urban ratio of population in 1951, 83 percent of the people were living in rural areas. It declined by 10 percent to 73 percent in 2001. The urban population increased from 17 percent to 27 percent in the same period of five decades since independence. There is more change in the marriage and family patterns in urban India than

its rural counterpart. These changes are making direct and indirect impact upon the situation in rural communities.

iv) Literacy and Education:

If we combine this fact with the spread of literacy , mass communication and occupational differentiation then we can get the wider picture of 'changing India' There were 16.6 percent literate persons in India in 1951 (with 25 percent male literates and 8 percent female literates). It has gone up to 65.3 percent in the total population by 2001 (with 75.8 percent literate males and 54 percent female literates). There was more than four-fold increase in the enrolment of girls in higher education between 1971 and 1998 – from 0.39 million to 21.16 million. Of course, these figures include wide regional differences between the northern and southern states of India like Bihar (47 percent literacy) and Kerala (90 percent literacy). The factor of literacy and higher education among women has been found to affect the age at marriage, fertility behaviour, and man-woman relation in the family life.

v) Mass media and Communication:

Mass media and communication have been one of the prime factors in modernization of India and other post-colonial countries. They have contributed towards awareness building and new value orientation.

India introduced Television on a very limited scale in 1959. There were less than 100,000 TV sets in India in 1971. But by 2000, it was accessible to more than 900 million people and there were 500 million who have become part of TV audience. Similarly, the whole country is having access to the national radio broadcasts throughout the day. The telephony density has increased to 4 persons per 100 population though it is 11 in the urban areas and 1 in the rural areas according to the figures of 2001. The expansion of print media in all major languages has been one of the most significant achievements of democratic India.

vi) Occupational Differentiation:

In exploring the impact of social change upon marriage, motherhood and family, the role of occupational differentiation has been identified as one of the most critical factors by the social scientists. It is well known that India has been moving in the direction of Industrialization and urbanization since the establishment of British rule in a limited manner. Many historians have argued that the foreign rule caused 'de-industrialization'. But it is beyond doubt that there was a systematic and planned promotion of industrialization-urbanization of India since independence through a series of Five Year Plans.

According to the figures of 1999-2000, the Indian work force was engaged in three major occupational categories: i) agriculture, ii) industry (public sector and private sector with 4 sub occupational categories), and iii) services (with 4 sub occupational categories). In a national survey of self employed women and women in unorganized sector conducted in 1988, it was found that there are 6 traditional occupations, 28 modern occupations, and 28 mixed occupations in which millions of women are found to be engaged for gainful employment. Agriculture has been the biggest employment generator in aggregate terms (57 percent) with 190 million persons engaged in agriculture related activities. But the last decade has seen 5 per cent per annum growth of employment in the 'services sector'. It is also important to note that only 9 percent of the labour force is engaged in employment in the organized sector and the 'Public Sector' accounts for more than two third of the organized sector employment.

To summarize, India is engaged in social change and nation-building within a liberal democratic constitutional framework informed by the values of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. It has been experiencing development and modernization since independence in terms of literacy and education, employment differentiation, urban-rural ratio, and expansion of mass media and communication system. The population has grown beyond 1 billion with decline in infant mortality rate and fertility and enhancement in longevity and the number of elderly people in the society. But these changes have been following a reconciliatory pattern in terms of the micro and macro structures. As a consequence, there is prevalence of the traditional worldview about marriage, motherhood

and family despite tensions between it and the imperatives of Western oriented modernization.

Context and orientation of the working educated women towards marriage, motherhood and family

India is predominantly patrilineal with two important matrilineal pockets in the south-west and north-east. Strong patriliney, patrilocality, male authority and control over resources and patrifocal family structure are characteristic features of society in India. Such a setting provides limited rights over resources and virtually no inheritance right to women. They live in a situation of dependence, seclusion, and segregation.

The social scientists have invariably included the following aspects in their efforts of identifying the most prominent components of women, family and kinship in India:

- a) Three or four generational residential and commensal joint family is the cultural ideal.
- b) The care of the aged, infirm, and the children and the raising of the young to adulthood are important function of the family.
- c) The joint families are rooted in land or in business where capital and close cooperation among kin are required.
- d) Viability of joint families is associated with demographic factors, the economic environment and migration.
- e) There are three different patterned timings of joint family break-up or rearrangement of family structure through time- i. Elder son separating with the marriage of another son. ii. Breaking up of married brothers after father's death. iii. Later stage break-up while the family is headed by one of the brothers or first degree cousin.
- f) There are different levels of familial entities ranging from co-residence and a common hearth to ties of cooperation and obligations and ties only of recognition.

- g) Property helps in maintaining co-residence, although small scale joint families are often seen to function without any property. The pooling of labour, the sharing of gains, and those several activities that are needed to run a household to rear children are possible collectively in the absence of property. Such small joint familial households are commonly found even among artisans, small traders, and agriculturists, as well as among the urban service class.
- h) The roles of women are derived from the kinship system and family structure. Marriage transfers a woman from natal home, and her primary or sole duty is towards her husband's family.
- i) Parents prefer to give higher education to son rather than to the daughters, mainly because boys are considered positive economic assets to the family. The daughters leave after the marriage. Sons are looked upon as a form of insurance.
- j) A certain delinking of women's education and employment occurs in upper classes. Girls are educated to become efficient housewives and mothers. They also become more attractive in the marriage market where education and employment are linked. This is usually for eventualities such as widowhood and in order to supplement the husband's income.
- k) Some parents may visualize careers for their daughters. But they seldom count on being supported by them.
- l) When women work and support their parents and younger siblings this usually traps them in a situation where marriage does not remain an option at all.

In the light of above features, Leela Dube (1997) argues that the concepts of family structure and the kinship network provide legitimacy to the transfer of a woman and create illegitimacy to her trying to support her natal family. Because of which employed young women in urban areas who support their natal family must often remain unmarried. In her discussion of the conflict and contradiction of patrilineal system, she asserts that the system functions and survives at the cost of women. It provides peripheral membership to women in their natal group. They are transferred to their husbands group where they are recognized for purely instrumental value as bearers of children for their affinal group.

Now the question arises about the relation between the ideal type of family system and social change in contemporary India. It is suggested that there is no lineal evolutionary differentiation from joint to nuclear family organization. Furthermore, all changes in contemporary family structure, as in the other aspects of Indian social structure, are not caused by exogenous factors of Western borrowing alone. The assumed universal function for the nuclear families everywhere in the world on the presupposition of universal evolutionism is contrary to the historical processes in many traditional societies. It is further asserted that the traditional typology of simple, compound and extended family does not accurately fit the forms of family organization in India. At one point of time, the size and actual composition of family often denotes only a particular stage in developmental cycle. Simple families grow into extended families and then break up into simple families again. A simple family emerging out of this process may retain some adhesions from the earlier extended family. Aged parents may later attach themselves to one of the sons who had broken away from them earlier to set up an independent household. The change from simple to extended and from extended to simple families are fairly frequent. Perfect three generation extended families are rare and not many simple families can remain technically simple for a long period. In spite of the regional variations in the changes in the family structure in India which has been brought out by a number of scholars, the traditional worldview of the joint family still prevails. Here jointness is defined in terms of a) residence, b) property, and c) mutual obligation among the kin. These factors are responsible for four categories of family type developed by I.P. Desai (1964) on the basis of generational depth: 1. Husband and wife only, 2. Husband, wife and married and unmarried children, 3. Three generation groups of lineal descendents, and 4. Four or more generations of lineal descendents.

The orientation of educated working women towards marriage, motherhood and family may be analyzed through a patriarchal model with the backdrop of predominantly rural society. It has been found that there is a caste-class overlap and gender is a special dimension that affects the division of labour. M.N. Srinivas (1978) has pointed out about the conflicting conceptualization of the man-woman relationship in the Indian civilization. On the one hand, the wife is conceived as the moral and religious half of the husband. On the other hand, he is her superior in an unsymmetrical relationship. Women who are socialized to

believe in such a pattern of relationship represented in the characters of Sita and Savitri in turn reinforce it. Even the secular mobility experienced in post-independence India has had a paradoxical effect on women. The resultant process of Sanskritization immunises women. This immunisation is further compounded in the region north of the Vindhyas, thanks to the institutions of Purdah.

It is important to underline that this trend was arrested among the urban educated women. Such women in India have broken out of the 'status trap' unlike the high status rural women. They have jobs that give them a regular income and social esteem. These women have made a successful transition from one structure and cognitive frame of reference to another. This change of orientation is most remarkable among the women born after independence. According to Neera Desai (1996), in recent years, particularly after the 1960s there has been considerable emphasis on women's access to salaried employment in order to raise their status. It is contended that for women belonging to middle and upper classes, non household employment not only means more consumer goods and upward mobility for the family but may also result in personal gains such as larger participation in decision making, less vulnerability in terms of stress and greater confidence in their own capabilities.

This expectation is in keeping with the claims of the 19th Century reformers when they made appeals for educating women. However, empirical studies on social reality of educated working women indicate that there is no direct relation between employment and status. Just as education has not always led to progressive values or the right to vote has not always meant access to decision-making, likewise employment has not always meant more power to women. In fact, a number of studies have found that in spite of working outside the home on the basis of their high educational qualifications, these women continue to perform their traditional role about looking after the needs of the family, including child rearing and caring for the aged and the infirm. They give priority to patriarchal value structure of the family. These women are engaged in balancing their contradictory and conflicting situation due to the two role demands at home and work. Their attitude towards work outside home is fragmentary. There is need to recognize the crucial role of the socio-cultural context within which these women work and live.

It is also important to remember that traditionally, there has never been a role conflict between home and work for the women from the working classes. But among the middle and upper classes and castes, the role of housewife as mother, wife, and daughter-in-law had been considered prestigious while work for wage by females create lost to the family status. Now attention is being given to the problems of adjustment that the educated women have to cope up with in a gradually changing Indian society in which their participatory roles in new domains beyond the domestic walls are expanding very rapidly due to getting out of the 'status trap'.

A study by Rhoda Goldstein (1972) revealed that education is found to have a positive influence on adjustment in marriage and in performance of appropriate roles in the family environment. The study also sheds light on the emergence of new economic role of women as a participant in the production of wealth and as earning member of the family. This role as co-provider has enabled her to share power in decision-making in the family affairs leading to democratization of the family system is the conclusion of the studies undertaken a generation later by G. N. Ramu (1988/ 2003). Contribution by women to family economy has also helped their marriages to become more egalitarian and economic resource remains an objective strength for renegotiating the balance of power among spouses, according to these studies.

In Indian society the traditional concept of marriage was based upon the religious sanctions. It was suggested that only marriage makes a woman a complete person and legitimate participant in the affairs of society (Kapadia,1958). The meaning of marriage was rooted in the socio-religious domain of the Indian society. Moreover, marriage is said to be essential for a woman because that is the only sacrament that can be performed on her. In the past, the According to the Census of India of 1981, by the age of 20-24, 88.4 percent women were getting married and the percentage goes up to 94 percent for the age group 25-29 years. While only 43 percent boys were found to be married in the age group of 20-24 and 77 percent for the age group of 25-29 years. This contrast shows that getting married between the age of 20-29 years is a near certainty for women in India. On the other hand it is a major departure from the mean age at marriage for women during the colonial era which was increased from 13 years in 1901-11 to 15 years in 1941-51. It is interesting that the same was

20 years in 1901-11 and 19.8 years in 1941-51 for men (See; Towards Equality(1976, Ch.II).

But the increasing impact of the modern forces, especially of education on Indian women, legal reforms and also overall modernization of the Indian society is changing the scene (Kapur, 1973). The institution of marriage is getting linked to the needs of individual more than to the social and religious obligations. For example, in a study by Rathaur (1990) more than 70 Percent of the parents considered marriage as essential for daughters and only a quarter of the parents wanted to leave it to the choice of the daughter. But in the perception of the unmarried educated working women, marriage was mostly associated with fulfillment of a) companionship, b) social obligations and c) overall security. It also noted that marriage is getting perceived by these women as primarily personal phenomenon dependent upon age, education, type of occupation and social class of the person. Majority of the respondents did not want a girl to be married before the age of 25 years so that she is able to complete higher studies. It was also reported that 35 plus years are considered to be not so suitable for marriage of a woman. The issue of mate selections is also an indicator of changing orientation where a significant proportion of educated working women are reporting to prefer 'self-choice' and a sizable responses were in favour of 'parental selection'. The women respondents also emphasized 'education', 'intelligence' and 'character' as essentials for a good marriage partner which are all individual attributes.

The attitude towards motherhood is found to be associated with traditional values about the need to continue the family lineage, and preference for son among the husband and in-laws. It is also influenced by the educational level of married women which is reflected in the spacing of children, use of family planning methods and limiting the number of children. As against the replacement level of fertility, i.e. corresponding to a Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 2.1, the TFR in India at national level was 3.4 in 1995-97. it was 3.7 in rural areas and 2.5 in urban areas. There were , however, large inter-state differences in the TFR. Kerala and Tamilnadu have attained TFR of less than 2.1 whereas is was over 4 in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh in 1995-97. it was also seen that at the national level the TFR was least among the Sikhs and Christians and the highest for the Muslims. The TFR was higher for Scheduled Castes/ scheduled tribes in comparison to the others. Over all TFR was

lower in urban areas than in rural areas. Finally, it turns out that economic development and social sector attainments in education and health have been playing a significant role. It also appears that factors influencing the decision-making process at the household level, such as participation of women in decision-making due to their empowerment brought about by spread of education or other factors have had a decisive role to play (National Human Development Report, 2001; Ch.5).

But what are the significant aspects about the orientation of educated working women towards motherhood (and fertility behaviour)? This question has been addressed in a number of studies of working women and appropriately articulated in a number of national reports. But all such efforts have been found to mostly paraphrase the observations recorded in the first national enquiry about status of women in 1974-76. According to Towards Equality (1976, Ch.III) there are four defining components of the orientation of educated working women towards motherhood in contemporary India: first of all, the situation of women tossed between work and home leads to a role conflict. Some of them develop a feeling of guilt that they are unable to look after children and home properly. Working women tend to pamper their children because they want to make up for what they consider to be lack of proper attention on their part. This is because of their own role perception rooted in their socialization and the expectation of the other members of the family. It is not realized that a child does not need the continued presence of its mother for its proper growth. Nor is it realized that the other parent is as important for the healthy growth of the child.

Secondly, many women believe that it should be woman's right to play a dual role. A woman should not be penalized for her important contribution as mother in the perpetuation of society. Child bearing is treated as purely a matter concerning women and hence the attitude that a woman must either give up her job or her right to bear children. A distinction between man's work and woman's work in respect of household job will have to be removed. If what are called woman's jobs come to be respected by society men will cease to hesitate doing these jobs. This attitude needs to be build into the socialization process of children both in the home and in the school.

Thirdly, it is argued that there is necessity to give women opportunity to do both – their job efficiently and satisfactorily. To this end it is necessary to provide for crèches, nurseries, and labour saving devices.

Fourthly, in the absence of many social and physical amenities like labour saving devices, easy transport, crèches, inexpensive processed foods, as also condition of service such as transfers, many women will have to remain primarily mothers and housewives. Some may have to confine themselves to the role of a housewife while the children are young. If family is important, home-making is also important. The inputs of household work and the mother's role in rearing of children need to be recognized by the family and the wider society.

Given these considerations, it is obvious that the educated working women are found to be reorienting themselves towards marriage and motherhood. Is there rejection, rebellion or reconciliation? The cases of rejection like deciding to remain unmarried are not too frequent. The unmarried educated working women have been in this status mostly due to non-availability of suitable match, family circumstances, or 'too many years spend in career building'. Trying to rebel against 'male dominated marriage system' through 'living together with a companion of same sex' has been getting highlighted by media and 'Westernised feminists'. A representative statement of the 'feminist perception' may be presented here to signify their definition of the situation. According to one of the most recent symposiums on 'Marriage, family and community – a feminist dialogue', "The institution of the 'natural family', as decreed through marriage, has been understood as the heteronormative, patriarchal, exclusionary and hierarchical institution. It has however remained a dominant presence in most of our personal lives and many of our campaigns and action have tried to negotiate it from within." (Shah, 2005). But the overall trend suggests that the educated working women are oriented towards endeavours to find new equilibriums between the multiple roles as a consequence of modernization including the demands of the work place and household.

For example there is definite departure from the traditional norms regarding the age at marriage – pre-puberty marriage - to create enough scope for complete education and personality formation. In mate selection, the principle choice, especially in urban families, is

today increasingly reconciled with parents approval. The wife's freedom in middle class homes to work outside in offices and schools operates within the traditional framework of the husbands approval and sometimes the approval of the husband's or even wife's parents (See; Singh, 1973, 174-184; Madan, 1993, 416-434).

There is a combination of traditionality and rationality behind the desire for children. The poor regard children as an investment and the well to do section finds them a source of psychological fulfillment and social status. The need of support in upbringing the children is getting more and more significant for a working woman and the extra-domestic systems like crèche, day care centers, baby-sitters are not able to fulfill the expectations of a working mother. They feel stressed and guilty about their contribution towards the child as they do not have all the time for the growing up of the children due to the unavoidable absence from home to meet the requirements of the work place. It has three consequences – more spacing between children, sharing of child care between wife and husband, and frequent dependence upon the extended family resources like parents and other members of the kin-group of the wife and sometimes the husband. Many educated women have preferred to get their children looked after by their own parents as it has no negative consequence for her power and status in her own household. If the children are being attended by the in-laws then she has to accommodate their claims of power in the family affairs. They have the threat of activating the old fault lines of traditional extended family including marginality of the daughter-in-law. Therefore it is better to count the resources from the natal family for her motherhood related needs and requirements. But such a strategy becomes feasible only in those cases where there was reconciliatory orientation at the time of mate selection and the approval of parents was given due significance. Thus there are new imperatives for maintaining familial bonds on both sides as they become very functional in meeting the challenges of combining marriage, motherhood, family and modern occupation for the educated working woman.

Towards some conclusions

The orientation of educated working woman in India towards marriage, motherhood and family is marked by the impact of modernization and development. The consequences of the introduction of a democratic constitution, changing demographic profile with stabilization of fertility and enhanced longevity, spread of literacy and education, increased urban population, phenomenal growth of mass media and communication, and modern occupational opportunities have together created a new value framework for the society including the educated working women. There are new challenges for the educated women as wife, mother, and working person.

The sociological enquiries about this question present a picture of continuity and change with reference to the challenges before the women of changing India and their responses. The responses are affected by the class, caste and occupational background of the educated working women. There are regional variations. Religious identity also has a role in determining their orientation and choices.

Despite these qualifications, there is prevalence of positive orientation towards marriage, motherhood, and family among the educated working women. They are getting out of the 'status trap' of the traditional upper caste-middle class Indian women by engaging in work outside home on the basis of their educational qualification without drifting towards 'Westernization' in the context of marriage, motherhood or family. This function of co-provider is creating a more egalitarian and participatory family setting for the married woman as wife and mother. The needs of motherhood and parenting are not being avoided. There is a combination of traditionality and rationality in the orientation and efforts of these women who are exploring new patterns of interdependence by enlarging the contribution of the husband, the parents and other family members of the wife and husband and various new resources created by the state, market and civil society.

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