

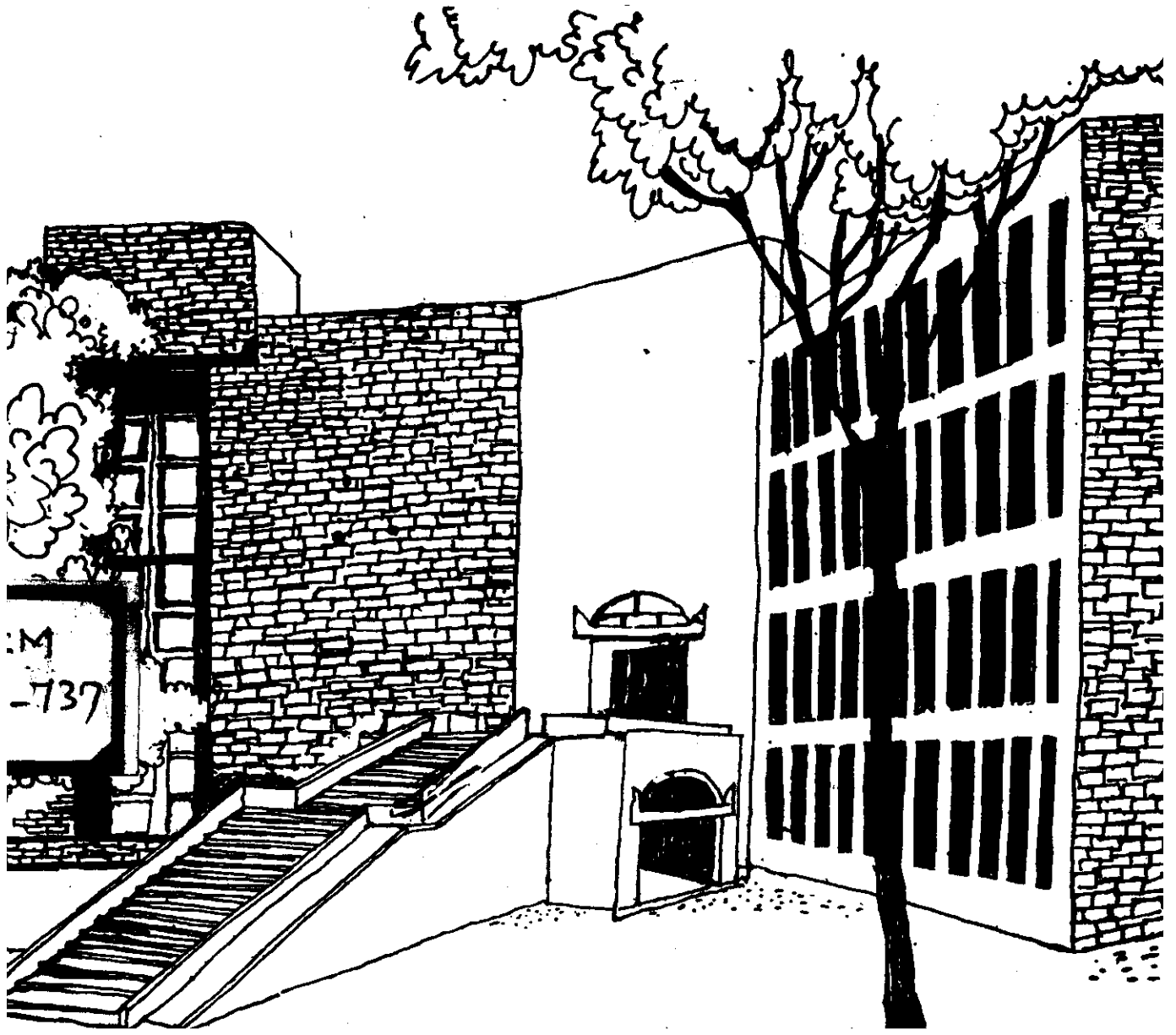


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SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT OF GROWTH
WOMEN AS HOME MAKERS AND MANAGERS

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This paper explores the processes of growth of women in both the family and work settings and their role as home-makers and managers. From the family, women acquire male and female role models. They also acquire concept of systems and organisations. Family and the national thrust for education provide opportunities for education and as a consequence career aspirations. From experiences of growing up, women evolve emotive and cognitive maps of both people and systems. They then, crystalize their own role. Some of the roles they form are that of the adjuster, the assertive, the ^{drifter} ~~daughter~~, the unappreciated, the misunderstood and the unaffirmed. Organisations often reinforce these role. This paper examines the struggle of women to go beyond the above stereotypes of both the social and work roles. They discover that social and work role models of past only take them so far. Beyond that, they have to arrive ~~at~~ by trial and error and by resillience and commitment with new action choices and new roles. They have to define new concepts of roles and systems and crystalize a meaningful identity relevant for themselves and both the systems of family and work.

SPIRITUAL AND PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT OF GROWTH
WOMEN AS HOME MAKERS AND MANAGERS

Childhood evokes kaleidoscopic images of laughter and gaiety, of freedom of long days of sunshine, of sweets, of dressing up at festivals, of acting grown up, of playing house, of being confined indoors when it poured outside, of the sheer joy of experiencing rains on one's face and body, of shivering in the cold, of being cuddled around a quilt, of shrieking terror and compulsions of listening to ghost stories, of being inspired by great men and women of past and a hope of growing up soon and becoming grown up.

A whole set of other images come surging forth - of feeling discriminated against denied, and rejected, of being the eldest and hence responsible, of being the youngest and waiting in line, of feeling suffocated by the demands and expectations of others, of being the middle child and being in a nowhere land and not being owned by anybody. One recalls elders who were to be obeyed or placated, the younger ones who had to be indulged or controlled, of being one of the many, of living tradition and no choices and of being the only child and loaded with love, affection, and expectations. Underlying all these images are the repetitive echoes of being told who to be, who to become, and what the future ought to be.

These are the first five or six years of childhood where the female child gets exposed to the cultural lore which defines the core identity and the structure of life space. She also experiences the multiple active rituals, commands and proverbial statements that reinforce the cultural lore. The significant people flood her with these messages. The child struggles, reacts, resists, defies but is pushed in the well bounded life space and core identity. By the time she is ready to go to school in modern times the female child's mind has become imprinted with the cognitive map of these core identities and the structure of life space. However, the school does offer a hope of discovering some new dimensions. Until very recently the girl according to our data become an apprentice in the home to crystalize her future role. A whole world was shut off from discovery. Her fate may have been set and may have possibly been tragic but in the traditional process there was a convergence and consonance in her introjected identity and the world she was initiated into. The world she wished for herself was held in abeyance but could be postulated in the songs and dreams of romantic beginnings in marriage.

Entry into School

In current times the female children who have the opportunity to go to school confront the push of being and becoming. Entry to school brings a closure to a world which till yesterday was of protected boundaries, of familiar people, of known expectations, of attempting to open new doors and finding them closed, positive and negative, being and becoming good, of climbing into laps, of being with people, of being carefree, and of being gently pushed and moulded to that which is desirable, and acceptable for the future. The first day of school is experienced in many a ways. It opens the door to a world whose boundaries have been expanded, where the faces are unfamiliar, a sea of people surge around laughing and crying, excited and anxious, some bold, some tearful and fearful and some coy and shy. The grown ups evoke fear while they comfort, their faces are stern, kind and preoccupied simultaneously. There is a flurry of movement, a jumble of sounds, a cacophony of noise, whimpers, sniffing, and a brave smile. These are all but vague memories which when grown up evoke sadness and nostalgia of the past when one is trying to struggle of finding ones location in the world outside the home, and in a world beyond the cultural lore.

Entry into school is the direction towards testing the limits of one's intellectual capabilities, widening one's horizons, actualizing potentials, road to opportunities and of friendships to build, some of which may endure and others may not. For some it is a threshold for the unfolding of the self and for other it is a beginning of a new tradition in the family. These families have never exposed their female children to formal education. For their grandmothers and mothers the school was out of bounds. Some of them may have been exposed to the school but their lives were to be lived in the home setting.

To the generation of women growing up after independence in India school became a road to travel and go to college. The women could respond to hopes, dreams, aspirations, and vision. However, (in the initial stages and even today for many) being educated was neither for achievement and enlightenment nor for unfolding of the self. It was conceived by the parents and society at large as a pre-requisite for a good marriage. It was not considered an opportunity for a profession or a career. It was an investment to be held in abeyance in the event of a catastrophe and to ensure economic well being under constraints. It was

a fall back to being without support. This meaning of education still persists in the minds of many a significant people. For many the adventure of going to school ended with the girls coming up age the onset of puberty the girl was withdrawn from school. Only some elite or emancipated families let their daughters go to high school. Being sent to college was rare.

School was a setting which reinforced the feeling of being privileged if born a male and disadvantaged at being born a female. Consciously and often unconsciously the young girl came to experience and believe that her role, space, aspiration, hopes, and future held different set of coordinates than her counterpart male child. The schools, though providing encouragement and opportunity gave double messages. If the female child was not so bright intellectually in terms of performance there were anxieties about her future, her marriage, her life and sources of support. If she was academically intelligent and performed well there were concerns about finding an intelligent husband, the closed world, competition in opportunities, lack of space in a man's world and eventualities of her life. Would she seek a career? What kind of husband will make her happy?

The society then, legitimised the entry of women into safe professions such as teaching, medicine, nursing. Social work came much later. Even today women find jobs largely in service organizations or in infrastructural roles. There was an anxiety that a competent and capable girl may be rejected in marriage. The orientation that investment in education was not for the self but to find a husband held sway. Her academic success flooded the family with doubts and also the man to whom the world belonged as bread winners. In essence schools gave a contradictory which she had to sort out.

There is ample evidence from hundreds of women to support that the female child received conflicting messages which undermined her attempts to build a world view of the future. The school-homesetting started a process whereby for the first time a fragmentation between the cognitive map of the world and emotive map of the people in the world took place in the female child, which planted the seeds of ambivalence between the roles in the family and social setting and her roles in the secondary systems of education and work. This led to a further struggle to resolve her guilt at the failure or inadequate fulfilment of one or the other segment of her life space. It became an uphill struggle to integrate the roles in social and work space and find freedom from guilt and to feel wholesome with herself.

The Emotive Map of the Family

Birth of a female child evokes many responses from the family. From feelings of being let down, disappointment, a sense of burden, anxiety of bringing, expenses in marriage, her fate with the in-laws and an overall sense of indifferent acceptance to feelings of being blessed, fate, joy, and contentment. In the educated urban professional set of parents with limited number of children, a daughter after a son is completion, a first daughter is acceptable with a lingering hope that next time there will be a son. The hankering wish to have a male child, the heir and continuity of the family heritage, is a dominant theme in Indian culture.

Experience of Being a Female

It is in this context that the female child develops an emotive map of the family. The indifferent or acceptance of fate of there being only next to a male child imprints in the female child that the status of being secondary. In the family the girl experiences no space or only to be invisible, obedient, conforming and creating no stress. She learns to hold herself as unwanted, or a transient to be cared for, but never to belong. She also acquires doubts about her value as a person.

The second aspect of the emotive map of the family is anchored in deriving security from being desirable, - in appearance, in conduct both social and personal, and being useful around the home. Each of these modes of security are then linked to her future. Being desirable in physical appearance ensures a husband. Desirability in personal and social conduct gets associated with adjustment and acceptance by the in-laws, for taking a successful role of a wife and a mother. In the emotive of the family her potentials have to be converted into qualities and attributes of an object for which she can be bought by the in-laws. The female child also internalises the disowning of application of her intelligence to the living processes of life and managing the interface. She cultivates masks to be confused by details, by complexity of situations and by the world of finance. She accepts the mantle of helplessness and being lost in the world outside. All other potentials of self like physical appearance only give her an object status. A plain girl is cajoled into becoming skillful and accomplished in household work to compensate for lack of beauty.

The emotive map of Indian family is saturated by the ethos of self-denial, sacrifice, of being useful and living for others. The social system in multiple ways reinforces a sense of negative orientation to being females in the Indian society. The shaping and moulding of the Indian female child emphasizes her obedience, her sacrifice, her being responsible, a home maker, an asset to her family and her husband's family, tolerant, patient, nurturing and fostering. Essentially a calm, quiet, resilient force which is not visible but ever present. The alternatives is to be called a shrew, witch, dakan, chuddail, amunh fut, and other derogatory labels. Inside, the female child experiences herself as liability and a burden. The female child experiences no clear cut anchors for psychological location either in herself or system. Acting from herself to carve a space and a meaning without threatening the well defined appropriate role is but a risk.

Expectation of being an obedient and good daughter

The experience of feeling rejected and a compulsive need to create acceptance pushed the young female child into conformity to the norms and expectations laid down by the family. "You are a guest and must be at your best.

Some tolerances can be made here but at the other home no such tolerances would be permitted." The parents rarely gave a message that a girl had a belonging with them. The dominant theme was 'you are always in somebody else's space.' There is no space which you can call your own. The only way to get acceptance is by conformity, sacrifice, and obedience.

The emotive map then unfolds to let the female child experience the differential and comparative frame with the male child. There are differences in the degree of control and freedom and the openness or secretiveness of areas of discussion. These experiences reinforced lack of sense of self in the female child. It also made the women internalise the role of being either martyrs or victims forever to be sacrificed at the altar of the will of parents, husband and his family and/or finally of the children. A very large number of women find it difficult to accept the ownership of their own lives.

Concern for physical appearance adds turmoil to the female child. Having to wear glasses, having pimples, early puberty, early or delayed physical growth all raise the ghost of finding a marriage partner. The female child codes herself as being nobody's resources but only of use. Most of her transactions are mere exchanges and she hankers to bring her being to somebody.

In the era of thirties and forties educated parents faced with mobility dispatched their male children to the boarding school or grandparents for continuing education, stability and maturity. The female child moved with them often changing schools every two years. She repeated the drama of uprooting. Some of the women eventually realized that academic brilliance and choice of profession was the only other source of security to conformity. Many of the women of this era became dedicated teachers, social workers and doctors and remained unmarried.

Growing up within a family emphasizing equality but at critical moments making a differential choice between a son and a daughter, shattered the female child's image of parents, their values, and integrity. When the female child confronted these processes it led to agonizing battle. Surprisingly, these battles were often around non-essentials petty matters mixing with peers specially boys or contact with males. All contact with males could be in the name of education such as tutor, at home or school. Literatures written between thirties and sixties depict a female child has set these males up as heroes and fallen in love only to discover exploitation.

The theme continues even today but less frequently. The female child caught with the hankering of her own personhood and its expression tended to worship the nurturing males. Many a young woman often felt, let down and cheated by the parents as they encouraged academic performance and offered potentialities of a career, but at the onset of puberty they turned conservative in matters of dress, social conduct, and eventual choice of career.

A set of parents both working and non-working mothers tried to create an experience of home life which added a sense of inclusion and well being in the children. The female child growing up in such homes experienced strength in the parents and an openness about family strengths and skeletons of the past. The children were aware of the economic realities and the emphasis was on values to live by. These parents emphasized academic excellence for a life of self respect. Their effort was to cultivate a sense of joint responsibility and an enriched life. The value of hard work, persistence and effort become an integral aspect of living. Sharing responsibilities and activities in the home became an unquestioned accepted reality. The parents provided

their understanding and resources but the choices and decisions were left to each child. This enhanced in the child the sense of responsibility for herself and the family. The family was a strong anchor. These experiences of growing up created in the female child a sense of valuing herself and self respect. They experienced the worth in themselves for what they were and not from their economic or social status. They performed well in schools and colleges and had a set of goals. They rarely joined large social get togethers with peers and were content with a small set of friends. They became the vanguards of the progress of women and models for the newer generation. However, the number of these women were small.

The Cognitive map of the family

While the emotive map continued as a sub-stratum and often reinforced by the society at large the cognitive map of Indian family changed after independence. In large metropolitan urban centers and in the families of the professionals a new modality of family began. Education instead of being a privilege became the right of women. Earlier themes of education for seeking a good husband, for future security and self reliance in

catastrophe—changed to education for development, autonomy and socio-psychological independence. Consequently, parents operating with this cognitive map pushed the female child to perform well academically. Deemphasizing house work and participation in the living processes of the family became a routine. A female child like her male counterpart was pushed to work hard, to show good results and apply herself consistently to academic success. Investment of money for her education got as much priority as that of the male child. These parents felt a sense of pride in their daughter academic records. They took pride in having treated the male and the female child as equals in their development. Participation in debates, sports, and position in school for games all met parents apprehensions.

For many of these women performing well at school was not a difficult task. It awakened their hankering for finding a meaning for their personhood. Given the opportunity they pursued education with a certain degree of absorption. They developed hopes to escape the life roles and the structures of life space imprinted in childhood. The opportunity also gave them a new sense of significance.

The discovery of the cognitive map did not fully mask the simultaneous continuity of the emotive map. It became more poignant when many of the educated mothers tried to find the fulfilment of their frustrations by demanding that their daughter choose specific careers or seek professionally qualified partners. This process very often turned these women against female identity and sometimes made them develop the syntax of women's lib with a vehemance. The ups and down between the emotive and cognitive maps generated emotional conflicts, arguments and increasing gulf between parents and female children. Many a women found that the only alternative to save themselves from a similar fate as their mothers lay in academic accomplishments and carving for themselves a professional and economic independence.

In the wider society of district and semi-urban towns the emergent cognitive map of the above type did emerge. However, it did not create such a strong cleavage in the goals and lifestyle of the female child. She became a victim of double binds on many fronts of her life. This far and no further became the see-saw within her. Many of the women who shared their experience with us were of the analogue of 'Tantalus'. They were caught with holding into the heritage which denied them themselves

and responding to the new ethos which held promises but raised the ghost of being the accused of destroying the heritage. They struggled with compromises and tended to develop a whole set of platitudes to hold on to their role and its meaning. At one level they admired the women who could polarize and take to careers. At another level they were the worst critics of them and their freedom. They experienced pride and shame, virtue and martyrdom, and contentment and emptiness simultaneously. They possessed and indulged their children and created confusion in them.

In the ultimate analysis there was not much of a difference between these two modalities. The female child was still left with a growing feeling of not having been able to really choose a psychological location for herself. Some sense of doubt about ones meaning to the world remained. They build barriers and drew boundaries. They declared or made statements through silence of their values and their commitments but they still sensed the anxiety of lack of location coded in the life role and the structure of life space of cultural lore.

Adolescence : The Mirage and the Reality

The adolescence for a female child is a period of illusion in a time and space where convergence and intermixing of multiple dualities of her being and becoming emerge simultaneously. This is a state where to every answer there is a question; to every affirmation a doubt; to every certainty an unpredictability; to every direction a dead end; to every response a censor; to every encouragement a condition; and to every action a review. Every step is a discovery and a confrontation with the joy on the one hand repulsion on the other.

In early adolescence the emergent maturity of the body locates the girl in an experiential space which is very mixed. Within her is an experience of unfolding. There is the thrill, shame and embarrassment. Outside she finds herself being stared at. Suddenly she becomes visible to both males and females. However, largely the male response change. Some of the experiences narrated by young women reflect the confusion:

"Men who never looked at me now smiled and put their arms around. They patted my cheek and made me sit close. They were suddenly eager but my flesh cringed. Many a male stared and their eyes moved. I stood erect in glory but also felt an

insect was crawling over my body. I felt as if I was being stripped and wanted to run. There were lot of compliments, smiles and welcome but there was also something sneaky. I learnt not to trust myself with any male. Even the most trusted men in kinship displayed the same pattern. It become a question of how to fend for myself.'

Most women recalled such experiences. They also recalled that mothers or elder sister were of some or little help in the dilemma. They neither shared their experiences or advised. They made only vague references to the ways of the world. All that came through the sexual privacy in the family setting is a reality and each women has to cope with it as best as she could. It is during these experiences that the female child becomes aware of herself as the object of lust, senses of craving and the ravagement of women's body. This also created the postulation of romantic interludes with an ideal man for communion. Adolescence here reflects moment of awakening where the whole world throbbled, with spectrum of colours' and where rainbows appeared at every horizon.

While this was her psychological experience the social world around the women started coding her with different messages. The messages were - you are the holder of virtue. The burden of chastity is yours. If anything happens to you, you are the temptress. From the family the messages about the forthcoming marriage became loud and frequent. In the moment of dream and search reality was impinged more blatantly than it did to a male child.

The Indian female child grows into a role adulthood and wisdom more quickly than the male child. Combined with the earlier experiences of maturity of the body the messages from the social world around tended to converge in the girl's mind with the hope and search for an ideal relationship in marriage.

Entry into College

The second stream of experiences by women were at the threshold of entering college and choosing a career. The female child is aware that hopes of carrying the heritage and being the economic resource of the family rests with the son. She is looked upon as responsibility and a duty. She witnessed her mother's life where creativity was suppressed, potentials were withheld and

her economic dependency too. In the social scheme she was destined for arts, becoming a school teacher - the roles in infrastructural services such as lab assistants and pathologists etc. If we look back at the trend of enrolment in college education women preferred Arts, Languages, Literature, History, Philosophy, Home Science, Social Work and later Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology in India. Even in fifties a handful went into Science and Medicine. Since, sixties larger number of women still pursued Design, Architecture and Commerce. Going into Science, Engineering and Management is relatively a recent phenomenon. The social phenomenon of education still confronted women with their secondary and dependent status. At the end of education and beginning of a career women still confronted the images of being incapable of making decisions, exercising authority and being unstable in jobs.

Many women having lived through this context felt alone and desperate. They fought and argued, pleaded and cajoled to gain freedom to choose the academic line to career. Very few women succeeded in choosing the academic stream they wanted and lived with the wrath, disagreement and disapproval of the family. Once the

choice was made the daughter found the family emphasising academic performance. The academic achievement became a source of joy and pride to the mother. She took active interest in the education of her daughter and monitored the time spent on studying. The daughter became the source of pride and referred status among her family members and neighbours. The father too joined the mother in encouraging the daughter. Academic performance brought satisfaction and a sense of achievement. There was time enough to play and engage in other activities. The household chores and responsibilities were largely out as family gave significance to academic performance.

The availability of opportunity for higher education and achievement had not fully transformed the concept of education being an insurance - An insurance for the eventualities of a broken marriage and having nowhere to turn, an insurance to get a good husband, for enlarging the vision and making it socially useful to the husband, rendering social service and/or investing it in the upbringing of children. None of the above objectives were for herself or for her career. These concepts continue to persist making the investment in education of the daughter to earn 'goodwill of the mother-in-law, a

referred status of the father's family but never for the love of the husband.' The urban Indian women have modified this to some extent. They have acquired some autonomy in the choice of a marriage partner, choice of the stream of education, choice of occupation before marriage and insistence to remain employed after marriage. But the battle to freedom of such choices for each women to fight. No social ethos to support it has as yet been crystalized.

Dual role of being both traditional and modern women

Let us look back at the female child's movement from childhood to late adolescence and adulthood when she entered college. Indian women of today experience their life space as a battle ground between the prescriptive roles and their idealized models of a bygone era and the emerging cognitive map of modern society. She discovered the musts of obedience, sacrifice, and conformity. The emerging cognitive map pulled the women toward wider horizons, dreams and aspirations, and goals and objectives. Caught between the shackles of the traditional past and the aspired future the Indian women walk a tight rope. In reality they carry the burden of both the traditional and modern role expectations and live with the denials of the privileges of both.

Duality in the field forces of her existence leaves many a women unresoloved. She tends to become indecisive and confused, angry and reactive, and/or entrenched or polarised. Whatever stance she takes a feeling of guilt, anxiety and stress pervaded her being and when the husband wanted a wife at home and a modern companion in public, - when children sought nurturance but resented discipline, when for economic reasons she worked but had no support in home from the husband and children, and when she was left alone to take the responsibility of being the daughter-in-law for kinship and was unsupported in her privileges. The women lived a life of a lonely warrior on all fronts. Her only resource was her conviction to create some meaning of her life. Listening to the experiences of many women reminds us of the analogue of Hercules who does endless labour to the assigned tasks with the hope of getting his heritage back. But his efforts are futile. He never recovered his heritage and goes mad. That most women keep their sanity and persist is a credit to them.

Childhood, entry into school, puberty, adolescence, entry into college and higher education are the landmarks of the life space of a female child. In her encounter with these landmarks she ends up experiencing herself as a warrior on all fronts. The structure of her life

space during this era is largely made up of the significant family members. How were these significant figures experienced? What is the heritage she derived?

The Experienced Mother

Mothers were experienced in many images associated with hoard of feelings. Behind direct transactions there were interplay of articulated and unarticulated expectations. Love, affection, and warmth, were one set of expectations. There is expectation of constant responsiveness from the mother. She is a source of need fulfillment. Any shift from this response gave rise to negative feelings. Mothers handled these expectations of each child differently.

One set of mothers who were educated, intelligent, and sensitive to the changing environment and their own qualities emphasized in the daughter the necessity of regular hours of work. They personally supervised the school work done at home and generally saw to it that the daughter had freedom but did not wander from the beaten track. The mother monitored the relationships with the opposite sex. The mother is experienced by the daughter as rigorous and strong woman but supportive. Another set of educated women were self-absorbed and pre-occupied with their own struggle, - leaving the child no involvement with her altogether, she felt disowned.

Another set of mothers who grew up in socially significant and economically secure homes but without emotional security defined their role through marriage. Such women were happy to be away from the daughters' role and domination and control of the parental family. They were willing to offer their best to the husband and their children. Such mothers were the source of providing opportunities to their daughters, were determined that their daughters performed brilliantly and created all the space in the home for their daughters to imbibe the values of self reliance both economically and socially.

A similar pattern emerged from among the less educated mothers. There were mothers who did the right things with feelings of involvement and others who did this as duty. Their female children responded having similar experiences of strength or objecthood. In the lives of most Indian women the parental (maternal) side of the mother had significant impact. Some women psychologically located themselves with the maternal family along with their mothers. While some others disowned the location of their identity in the paternal side of the family. Within the maternal side the female children

experienced some nurturance, some indulgence, some pampering and being allowed to express and experience the childhood. In the midst of such experience the maternal side of the family is experienced as close knit and providing emotional support to each other. The growing child experienced the different status of the mother in the maternal family. She saw respect, love and affection given to her mother. In contrast, in the paternal family the mother is seen as an alien-daughter of the other house and an object-both of criticism and praise-for her role performance. These contrasting experiences of the mothers status in the two settings let the child wondering of her own location. Women who were the only child and daughter experienced their mothers as loving and encouraging on the one hand and controlling and seeking their fulfilment through their daughters becoming on the other hand. They experienced the pressure as if mothers were saying - be like us but become different than us, or become what we could not. This left the only child/daughter as unresolved about location and identity as other women who came from larger families.

Heritage of Women's Identity

The life space of a female child then, is directly populated by the mother and her context to begin with. As she grows she introjected the core identities of the cultural lore. As she entered school she is exposed to the identities of women in Indian history. However, she is also a witness to the current living models. Among these current models the one that stood out clear and stable among Indian women who accepted at one level the traditional role of being shadows to their menfolk yet retaining their substantiveness in themselves, and being echoes of the prescriptive social system and yet retaining their voice in times of crisis and being heard. They were a source of silent and dependable strength to their families. They survived the storms of family feuds and struggles. They protected their sons and daughters sometimes their husbands and whole families from annihilating transactions. In fact these women accepted their self-denial and social imprisonment with grace and sowed the seeds of future aspirations in their young female child.

These women were experienced in the family as strong and capable to engage in multiple role simultaneously. They became resources of the family. They rose on

occassions to protect the family heritage and brought themselves in the forefront at critical moments to survive. They managed the homes, sometimes with the minimum resources and with many constraints. They swallowed their bitterness, and rose beyond the discriminations and denials by the social system. Such women turned their roles into anchors of stability, continuity, security, and consistency. In effect they became the context wherein others derived their autonomy to be themselves.

In experiencing live role models of such women the female child is either aware or ignored the processes of deprivation and denial of their own aspirations, meaning and a sense of well being. The female child simultaneously is aware and ignored the processes of victimhood of the self and glorification of the role. The pathos was of ravagement, and finding no replenishment. The pride was of persistence and having the capacity to regenerate from within. The strength was of one's own commitment to live, survive and bring the best with a hope for future. Hence, the awareness of cultivating the quality of mother earth in order to be a woman. Surprisingly, in India this is the only stable role model of women for living transactions. It is also to a certain degree a positive model of survival.

To the women currently struggling to transcend the inevitable structures of life space and create a new space this role model of traditional Indian women drew admiration, awe, pity, and various other feelings, but it did not mobilise women to act for themselves. Somewhere in the midst of admiration-criticism, in the midst of approval-doubt, and in the recognition of their success the universe of pathos and inadequacy appeared. The whole dialogue had the syntax if not this (the model of traditional women) what? - "that" (women currently struggling to transcend). "That" it is too painful and risky. The universe of the old is known and well charted. It was easier to navigate in calm waters. There were well known landmarks and it was safe.

The Experienced Father

The father's image in the minds of female child were many and varied. There were a set of fathers who in childhood created fun and gave comfort, teased and pampered when they were at home. They even favoured the daughter when the mother was harsh. These very fathers who earlier appeared liberal, encouraging and supportive in childhood later turned traditional, conservative, restrictive and determiners of education

and career choices. Their mother in such a situation became the new ally and support for the daughter. Hence, the liberal father between ten and fifteen years became symbols of the restrictive society.

There were also other set of fathers who were silent and aloof. They evoked fear, sometimes anxiety and appeared harsh in their outward behaviour. They were hard workers and also appeared harsh task masters. Their presence at home made the mother push the children into corners, into talking in whispers and generally to keep quiet. They rarely made direct demands. Occasionally, they also displayed their fondness, affection, and love. They affirmed success and achievement. They however, remained a mystery while their whole posture invoked hope and affection.

In both their images the father got idealized, somewhat romanticised and was looked upon as an object of hope. Along with this cathexis with the father women introjected role taking processes with men characterised by dependency, need for approval by men and security of location in a contained environment. The anchor of their role as recipients and some of their temperamental behaviour in marriage lingered arising of the daughters cathexis to father.

Some other images of the father led to negative cathexis. Here, the father was experienced as ruthless, discriminative, depriving, and hostile. He is experienced as direct source of demand to postpone the self and its expression. Physical battering had been frequently associated with these fathers. His gifts were tainted with duty and not blessed with pleasure. He became the symbol of women introjecting the shame of being women in contrast to men. It reinforced their other introjects of being helpless victims and the fate of being women. The experience with such fathers reaffirmed the message of being 'Paraya Dhan', being secondary and an outsider.

Some fathers were experienced as inadequate and helpless. They were perceived as having low status compared to other members in the family. Daughters witnessed the discriminatory, depriving and other processes of denial and rejection converge on these fathers from the family and neighbourhood system. In turn they experienced the same behaviour themselves. Sometimes they also became the object of pity and compensatory nurturance from some members of the family and neighbourhood. Some of them were perceived as failures. Others as being ravaged and denied their due. The daughters witnessed them as trying to maintain dignity and self

respect and failing. These fathers triggered empathy and sometimes a deep identification. The cathexis from this experience often invoked in the core of female identity a need to provide ones own resources to the men without making a demand. Some of the behaviour patterns of women who experienced this was a display of so called mothering or reforming the male.

Infrequently but persistently we ran into another set and experiences of fathers held by Indian women. These experiences were never openly stated. They were only shared in private. The image of the male held by the women was that of the eternal lustful youth. Part sensuous, zestful, flirting, laughing, and being generally witty, making quick come backs and poking humour. These fathers tended to have a great need for extending physical touch. They were playful. In their own way they were the initiators of the daughters into the world of adolescence and adult. They also provided some intellectual and developmental inputs incidentally but not in a purposeful manner. Most of these women seemed to have internalized shame of being women and treating their body and social viner as their assets of transactions. Alternatively, they continued to foster in women the identity of 'innocent girl' whose every encounter with

male invoked the seducer. The image of this father was very often fused with the experiences of uncles - younger brothers of fathers or his friends. The contents of the image were minimal from the father but were embedded in his personal set of friends. Regardless of these experiences with father a strand of physical battering from father runs concurrently. In some women the physical battering was the most poignant recall of their childhood and adolescence. Their cathexis was largely negative.

Just as in the case of mother the female child's experiences with father also reinforced the elements of cultural lore. Men remained the inevitable counter identity and the issue of quality of relatedness between the two continued to revolve around the inevitabilities of the structures of life space.

Father's Heritage

While the mother's heritage was linked with status and location in the two families - the in-laws and the parental - father's heritage was grounded in the father's location in the parental family and the locale of his origin. In terms of origin there are two clear trends. The first one is of the grandfather or the father who as a migrant from the rural area created a space in

urban places ranging from semi-urban settings to metropolitan cities. They became entrepreneurs in trade and business, found a position as wage earners in civil services or mercantile houses and became 'sahibs'. Others turned professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and professors. Their heritage was hard work, commitment to succeed, the ethos of being self made and a strange culture of transience where traditionalism and modernism were held in isolation - Traditionalism at home and modernism outside. At home they retained the life style, rituals, religions, and modes of behaviour in social settings. They got up early, displayed respect and participated in the living process. The women were compelled to dress in traditional attire. Outside the home many of these were not insisted upon.

The second heritage of the locale was traditional urban residence. Most of them were a continuation of their family heritage. They too entered civil service and mercantile houses to become 'sahibs' or turned to professions. Some of them continued in business and trade. Thus, from the urban centres they were two distinct locale based heritage. One was constituted by the business class. The other by the wage earners and professionals. The heritage of the business class

remained very conservative in ethos but also promoted certain latitudes of display of possessions. In the heritage of wage earners and professionals career if not a regular one at least as an eventuality in crisis had become acceptable.

The heritage with the status of the father in his own family has many dimensions but the three most significant are - the nature of transaction between the father and the mother, the nature of transaction of the father with his mother, and the quality of relatedness of the father with the rest of the family members.

Father and Mother

Father's transaction with the mother was the source of both the pathos and an ethos which created the universe in which the daughter learnt to hold men in her encounters. Sometimes the father being idealized and romanticized with its positive cathexis become the symbol of the men sought. The positive cathexis becomes the dreams and hopes. After marriage attempts to create the pattern of positive cathexis persisted. However, in the marriage the negative cathexis also surfaced and became a matter of confrontation and resolution.

It was not very surprising to note that there was a great deal of symbolic transference from this universe to marriage. Father's transactions with the mother were often compared with his transactions with herself by the daughter. This comparison created the dynamics of struggle between centrality and marginality of women's identity. It created the harrowing dilemma of being and becoming into an object or a person. There was a strong sensing in the female child that there was very little choice - but to be an object.

Father and Grandmother Transaction

The status of the father in the family is often caught in the father's ability to resolve his son's role. In managing his own status and remaining silent at the treatment meted out to his wife by the mother and his family at large seemed to be most significant for the daughter. It also reinforced the inevitability of the life space of having no psychological location except in herself. Very few fathers seemed to provide a model to counteract the residual feelings from this aspect of their status in the family.

Father and Kinship Transaction

Father's status outside the family if it was positive became very precious. In moments of feeling psychologically dislocated it was this heritage which was held onto by the daughter in her life. This reinforced the proxy role of being 'the daughter of the house' and the woman tried to reproduce it in her life. The values she carried for herself emerged from this heritage. In case it was negative it left the woman lonelier in resources. The feeling that she was her only resource got reinforced. Some of them committed themselves to create their own heritage.

In Indian setting the transactions of the mother with the grandmother become significant introjects for the role of woman. They had become a cultural lore where the mother-in-law or the grandmother acted as a persecutor of bride. In combination of experiences with various kinds of mothers stated earlier the experience of grandmother added the ambivalence to the status of being a woman in society. Inability of the father to resolve the son's role with his mother added to the intensity of pathos of being a woman.

The emotive map of life role and life space as internalized by the female child from her experiences with the mother, father, and both their heritage had identicalities with the emotive map introjected by women from the cultural lore. The most common theme was of psychological location. It was always transient. It appeared stable and firm but always collapsed under the feet when they needed to hold on. Women's life appears like a rudderless boat drifting, occasionally in serene waters but frequently in turbulent waters. Escape from this drift was only by grounding the boat in the swamps of traditional ethos and pathos. Attempts by women to take charge and navigate or discover anchors to stop the drift required a very strong commitment to deploy their resources alone and to find adjustment with the socially defined situations. Attempts to take charge and navigate beyond the traditional waters invoked a wide range of feelings of anxiety, terror, shame, guilt, joy, hope, and dreams. Managing this struggle required not only conviction but tolerance to withstand many accusations. Many women who shared experiences of their life space emotionally blackmailed themselves to stop the struggle. Some of them reminded us of the folk tale where when one looks back while

on a journey turns into a stone or a pillar of salt. These women had become entrenched in a perspective of the world and their transactions with men with which they began initially. Their success of having crossed many a thresholds did not provide enough courage to go beyond the initial pathos which mobilized them for action.

The second common theme was that of 'fate' of women. The universe of this theme of fate was often accompanied with the feeling of 'damned' if you do and damned if you don't'. So why struggle and why not surrender to the inevitabilities of the structure, life role, and life space? To suffer in commitment to the given role was desirable. This permitted women to hold on to helplessness - dependency and innocence - aspects of their being. It allowed to be immobile and reinforced the feelings of victimhood.

EMERGENCE OF ROLE-IDENTITY

This reviews the three primary location of role-identity of women i.e. the adjuster, the assertive, and the drifter.

The Adjuster

Some women having introjected the cultural lore and internalized the experiences with father, mother, and their heritage developed a context for their role play. They accepted the recipient and a performer role. They accepted the construct of duty and role appropriate feelings and behaviour. They committed themselves to render their best to the family, children and husband with a smiling face. They could respond to a houseful of people, sudden arrival of guests, sudden descent of inlaws and other emergencies without losing their poise. They tended to create a feeling of sufficiency and plenty in the midst of low or inadequate flow of resources. They built reserve in their personal as well as other resources of the family. Their home was well run, neat, ordered and clean. It was quite homely if not decorative.

Eventually these women were experienced as reliable and dependable. To a large extent their status as an outsider got dissolved. By middle age they started acquiring social status and power. They could then influence the courses of the family and were held in regard. The same people who would have fought her

earlier and created situations now avoided open confrontation. They never completely gave up but become more amicable. Such women begin to be heard in their system. They also become visible. Essentially these women have become echoes and shadows of ideal promoted by the cultural lore. Once they are in power they reinstitutionalize the cultural lore through their transactions with the husband, son, daughter-in-law and grandchildren.

This is their adaptation and they are justly proud of having successfully managed their social and phenomenological transactions. In many ways they became the upholders of the system. Some of them even become creators of heritage by dropping some of the traditional compulsions. For example, they may support the daughter-in-law's modernity. As long as the daughter-in-law was duly respectful she may not have to cover her head. Daughters may be encouraged for education and freed from participation in rituals. This heritage is largely of the nature which fosters some autonomy and transactional ease of day to day living. They made themselves available in their role to everybody. But their personal feelings were never

stated. They were gracious and earned their dignity. They did not voice any regrets. What was happening in their person was rarely known. Most of them took to the religion in later years in a more concerted way. They also retained the ceremonial aspects of rituals and festivals.

The Assertive

Some women though exposed to the cultural lore seemed to react to the experiences of mother, father, and their heritage by internalizing assertiveness. They did not like the restrictive life role and inevitable structures of life space. They sought to establish for themselves the role of a navigator and take charge of their life. They became active in trying to carve a space for themselves where they could find expression of their being.

The response to their effort by the environment entrenched them in a fighting modality. They were seen as assertive, aggressive, sometimes impulsive, stubborn and got labelled as fighters or unmanageables. This often settled them in the mode of a rebel. These women were pushed by the response of the environment into such intensities of feelings that they crystalized either the ethos of restorers of women or made it a personal issue of being themselves.

Their asset was their academic excellence, ability to mobilize themselves, deploy effort and of being good at doing things. They saw no justification of being denied a psychological or social location as partners in life. They were not satisfied with being secondary echoes and shadows. They began their search to find relationships in situations where limitations, weakness, vulnerabilities of their own can be attributed to the society and the male domination. Their syntax behaviour was - only opportunity can be had or created. They would show what women could do, achieve and contribute to life.

Within themselves, they were also aware of their limitations, weaknesses, and vulnerabilities. These they postulated in a search for a relationship where mutuality of resources and vulnerabilities could both be accepted. The search got partly romanticized an ideal relationship where there was no censor, criticism and accusation or punishment. A whole generation of potential assertive women got caught with the myth of having 'communications'. Their incapability to find a relationship to communicate finally turned them into rebels and proponents of women's lib in India. Others with some core of traditionalism

operative in their identity turned to the ethos of reformation and tried to start programmes for the development of women.

In our experience with most women their search and effort to create a space led to interactions with people who were hostile, sarcastic, and reactive. In turn the women affected a style that portrayed them as callous and rebels against social norms. Every issue became a major issue to prove themselves as right and seeking justice. Very often fight in transactions raged around non-essentials. They presented a stance of defiance and non-negotiability. They learnt to appoint themselves as spokesman for all women.

The pathos these women were trying to circumvent and get rid of was still that of small, secondary status, lack of psychological location, of being treated as objects and of being kept in recipient role. The pathos of a 'cripple', the denied, the deprived provided them the energy to hold on to this stance in a dedicated manner. It is interesting to note that most of these women reflected an interesting phenomenon. With regard to large number of women specially with 'drifter' identity they took the role of being a patron. Their own relationships however, were directed toward people who were

intellectually and otherwise equal if not superior. In this phenomenon they continued their own struggle of inclusion and finding a viable psychological location. Many of them were not aware of this process.

To some of these women the fight revolved around a struggle against centrality versus marginality. Though they tended to vouch their arguments in seeking equality they were seen as seeking to displace men. They also created the credo - 'women for women and no man can empathise with women'-. They became the representatives of disillusionment, disenchantment, and skepticism of having trusted men in the system and experiencing repeated let downs.

On the whole, women who awoke to the pathos of women and who sensed some hope and a way out in the context of the new ethos of west took to this stance. It is unfortunate that a meaningful awakening and an assertive stance led to a creation of an arena to fight with lines drawn. Very few of these women succeeded to retreat and create a personalized world of wholesomeness. A handful of those whom we met during our exploration were sagacious women who recovered from the diffused traditional ethos and reactive stance and could converge

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the pathos, goals of new ethos and the affirmation of the old ethos to create a pattern of fulfilment for themselves and a release of a new path for others.

The Drifter

Beginning in thirties as the culture of transience gathered momentum - a social cultural setting got created in India where the introjects from cultural lore and internationalizations from living experiences got increasingly away from each other. They contributed towards a great dissonance. Sometime the living experiences with the family were also in disarray. They were coded with double-binds. Besides the cultural lore which was being introjected the female child also got cognitively exposed to the constructed lore of child's life from the writings of popular psychology and authors from the West like Enid Blyton. Thus, the introjects and internalizations created a fog in which counterpoints, contradictions, and analogues and identicalities evolved and dissolved from time to time. This process and its product the fog made the problem of psychological and social location all the more difficult and acute. The drifter identity felt deeply disowned and alone. There was restlessness and desperation to clutch onto something to experience stability and direction.

Post independent era intensified the culture of transience. It became a period of hopes and turmoils, awakening of aspirations, of perceived opportunities, of plans of transformation, of walking into a promised land and of sudden bursts of energy and setting up of many goals. It triggered in its wake a greater mix in the introjects and internalizations. The female child had to decide what kind of social location and what kind of psychological location to search and value. The models of social location were getting polarized in either or, and the traditional or modern. The models of psychological location were as usual lacking. The lack of the models of psychological location made the choice of social location an illusory choice. For most women it was difficult to let go of either. Consequently they moved into different patterns of drifter identity.

Our experiences with most of the women with drifter identity was that each of them had developed a set of tenets to operate from in multiple life situations. They had no cogent perspective of life as a whole. They were concerned with consequences and the kind of things they wanted. They were more logical in their syntax as compared to the other two identities. For example compatibility and commonality of interests in marriage was one of the tenet. They would have great debate about it.

They refused many of the offers in marriage. To our surprise many of them eventually married without any compatibility or commonalities of interest in marriage. They often ended up with 'tall, handsome, dark stranger who held promises of success' and repeated the theme of the 'trickster' of the folktales mentioned earlier.

One aspect of the universe of the drifter identity was anchored in the female child desperately seeking to be owned up. The deeper influence of the cultural lore has held the set that owning up can be done by somebody else - a God, father, guru, husband and in modern times a cause. Caught with the fog of culture of transcendence the models of being owned up became unstable and got diffused, the women struggled. From their narration we found four sub-sets of drifter identity which converged around this theme of owning up.

The Unappreciated

These were women of great commitment who were ever ready to give their resources to the system. They rendered support and service in all family interfaces. They would be relied upon to do all the right things. Yet surprisingly, they were also objects of criticism, sarcastic remarks, occasional disdain and condemnations as persons. The family and people around would use their services but

would not necessarily include them in their affective relatedness. These people in time felt unappreciated, occasionally exploited but persisted with their pattern. In discussions we found them using syntax of comparison, evaluation, and logical justifications of their feelings of disenchantment. There was a sub-stratum of mild disdain and contempt and search for significance and exclusivity. These women were always relied upon in crisis. They also became like errand girls to manage uncomfortable and time consuming interface. But in general they were accused or criticized for having airs about themselves. Some of them were also attributed meanness, selfishness and such other social derogatory motivations.

In our experience these women were unsure of their self-worth but very sure of their competence. So they became great doers and displayer of efficiency. These women also had great potentials. They continued to invest in their self development and in the development of their children. They also eventually became perfectionists and learnt to communicate the message - of everything being done in 'just so' manner. Eventually they came through to people as critics, self righteous, and finally unmanageable but indispensable. In the traditional cultural lore this has been the syndrome of 'badi bahu', 'Jithani' or a 'drudge'.

The Misunderstood

A model of drifter identity anchored in the same dynamics as the unappreciated was a comparatively passive person who did not seek visibility. In silence and to the chosen few of the system and invariably to all and sundry of the juniors she rendered her resources. Her intentions were always right. She was seen not as a perfection in her performance. She did not initiate things on her own, waited for a command or a bestowal of assignment. She was always around but not in the center.

The drifter identity caught in the need of being owned up developed the pathos of being misunderstood. They have lot of reflective processes. They have perceptiveness but unlike the unappreciated they cannot mobilise themselves to action. In final desperation they turned, reactive, negative and claim that they did not need to be owned up by anybody and that they would make it alone. Their attempts however made them flounder in shallow waters. They had a sense of self worth inside but did not have trust in their competence and or performance.

To many they become the counsellors. They could play the empathetic proxy role but could not act for themselves in desperation. They made good altar-egoes 'the sahelis' of the bargains in Indian classical drama

and folk lore. As they went through this process of holding lot of promise but achieving far less they generated the feeling of 'oh well' or exasperation in people who empathized. The pathos of being misunderstood kept on getting reinforced in their lives. They also experienced desertions. In cultural lore they were the 'bebharis' who are seen as whining and as being the source of their own miseries. After a time people learned to leave them to their lot.

The two other models of the drifter identity in this theme of search for being owned up are the converse of the above two. The 'unappreciated' becomes the misunderstood, and the unaffirmed.

Like the unappreciated, women in this pattern are action oriented. They too wished to render service in action, but somewhere a conditional clause of equitable reciprocity made its presence in their transactions. When things did not go as per their expectations they felt misunderstood or cheated. 'Misunderstood' was their label when the other person stated that he or she expected more from them as a reciprocal part of their transactions. They got angry and resentful. Being 'cheated' was their experience when the other person in transaction did not come through to fulfil the expectations they had built in the transactions.

This model of drifter identity liked to keep all her doors open and had problems of making any commitments to any relationships. In their syntax they appeared doubtful, skeptics, paranoid - but definitely pre-occupied with apprehensions as to whether the other party would come through or not. They spent hours in arguments about these apprehensions but arrived at no resolutions. Their ultimate response was the slogan - 'alright let us see'. Their basic syntax was to establish clarity so there was no later misunderstanding. However, misunderstandings were inevitabilities of their life. Eventually, they got seen as manipulative, selfish, and as castrating. Being really talented in certain ways they also were seen as arrogant and as possible threats. There was also a certain degree of righteousness in their pronouncement of people and world. They eventually developed such set maps of people's behaviour toward them that they were ever ready with anticipated responses. This made them experienced by people as carrying a chip on their shoulders. In the cultural lore they were the pampered 'nanad' (daughter of the house) or the proverbial females.

The Unaffirmed

Parallel in process characterized by passivity and with an overt sense of innocence was another pattern of drifter identity. They came from lower economic, social

cultural strata but had the opportunity to go to good schools due to the commitment of the parents. Some came from high socio-economic and cultural strata. Some were the youngest daughter or in some way due to stigma of height, colour or some other phenomenon did not experience a sense of belonging. The search for being owned up in these women took the mode for search for belonging at any cost.

Their own fear of commitment blocked any search for relatedness. As such, the acuteness of need of belonging made them seek for temporary warmth and approving relationships. They got into them with a sense of innocence and found themselves exploited. As against the misunderstood who became defensive, doubtful and skeptic these women took a hopeful and trusting stance. This created situation of many kinds of exploitations including sexual exploitations.

Some of them appeared erratic and quite unpredictable. Many of the women in our discussion shared experimentations with drugs and other phenomenon associated in their mind with freedom. They carried deep scars from childhood and a strong resentment against almost dogmatic and pushy parents specially the male. Their behaviour in adolescence and after seemed to become that of a waster of their potentials. Their need to punish themselves and by proxy

the parents was very strong. Their sense of worth in self and competence were both shaky. Their strategy was always to attach themselves to somebody in order to go through life. In the cultural lore they were the innocent or the dumb.

There are some other models of drifter identity. Some of them were merely mixes of the four patterns stated. Others seemed to be different but no clear cut underlying theme for them like the one search for being owned up - seem to emerge. The one distinct pattern of a drifter which emerged through school to colleges is an all round admired and accomplished achiever girl. Her modalities are close to the cultural lore of the 'Accomplished'. We saw her as a drifter as many of them failed to consolidate the goal, a career and a direction for themselves. They were good at whatever they did. They always made their presence felt but they also avoided to make self oriented commitments.

The adapter, the assertive and the drifter are the three nuclear core identities. They seem to have part continuity with the tradition and are partly the product of the current social cultural scenario. What is the nature of the socio-cultural scenario?

Increase in Nuclear Families

With the increase in wage earning society the number of families which in physical terms can be described as nuclear has increased. The nuclear family provides a setting where the configuration of role models are strikingly different from those of a large joint family. Born and brought up in a nuclear and small family the female child's need for competition, struggle for attention, and centrality in the emotional space of the family gets reduced but confrontation between male and female identity becomes more severe or gets masked. It leads to the development of an attitude of being special and some awareness of being different from the women of cultural lore. The family provides a setting where sense of inclusion, well being and positive support from concerned people is experienced. There is a sense of personal involvement. The child sees herself as one of the members inspite of references to her transient state. Essentially, this consolidates the daughter identity.

The nuclear family also exposes most children to the turmoils and travails of the marriage of the parents. These conflicts vary from a general tense irrationale transactions, to suppressed hostility, through sarcasm to open confrontations. The issues may be money, children,

friends, parental families, grandparents or many others. Very often parents either shut the children out leaving them anxious or tend to win them to take their sides. This created sense of guilt. Thus, in the midst of security of daughter role forces of insecurity and doubt about quality of relatedness reemerged. The social location which was secure gets contaminated with the insecurity of psychological location.

When such a child went to schools and colleges she moved from a personalized world of stable social locations to being one of the mass. Female children who were talented took the stance of achievement and competition. This created the scenario where with her verbal faculty and intellectual abilities school became a stage to perform for glory. Need to stand and outshine others made her mask similarities with people. She often learnt to develop strong likes and dislikes. This moulded her into a woman who was the life of the party but lacked meaningful relations. Often these women experienced stress in building closeness and intimacy. They were either put on the pedestal or left alone. They often became prone to encounter the trickster.

The nuclear family also made the female child directly witness the life space of the father and the mother. They saw the parents struggle and sacrifice, compromise and persist and retain the sanctity of their life. They experienced their helplessness and determination. All this had an influence in fashioning of their identity. At one level the female child committed to autonomy and a stance not to be subdued, controlled and made economically helpless and dependent. They learnt to emphasize the search for psychological location and not the social location.

Some of the nuclear homes inspite of various vicissitudes retained the quality of emotional security. Such homes were full of space to talk, discuss, explore and share in the evolution of a stance in life. Women who grew up in these homes acquired an ability to deal with reality. They took the negatives of the larger situation and held on to their perspective of charting a path for themselves. Some of them grew into adjusters and others who though called rebellious in the initial stage created their own heritage.

System of Secondary Socialization

The nature of secondary socialization also changed from the tradition. Earlier, the secondary socialization of the female child took place in the home, neighbourhood and community. She was initiated in rituals, forms of social behaviour household activities and other desirable accomplishments which would ensure a good location at the husband's house. The new socio-cultural scenario created schools and colleges for secondary socialization. The secondary socialization of earlier time was played down. Initially these settings were cloisters of women colleges. They were well protected and guarded. The teachers and the principal acted as the mother surrogate. There was heterogeneity of students in terms of culture, origin and religion etc. but there was homogeneity of school or college culture. This became a setting and a period to discover the inner world, sensing of awakening and unfolding of the woman - the laughter and chattering of friends, in the midst of participation in dramas, debates and sports, in the awakening of aspirations and dreams - in the midst of discovering the forbidden through books and by proxy from some adventurous classmates the female child retained her tentativeness, doubts and apprehensions about her future.

The encounter with male counterpart was largely transient. It happened in public settings of debates, dramas, picnics, and college trips. Very often on the train journeys when male and female children travelled to their home in groups. Deeper personal contacts were rare. Most of these relationships created periods of mooning around. One of the sayings of the era was - a good book of poetry and Khalil Gibran - was the end of many of these contacts. Most of them could not break the modality of bestowal. They still felt that freedom is to be bestowed and not taken. Women of this period ended up living the life role and life space of cultural lore but did better for their children.

In the last thirty years the nature of the secondary socialization has changed. For larger number of women coeducation has become the preferred mode. What did it bring to the female child?

Legitimacy of Profession and Career

More women could aspire, plan and struggle to build a professional status or career for economic isolation. The occupation of teachers, doctors, social workers were the earlier roles. Now a whole panorama of careers have become open. Women now entered the field of business, drama, dance, engineering, space science etc. In India the opportunities in job and careers except in business are more easily available to women than anywhere in the world.

Along with the prospects for career and being a professional the secondary socialization also exposed women more directly to the western ethos and social forms. It created the rationale for freedom, autonomy, equality, and companionship. While it enlightened the women on one hand the root of cultural continuity which had always been carried by women in India got shattered. It was not that women had to carry this burden but their role in the past provided for a evolutionary process. Their mass exposure to the western ethos, modes of living and social conduct perhaps created the lacuna of developing integrated identities. However, the most critical contribution of the secondary socialization of school and college setting was to confront both the female and male identities with direct encounter of the inhabited world of heterosexual intimacy and closeness.

The experiences with heterosexual encounters created mixed responses. There were some disillusionments, some disenchantments and tragedies to cope with by falling in love. The experience of falling in love was like any story book romance. The person per se was not important, but the discovery and experience of an awakening generated a mixture of fear and excitement. Many women have experienced and described this feeling like a "mid-summer

nights' dream" where the young woman awakened to her womanhood inside and fell in love with a man with a donkey's head. The first flush of awakening transformed the world into a magical world; a world where one walks a few feet above the ground, where the air, the sun, the colours and the flowers all acquire a unique and intense fragrance. Feelings of both pleasure and pain acquire an intensity and every moment is experienced as life and death.

These are also the critical moments where a path to the future and roles in life got crystalized and acquired a shape and a form. Here, the centuries-old universal themes of sleeping beauty, Cinderella, the mermaid, the folk tales, folklore, legends, myths, epics and psycho-dramas got enacted and re-enacted. This was also the threshold where new roles and themes could emerge and new paths be created.

The young women coming from all across the country with their unique configuration of experiences of the family and the social system responded to this awakening. Some accepted the role of a sleeping beauty who lived in her parent's, family's and society's reality and now woke up in the world and reality of her prince charming. She made no demands and created no reality of her own.

Her hopes to live happily thereafter dashed. She found herself once again in the realms of echoes and shadows, where she had to live by duty and rendering her best to the husband and children. It was like a life of captivity intervened by a moment of freedom and back into a life of captivity. Some women become Cinderellas where a life full of rejections, deprivations, discriminations seemed to end in a moment of acceptance. They were ready to give all for that one acceptance. They overloaded the relationships with expectations only to be disillusioned and let down to repeat and recreate the past into present. Insecure, anxious, and apprehensive they kept repeating history. They kept on awaiting a human touch from outside. Their being was like a bottomless well where the deprivations and denials were so intense and deep that a lifetime of gifts by others were not enough. They let themselves open to a world of fantasy and dreams and in the encounter with males got exploited and used by many. Thanks to their strength and resilience they survived to search again and again that one unattainable relationship.

Women who reacted in these two modalities in their encounter with male identities essentially became victims of the structures of the life space described in the cultural lore. Their introjects were deep enough to

inhibit them from taking this opportunity discover their own human touch to heal their deprivations and to own up their strengths to create first their own reality and then one together with a male.

There were a set of women who in the moment of reception in love took the entire responsibility of sustaining, fostering and carrying the love. They committed themselves to sacrifice and became possessed. The male counterpart in such relationships discharged all his negative residues of his mother's identity on them. They were loving to seek solace and comfort. They were pickiunish. They pricked, deflated and then turned gracious. They were hostile, threw temper tantrums, walked off and hoped to be begged and pleaded with to return. Some of them always returned like a bad coin. It became difficult for the woman to let go and break the neurotic pattern. In such a process the women let themselves become the beasts of burden. They were willing to sacrifice their satisfaction, lived for others, carried the emotional burden, and brought their devotion and faith to find a space in other people's lives. The pathos of lack of space however, remained. They believed they had no ability to create their own space nor invite others to give them space. They were forever torn on the see-saw of too little or too much.

These women found it difficult to create a world of people or relationships for themselves and they forever experienced emotional poverty of their being. Their efforts to become was to fill a void or a lacunae of the past. In their attempt they become mortgaged to others needs. They had lots to give of themselves but could not discover the will to give it to themselves.

In summary, women who went through this cultural scenario had a strong need to retain one's individuality and found it difficult to create a complimentary role. The need to possess, claim and own their accomplishments and achievements was obvious but to make it their anchor for security and location was difficult. Although presenting an external image of being socially interacting, outgoing and confident, their inner insecurities created anxiety, uncertainty and doubt about the self. This rarely got dissolved. The need for validation, affirmation, and assurance from outside was never abandoned. Loneliness was frightening and large amount of their energy was spent in creating relationships. Social relationships were experienced as shallow and meaningless and yet they continued to hold a fear of creating meaningful and close relationships. The fear of losing oneself, fear of merger, of remaining marginal, loss of centrality,

fear of being possessed and controlled and turned insignificance continued to keep them on the see-saw with achievement and success in life. Their role and identity outdated, psychological location remained elusive.

Reflections

At the threshold to enter a new world, a world of work, and marriage the young female blossomed into a woman wonders whether the battles of achievement, the drive for excellence, the strive for economic independence, and struggles to create a space and personal meaning have any meaning at all. Why does the economic insecurity make her anxious, why emotional dependency creates apprehensions, why agreements evoke rebellion, why conformity evokes reactivity and all the years of struggle to achieve a space has made her loose the acceptance of herself?

Work has become an anchor without which her life would drift like a boat whose navigator has abandoned the helm. It evokes fears of being rootless, forever being a shadow and an echo and following in the footsteps of all these that have walked the beaten path. The conflict is intense between the demands of the traditional role from the family and society and a modern role from

self aspirations. Traditional role as experienced by the female child from the family and the society demand obedience, conformity, and following the path charted out by parents and then the husband's family. To the women this implied disowning of initiative, self motivation, aspirations, dreams and goals. Having continued to persist in what she believed in, argued for what she aspired, and dreamt acted on her convictions that had evoked in her a heloless fury, tears and guilt. With some women her dreams and aspirations then moved her to step into avenues and opportunities of the blocked options in order to discover some meaning in her life.

Caught between the emotive and cognitive map of experience of the family, school, college and the society, she had survived with many scars. Her future - the social role of being an obedient Indian wife who puts family before personal meanings. That part of her being and becoming which propelled her to create both a meaning in life for herself and create a home put her on a see-saw. Thus, threshold to enter the adult world evoked terrors - that the ghosts of the past and the beckoning of life in the future - would create pulls and pushes for a commitment to be made. Choice of self goals would evoke guilt and accusations of neglecting the family. Choice of others

and family would not only repeat the history of sacrifice, futility but also the guilt of wasted potential and creativity. A painful choice awaits at the threshold - a threshold where a door to a nostalgic world has to be closed to step into the unknown; a world to discover and a world to create, a reality to experience and add; a reality to aspire and dream; a reality to mould and shape; and a reality to live with its numbing pain and exhilarating joy; a reality which carries the centuries of pathos and seeds to create a new ethos and at all times experience the pulsating life that is to unfold just beyond the threshold.

Many women have woven romantic dreams about love and marriage, about a prince charming or a knight with a shining armor. For most women standing at the threshold however, hold the experiences of growing up, which have tempered the dreams and fantasy with social and cultural realities. Many women educated and intelligent, capable and confident, eager and aspiring have eventually come to terms to believe that love may spring from beholding in each other's eyes but requires a deeper attempt to understand and commitment in each other to survive. Consequently many women at the threshold of a professional role and career have accepted the social

reality of an arranged marriage with the hopes that they would work out. The women hope that the man they married would be mature to accept sharing of inner realities without social norms and evaluations. They would be able to laugh together at the follies of adolescence and be able to integrate in effort and meaning together. It would create a space to combine.

Women with maturity have come to some terms with themselves that they are not competing with men but hope to create an equation. They anticipate sharing of responsibilities of home, work and living a life of togetherness. There is a need to arrive at meaningful convergence of their status of being a traditional 'bahu' a social asset to the husband and carving a career for herself.

Profession means a sense of autonomy, self respect, being mentally alert and experiencing a sense of worth and meaning in life for herself. A life without this meaning means a slow and gradual decay, deterioration and wastage of one's 'being'. Work today has a deep meaning in the woman's life. It is the only way out to breakthrough the cultural lores and limited choices of identities and the inevitabilities of structure of life space.