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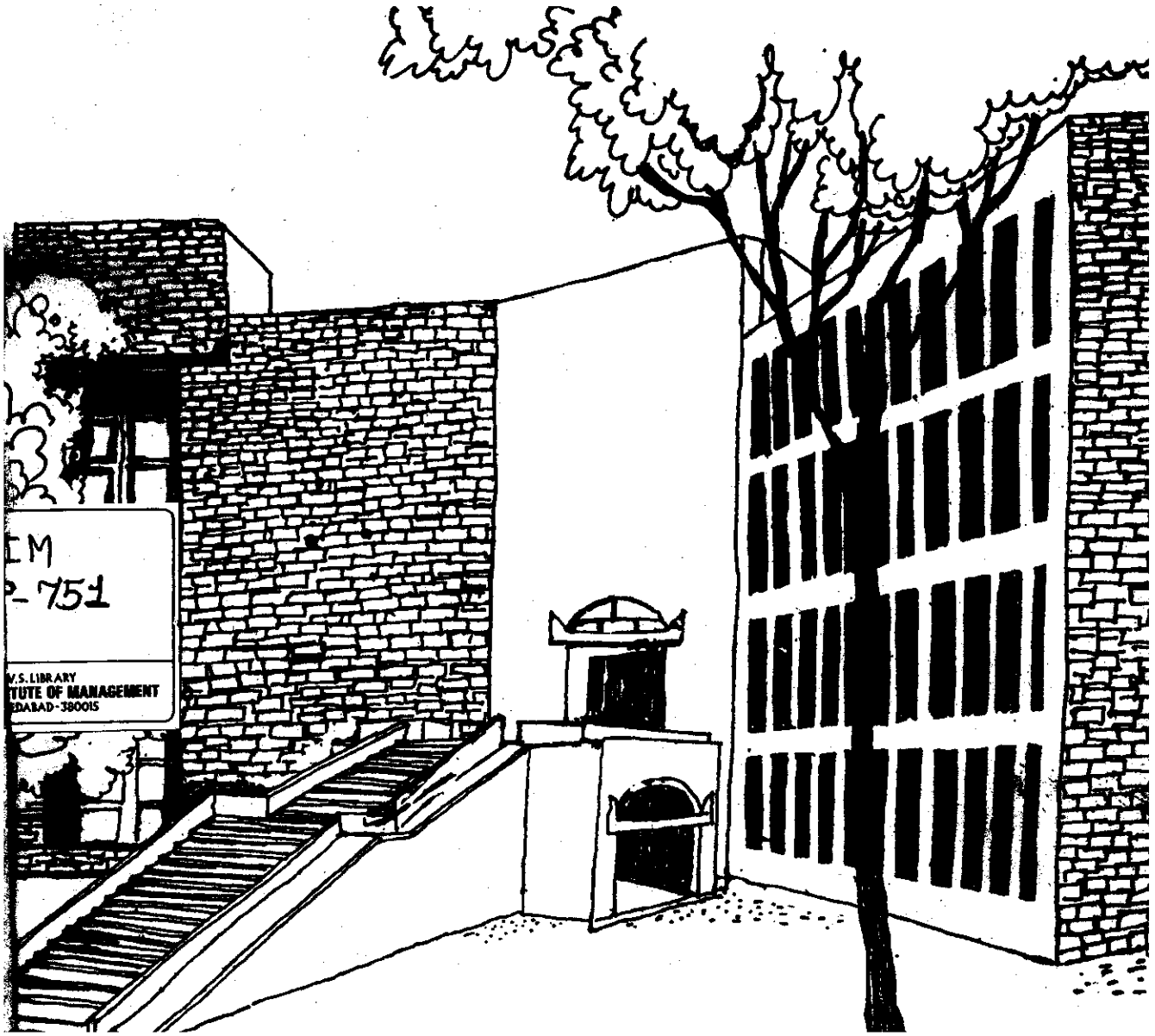

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DEFINITION OF SOCIAL AND ORGANISATIONAL ROLES

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the institution of marriage and work organization as held by women. Both systems demand responses from women for which they are often not prepared. Their dreams of romanticised marriage and fantasy of togetherness often lead them to dis-illusionment and dis-enchantment. Their career aspirations without the reality appraisal of organisations and their own definition of systems lead them to frustrations. They are pulled and pushed between social and organization role demands, and their own entrenchment in stereotypes of role taking. The conflict between the desired and the aspired daughter-in-law, wife and mother roles on the one hand and desired, aspired professional and career role on the other hand creates conflicts, stress and guilt. women get caught with the internalization of the normative prescriptive modalities of social and work systems. The role models from family, culture and history are insufficient and inadequate for meaningful responses. This paper explores those areas of role taking by women which can help redefine and redesign new responses in both the systems. It deals with the reinterpretation of existing roles and arriving at an integrated perspective for women which can bring convergence within both the systems of family and work. This paper suggests that women who encounter in themselves the women-person dilemma and take charge of their own destiny in their hands to give it a shape, form and a meaning finally come to make choices for the wellbeing of both themselves and the system. In the absence of such an integration, women when confronted with the turmoil of the two systems either become conformists or rebels or exile themselves and end up making compromises rathe than choices.

At the threshold of marriage, holding both anxieties and anticipation encoded in cultural lore the woman envelops herself with cloudy and misty theme of "lived happily ever after". To her, at this threshold it is bewitching and enchanting. It gives the message hope, future dreams, and newer aspirations. New relationships and a strange family awaits her. The parental home had been the family of adults where she had been a child, a daughter, and a transient. Her network of relationships are given, her role well defined and expectations well determined. Within these boundaries her passage through adolescence had been full of kaleidoscopic emotions with all its joys, and thrills and its pains and pleasures. Her encounter with the self and male identity at home and educational aspirations made her struggle to fashion an identity for herself. This era is not always clear and cogent. There were many doubts. The woman lives through contradictory cognitive and emotive experiences.

The threshold to marriage has been romanticized. Some women arrived at threshold with thumping hearts, dreams for the future, and a heritage to create and continue. To others, it is a dream, romance, love and a bewitching relationship where rainbows danced, eyes spoke, and silence communed - a world surrounded by magic and fragrance all around. For some, it is awakening, a beginning of an unfolding to discover a touch, a pulsating heart, to dream of togetherness, to witness dawn and dusk, a moment to merge, a moment to unite and to weave a world where there is no pain and sadness, - no hurt, no anguish, but a world of love, and affection.

To some, it is at this threshold that the search for the right one, the ideal one, for the self and a new life begins. The new family is at the periphary, and not in the focus. To still others it is an entry into a world of new faces, new people, and new relations. There is an anxiety to create a space - the magic space where she could experience and bring her potentials of being a person. To all, it is a moment to bid farewell to her role of being a daughter and a child. This is at this moment to wish good-bye to the past both pleasant and painful, a past passive and turbulent, a

past of childhood denied or being kept a child for too long. It is an admixture of overwhelming feelings of tears, laughter, anger and subdued wanting. It is also a feeling to want to hold on to the familiar and known faces of the loved ones. It is also the anxious anticipation, an adventure, a journey, a path, a life ahead of uncertainties, unfamiliarity, an uprooting, and entering a world of one's own and not one's own.

The role brought on by marriage - transported the woman into a world of many new social relationships. She became "bhabhi", "kaki", "chachi", "mami", the "bahu", "jithani", "devrani" all at once. These relationships had degrees of freedom to relate with a whole new set of expectations. This network of relationships were either supportive or generators of stress. The ease of adjustment or non-adjustment depended upon the quality and nature of interaction between her and the network of relationships in the new system. She had no experience with them herself. She had witnessed models which have not always been satisfactory in her feelings. She had also been a witness to the poignancy of the struggles of her own bhabhi, chachi and mami to adjust to their new family and the woman had wondered whether her models would work in the new network of relationships.

Sense of uprooting and concern with re-rooting is the core dilemma of women in male dominant society. Most women confront the issue of what to carry forward from the past. Would it be an asset or a liability? It is a drastic uprooting where the doors to return are tightly shut behind. Henceforth, only as a visitor or a guest she can return with a sense of respect, and dignity. It is the most significant inevitabilities of the structure of life space of women. Men may go away for long periods and experience long separations for education or business and he may experience enforced and perhaps self chosen exile. But a psychological uprooting through marriage is not part of man's experience. The trauma of uprooting is faced by women alone - each woman in her own way. Our understanding is that in the past through customs and rituals, through conventions and individualized traditions of family some infrastructures and systemic processes were available to women to live and work with this trauma. The emergence of secularised ethos has eroded most of these supportive social infra-structures. Where they are still operative they have lost their meaning. They have not been re-designed to suit todays times.

At the threshold of uprooting a confrontation of a stranger and a strange world awaited the woman. To them she is inevitably bound and bonded. A stranger - a male - an identity which is until now a source of uneasy anxiety. This identity both excited and frightened her. It is held both in suspicion as well as desire. The woman also had to confront a stranger in herself. For years, her feelings have been held in abeyance, waiting for a person, a new setting and a new direction to create a space for herself. Also feelings of romance, of being valued for herself, and receiving a sense of mutual meaning, had been nurtured by her. Parental home - a transient location - is an admixture of security but uncertainty, legitimacy of permanent space. Her sense of belonging similarly is fragmented with the primary family and the family to be. Her fate lay beyond the threshold of uprooting.

Standing at the threshold, the young woman sees herself in many images largely juxtapositions of the old and the new, traditional and the modern, the home-maker, and wage earner one to be protected, cherished and loved, and the one to be strong and joining hands to work as a team. Her image is to be a loving devoted woman to the husband and doting mother to the children,

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respect for the traditions and rituals of their belonging as anchors of their identity, but adapted modern modes to enrich the quality of their lives. Women from such homes did not feel overwhelmed, and could gracefully move into any role with certainty and confidence.

Such women had sense of security in themselves to evolve a role. They felt equally at ease with the traditional roles of being a wife, daughter-in-law, and mother and also with being modern (ability to relate in social settings with ease, grace and integrity) outgoing, and managing the external environment with confidence and poise. They won the trust and location of their role easily. Without nagging or being too eager these women encouraged their husbands to achieve beyond what they planned. They created a space where husbands could share his aspirations, achievements and options. Their ability to ensure the husband that they were willing to stand and bear any consequences of the risks involved in his options provided him strength to forge ahead and be sure to return to a secure, and stable home.

Many of them picked up work and possibility of a career after they saw their children through their early dependency of childhood and early schooling. They were the backbone and anchor of the family to experiment and grow. Their husbands took many critical decisions and were involved in making their dreams come true. These women created homes which were comforting and where people sensed harmony and affection. Differences and disagreements rarely became major conflicts. Rationality and affection tempered by commitment and concern made such differences a part of living reality and did not evoke panic, threat or anxiety. It is at this setting - where marriage as a social and cultural institution had the best chance to survive.

The mother-in-law issue - like in all families in the Indian cultural context was an issue and an area of stress. However, their introjects of culture and their deployment in their role behaviour kept the stress in manageable boundaries. They could persist and modify without defiance. Similarly, these women were firm and flexible enough to retain their autonomy in many essential and critical matters of their home, husband and

children. These were the families who valued the past, valued their belonging and experienced a sense of pride in their social and cultural context. They created a home of comfort and not necessarily a home of luxury. They encouraged the value of self-sufficiency, self-reliance, and discipline. They faced crisis without whining and whimpering, anger or futility. They had the resilience to continue to build and create a family with a sense of togetherness, loyalty, affection, concern and a direction. In many ways these women anologously belonged to the cultural lore of the 'Apple and the Stigma'.

Twice Uprooted

These were the young, intelligent and competent women who came from families with westernized modes of life style and beliefs. These families had by choice surrendered the religio-philosophic traditions of their heritage. They were the enlightened ones with a strong rational scienticism as a perspective for life and its problems. As an under current there was a certain degree of contempt for superstitious knowledge and contents of traditional life style. The families conversed in English and rarely used their mother tongue. Their

modes of day to day living, food habits, and dress were all in tune with the western world. Western festivals like Christmas and New Year were celebrated with greater enthusiasm than some of the Indian ones. There was definitely a disengagement with Indian mode of life. Their reference group was England or America and they had a penchant for foreign goods. The west came to represent quality, advancement and progress.

For these families the first uprooting was from the cultural moorings. In adopting an alien life style they had only internalized the logic but basic assumptions and the quality of ethos and pathos of alien land was not introjected. At marriage the women confronted another uprooting. However, it seemed that they either ignored this uprooting or continued to be rooted in the life style which they experienced as a daughter. In the parental family both the boy and the girl had been pushed for academic excellence and achievement. Participation in sports and extra curricular activities were encouraged. Acquisition of modern, social and sophisticated personal appearance was emphasized. Premier schools and sophisticated boarding schools were chosen to provide a grounding for future life. The family life - centred around social

entertainments, clubs, parties and get togethers. The friends of the family included significant social, cultural and political names. Visibility and social appearances were the hallmark of their life.

Many of the girls coming from these families were prepared for a life of companionship in marriage not the married life of a housewife and daughter-in-law. They were well groomed but lacked roots. They had learnt to live efficiently but not effectively. They did not know how to deploy their resources to build infrastructures of living. Their work goals were for socially visible and coveted jobs with glamour. To them marriage was a continued series of parties, outings, shopping sprees and chatting with friends.

Most of these women rarely stayed too long with the in-laws. They created a separate base in the same town. Acquisition of decorative modern home, a place to entertain and to set out from was very important. Lack of wherewithals in the home for such a style created stress and conflicts. Having wherewithals of modern life was central to the planning of their family. Economic well being tied to social status and a decent life style was primary to having children. Life was a

planned sequence according to a list of acquisitions. If the sequence did not flow as planned, life became one long dissatisfaction. These women felt more unsettled if they did not work. Their urge to socialise and compete with women in the elite social set was great. Over time, slowly but gradually they got involved in a pattern of life which revolved around being a hostess for business interactions of the husband. The second aspect of this life revolved around modes of acquisitions, card playing, social drinking and interaction with celebrity. Eventually their marriages were held together by reflected social status, lavish homes a retinue of servants, and a large budget provided by the husband. They lived with horror of social ridicule and being shunned. They lived with the anxiety of loosing economic resources and social standing. Part of the universe of these women is analogous to the cultural lore of 'The Accomplished and the Trickster'.

The Working Woman

The women in this pattern came from homes where the father's first generation to have risen beyond their socio-economic status. The fathers were the self-made men. They maintained links with their belonging without shame. The success of the father lay in his academic

and skill achievements which provided a niche in the setting of work. The family was loosely linked with all the traditional kinships and extended family. They got together on rituals and social occasions as marriage and death.

The families emphasized education for job or a career. The value of work for economic autonomy and security was central in their cognitive map of future life. The home and the skill of home building and maintaining family links were equally emphasized and cherished as inherent values of being a woman. These women prepared themselves for roles of teachers, researchers, bank employees and similar other middle range service professions. The belief was that such professions would provide a setting where women could manage both home and work with ease. When married early the women continued their education and soon took up jobs. The women who had jobs continued to retain their jobs after marriage.

They often set themselves a Herculean task to being a socially traditional daughter-in-law are ambivalent and added to the stress. They liked the economic earnings and the increased buying power, but they also

resented the autonomy and the freedom of the daughter-in-law. They made life difficult in the family. They capitalized guilt of the daughter-in-law of being away from children and home. The mothers-in-law also acquired referred and a higher status in the social and economic setting.

Caught between the social familial relationships and expectations from their roles, and the reinforcement and encouragement of their role in economic partnership, the marriages of these women often reflected a swing from participative effort of the husband in the chores of the home and children to periods of strife, tension, doubts and suspicions about the woman's relationship with her male colleagues.

The homes of these women were simple and functional. A visitor felt comfortable. There was no pretense of social glamour or competition of acquisition. The neighbourhood was a living reality. There was a comaraderie as well as squabbles. The home was filled with friends, children, neighbours and relatives. They appreciated what they had and trusted friends, relations and neighbours as a source of security. They were never socially alone. Their sense of belonging was strong. They felt valued, stress of daily living became a reality.

Life however, is not a bed of roses. It is a continuous struggle of something gained, something lost, some deep satisfactions and regrets, a squabble, a love, arguments and togetherness - all with a set of purpose and direction. Such women from this belonging arrived and middle age with sense of pride, of having pushed the walls of captivity a little farther and having created a space for themselves. Some indeed turned critical and temperamental for their struggle seemed hard, and perhaps alone but they had a sense of substantiveness about them. As persons they were experienced as harsh and demanding on one side and supportive and tender on another side. At one level success left them psychologically alone. In middle age task orientedness and commitment to persist in it happened to be viewed as strength. Occassionally some of them were seen as non-negotiable, non-compromising and over instructive of how and when things should be done. Their children felt their love being masked by their need to control children's life.

The universe of these women reflects the unfolding the diverse strands from the universe of cultural lores of 'The Apple and the Stigma and The Accomplished and the Trickster'.

The New Middle Class

These women came from families who made a small beginning as entrepreneurs and through success joined the new stream of rich. Traders started manufacturing, and production units. Some went into finance and big business. The family experienced a substantive rise in their socio-economic status. However, their cultural and social status lagged behind. Many of these families took to a pattern of conspicuous consumptions, with a conscious display of their economic power. They enjoyed possession of foreign goods not necessarily quality goods.

The fathers in such families displayed attachment to daughters but were harsh to sons. Daughters were educated but not pushed for academic achievement. They were pushed for accomplishment in craft and art. In adolescence these women got addicted to Mills and Boon literature in their mother tongue or English. They were contemptuous of men of lesser economic status and were somewhat apprehensive of the intelligent and educated men who held degrees in subjects like mathematics, physics or chemistry.

The mothers were dominant women who from being silent sufferers and grown up with scarcity of economic resources had overnight acquired the magic wand of buying power. They critically controlled the daughters and planned lavish marriage celebration. They looked around for husbands from families with names and urban backgrounds but within the socio-cultural and caste boundaries. The mother also insisted that the daughters acquire familial accomplishments.

The young women were caught in the role of being a daughter. They had entered adulthood but they lived in the world of adolescence, romance, and marriage. To them the in-laws were the ogre and they had decided they could never get along with them even before they had met them. More often they dreamed of continuing to live in their husband's home but absorbing the husband into their parent's home. If they married an educated, professional man, they resented his limited economic resources and gradually developed contempt for the husband. They frequently chosen to visit their parental family to bring back material resources for themselves.

Some of these women felt uncomfortable in the husband's home and with his family. They compared the husband and his family and found them wanting in many respects. Their syntex was of constant comparison. They rarely if ever could develop a basis of psychological relationship with the husband. The husband's home was a transient place in the first few years of marriage. Their emotional loyalty and belonging lay with their primary family. They started putting their roots in the husband's home only through their children. Having failed to integrate their husbands in the parental families they fostered in their children the belonging to maternal families. The mamas and mamis often became their models.

By the middle age most of these women had begun to feel empty and meaningless. Many of them by this time put on excessive weight. They also started to limit their life space and narrowed the bounderies to a select few withintthe neighbourhood. Their main stance was critical and disapproving. They too had failed to manage the uprooting. Fatalism and stock philosophy of life became their platitudes. Some of them turned to religious beliefs. The universe of these women is analogous to the cultural lore of the 'Lost and the Unfulfilled'.

Self Reliant

These women came from families where the father was absent, psychologically or in fact missing or died young. The mother held the family together through work and self-reliance. She neither controlled rigidly nor allowed too much autonomy. Children were expected to be mature and responsible. The mothers also encouraged the ethos of self-sufficiency, standing on ones own feet and making choices with self respect. The children - daughters particularly - grew up with certain clarity of goals and directions.

They choose to marry men who were also largely self-made men, intelligent, hard working and committed to create something for themselves. The wills and values of both partners were strong and clear. Marriages often became a setting for intellectual stimulation and a sense of commitment and purposive living. The sharpness of male and female identities attempting to cre te a life space together also held a threat to creation of harmony. Some parted with bitterness while others with understanding. Those marriages which endured became model families in the neighbourhood. They were held for emulation by neighbour's children. Their own children grew up with

sense of confidence and poise. The universe of these women is analogous to the cultural lore of 'The Realist and the Exiled'. Such were the realities of roles responded to by the women. These women grew up in an era where the macro culture was in transition from the traditional agrarian society to the emerging modern society. Confronted with their experience and aspirations, being rooted and uprooted, having a glimpse of a world alive and inviting and all the cumulative feelings of being a woman - these women responded with an intensity - not to fallow the footsteps created by past models.

However, as we look back on our data and experiences of these women there is a striking commonality experienced of their standing at the threshold of marriage. Regardless of the families the women came from, and regardless of the cultural lore and their personal life introjects, most women arrived at this threshold with a mixed state of feelings within themselves. To a certain extent the women were incomplete, unfihished and open in their identities - open for new introjects, and new internalisations. Very few had arrived at this threshold closed and with entrenched role identities.

Psychological State at the Threshold

The threshold to marriage was set in the context of dreams, hopes, anxieties and threats. They hoped for husbands who were mature and educated and on whom they could rely who would be tender, affectionate, loving who would respond to their wishes and initiate pleasant surprises and who would also demand from them an involvement in their lives. Commitments to sacrifice and to hold themselves in abeyance to create a stress free space to grow together competed with the need to fulfill the residual feelings of deprivation, discrimination and of being transient in the father's family. All these and more evoked contradictory and mixed feelings in the women.

Most women were seeking a space for being a person and being treated so. Most women wanted affection without control and love without guidance. She wanted a specific space which were her own and not be an intruder ino other's space. These wishes were tinged with doubts - doubts held from the exposure to the models of marriages during her period of growth. Many women in their childhood had witnessed the conflicts, arguments, fights, stresses, tensions and violence some had also witnessed love, affection and security! Their own expectations

and hopes were sometimes in counter-modalities of their experiences but they were also aware of possible realities. The marriages assuch, was already overloaded with contradictions of super human expectations of life full of love, affection, tenderness, gentleness, concern and the theme of "lived happily thereafter" on the one hand and the pain, poignancy and tragedy held tucked away in some corner of their memory on the other hand.

Women were confronted with day to day living of socio-economic realities, needed to generate economic resources, and management of complexities of both home and work found themselves torn. This was further compounded by expectations of being a daughter-in-law. The women confronted with these contradictions began to polarise. At the crossing of the threshold some women experienced patterns of dominance, demand for total surrender, conformity, obedience and devotion. Her role was to give unstintingly and receive what was given. In a way the woman found cojtinuity of expectations of what to do, how to do and when to do in the new family. The only discontinuity from the primary family was that now her state of transdience became a state of captivity.

In confronting these interfaces of reality women tried to generate new responses. Our discussions with women suggests that they experienced being under the microscopic scrutiny of the in-laws, and the husband. Most women felt damned. Whatever they did was critically appraised. The only guidance was in sermons or preachings. Most of these reflections implied as if the woman had been insensitive to something in the in-law's family. Eventually, feeling badgered many women regressed to the same coping processes and patterns as they were used to in their life of being a daughter.

A set of women however, responded with maturity and gradually helped the husband become sensitive to the existence of her person, her aspirations, and dreams. They worked steadily and gradually and helped the husband to row out of the traditional role of the son and to acquire an adult, mature role for himself. While, some other women stood by waiting with commitment and support to let the man fulfil his family obligations of economic autonomy. Many of the young men had sisters to marry and younger siblings to educate. Some of them had loans to pay back and provide for the retired and aged parents.

Whether the marriage was by choice or arranged by parents, these were the realities of their existence which many a women confronted as they stepped beyond the threshold.

In case of marriage by choice many women had to overcome the threats and delays in marriage due to mothers and would be mother-in-law who had higher aspirations for their children. Any choice made by the son or daughter was more often not the dream partner in the mind of the mothers. Many young men and women waited for reconciliation. Large number of them just drifted apart. Others who finally persuaded and received blessings to marry still had to work for affirmation and approval from their respective parents in the first years of marriage. Some women turned angry and bitter and set the stage for an unhappy frictious first years of marriage and failed to modify or reappraise the situation. They constantly demanded proofs of love, affection and security and often drove the husband to walls. While some others sacrificed their earnings, assets, jewellery to unending economic demands of the family who turned parasites on the struggling young couple to start a family and home.

Marriage : The Cultural Setting

To individuals marriage may mean many things from a rainbow, spring, desert, a river of life, a storm, a hurricane, a raft, a heaven and a million other experiences. But to the society, marriage is a social institution providing legitimate entry into the adult life of sexual and psychological togetherness. It is marked by a shift to a new location to create new meanings. It is legitimised uprroting from one context into another. The woman leaves her home, changes her name, accepts a new belonging, attempts to call it her own and accepts all that is past and present of the new family and weave a future with herself in it.

The institution of marriage is conceptualized in the Indian ethos in many ways. At the psychologicaly and philosophical level the woman is told that the marriage is her space where she is 'ardhangini'. It invokes the image of physical togetherness and completion and also implies co-ownership of resources. She is also told to be 'sahadharmini'. Dharma in its essence stands for the value anchored mode of living and conduct. Sahadharmini as such does imply the status of co-chooser of values and co-designer of conduct in life. She is also told that she is the 'priya', 'rambha', and 'shakti'. This implies that sensuousness and fullness of sexuality is her right and so is the responsibility of being the sustaining force of man's struggle in life. These

coded in the contempt of marriage provide her not only the ffeedom of space, but also the dignity of being a person. Man is also given similar messages.

The marriage in India used to be a week long event. Around the main ritual a host of other rituals were planned. These rituals evoked in the youngwomen and men to end their social role of son and daughter and evolve a social role of being adult members in the society in their own right. However, during the decadence of agrarian society the concept of joint family demanded that young couple remain in the social system of the husband's family. They were not allowed to set up a home of their own as was done in tribes and in many other cultures. This process created much of the confusion in unfolding of married life. Perhaps it would have been easier on the young couple if they were allowed a separate location and processes of integration with the social system left open for exploration. Traditionally, like all other aspects of life, institution of marriage in India had been designed as a setting for individuals to make active choices to define and redefine meanings. It was in the same lines as the Indian

community which is a fusion and a flux of socio-psychological, socio-temporal, socio-economic and psychocultural communities. The spirit had been to create a setting where multiple universes can converge to let man struggle to achieve his/her own unique integration.

In the decadence of Indian society this organismic quality got lost and the individual got caught with conflicting demands and choices from social setting. In marriage the dissolution of psychological role of a daughter and son became different in the face of retaining the social role. The social role became a continuity and could not be redesigned. Todays young men and women find that the only solution for them is to create their own nuclear families. This choice however leaves them with a whole set of residue feelings of guilt. Those who cannot take this option find their family setting a source of contiguous struggle and in which the seeds of mistrust, stress, and doubts are sown. The unfolding of marriage confronts loneliness, restlessness and gradual erosion of stable processes of rootings.

Struggle to create role space

The first few years of marriage were filled with turmoil, anxiety and contradictory expectations. The bride is chosen by the husband and the family for being

educated, intelligent and capable of being an asset to the husband and his family. Yet any indicators of behaviour displaying her education, intelligence and capabilities brought forthwith accusation, criticism, and censor. What was really required of her was her conformity, submissiveness and acquiescence. Entry into a new home with simultaneous multiple roles created in the new bride anxieties and apprehensions. The roles were hers as part of marrying the man. The social membership was given but its unfolding was dependent upon several factors. The most critical and significant role transactions was between the bride, her mother-in-law and the bride and her husband. The demands from the husband and his mother were often incongruent, inconsistent, and contradictory.

Some husbands sought a modern model and demanded open expression of affection, social skills to relate to his friends and participation in theirsocial life. The mother-in-law sought a coy bride who was invisible but always present at her beck and call. She needed essentially a traditional, ideal "bahu" who would be obedient to her. Caught between the two women lived in anxiety and often in fear. She was torn by two sets of values and her own expectations of herself.

Her introjects from the family and education, both emotive and cognitive were also challenged by the experience of being married. She attempted to define what she as an individual would like her role and space to be. But there was very little option. When she brought her own expectations and joined the husband to take new steps away from the son's role she incurred the wrath of her mother-in-law, and when she attempted to please, and accommodate the mother-in-law she experienced from the husband resentment of being let down. Torn between the two the women ended up in a 'no-role' situation and had to keep her own expectations in abeyance.

Role Taking Processes

At the entry into this new home some women who grew up in traditional homes learnt to dress in westernized ways, cook western food and participate in activities which were taboo in their parental homes. They learn to cook meat, go to clubs, dance with male friends of the husband, and went to races. They often learnt the art of being sophisticated. But the husband who on the one hand demanded all this change was also uncertain at each step. The life was full of doubts and suspiciousness and a source of many conflicts and

arguments. The woman lived with guilt and conflicting demands and went through the torments of her changing values. The woman found it difficult to be all modern and all traditional and in the pendulum swing between the two, she gradually lost touch with her person as well as with the concept of her own role. At some point in time she hoped a child would be born so that there would be some respite from the demands of the multiple roles.

Some other women experienced another pattern of role demands. If the day-to-day interaction with the in-laws did not exist many of the men took on the role of teacher, critique and editor. He, in the traditional social design, wanted to be the decision-maker as he was the breadwinner and provider of the family. He believed and demanded that his authority be unquestioned and considered as absolute and that he be given the central space and significance. The women felt pushed to surrender her autonomy and partnership. She was to pay homage and provide him all affection and adulation. The wife felt that she was slowly but gradually being pushed into a role of a mother to her husband rather than being the 'ardhangini' or 'Sahadharmini'.

Most women stated that being born in modern era left them at a cross-roads. Mother's-in-law demand to play the traditional role could be tolerated but the tragedy was that she was denied the privileges of the traditional role. Similarly one could respond to the demands of the husband to be modern and a companion but he was even less tolerant of the privileges of a modern woman. The demand was that women emit two different kinds of behaviour in two different settings and claim no locus for themselves. Some women went so far as to state that the denial of privileges of either role had reduced their psychological status to that of a 'family kept' and it undignified them tremendously. Actual economic helplessness contributed by their own introjects let them remain in the undignified position. They would have preferred to break, walk out, fight and demand but passive withdrawal, holding oneself in sullenness and suffer the indignity seemed to be the only option they saw for themselves. In their feelings they experienced erosion of well being not only for themselves but their family also.

Consciously or unconsciously, slowly but gradually, the women found themselves being edged into all the role modalities suited to the new family. She realised that she was to be understanding, non-demanding, devoted, and an ideal house wife on the one hand, and modern social, capable woman, managing the environment and contributing to the husband's growth on the other hand. Amidst all this they were also to find time and space to create an acceptable social role in the neighbourhood, be worthy mothers and occassionally join the work force.

Pushed into this kind of dreary life many women recaptured the fantasy of romantic encounter with that one person where they would feel their own personhood. Our explorations with many a women suggests that this pre-threshold fantasy re-appeared and acquired a great potency in many of them. Most of them fulfilled this fantasy vicariously by becoming addicted to the Gothic literature or Mills & Boon Tradition. Many also actively searched for the fulfilment of their fantasy. Their encounter however, left them empty and with a realization that this fantasy could hardly be fulfilled in the real living process. It can only be an episode. To many of them this encounter reinforced their beliefs about women having no personal space in life. It reinforced their

mistrust of all men. It also made them identify themselves with the macro-identity of women i.e. women as a class of martyrs, victims, deprived, and discriminated. Some of them mobilized themselves into being spokesman of women at forums. Others developed a general platitudinal philosophy of withdrawal and settled helplessly in the confinements of role. Still others became bitter and turned into a shrew.

Management of New Roles : The In-Laws

Many women find it difficult to give up the daughter's role and cross the threshold to enter new roles. The home space became a struggle as to whose attitudes, values, beliefs and ways of living were appropriate and valid. The woman loyal to her parents, became adamant. In the initial encounter with the new role, as women began to explore the image and the expectation of the new family they met criticism, some snide remarks and constant evaluation. This process evoked all the internalized fear from the cultural lore of the in-laws and their settings. Women hardly got any time to sit back and manage the ensuing transactions. The feared transactions as a whole blocked them, so the daughters' role got reasserted through entrenchment in the belief that the ways of her parents were right. Many confrontations

started on insignificant issues and often acquired the form of battles of will power, subjugation, domination and surrender. The home became a setting of hostile, sarcasms and barbed comments. Either the new bride or the mother-in-law inflated issues, often out of proportion, and the husband was caught between the two.

The mother-in-law anxious of loosing her son and uncertain about her centrality continued to hold on the ownership of her son and his surrounding space. The young woman found it difficult to make a new response. She found herself being pushed into the role of a 'maid-cum-errand girl' in the family. Attempts to create togetherness and richness of emotional experiences became a mirage. The young couple rarely grasped few moments only to be confronted with the harshness and emptiness of dehydrated living processes. These processes further reinforced the woman to hold on strongly and retain security in the role of being a daughter. She wished and created opportunities as and when possible to go back to her parental family. In her in-law's home she held anxiety, insecurity and turmoil within. This made her very defensive. In her defensiveness she was often tentative. This made her emit behaviour which further

invited critical remarks. It was a vicious circle. The lack of active support from the husband left many a young bride desperate for a respite and a corner to breathe. The whole process often pushed the young bride to increase her attempts to integrate her husband with the parental family. and thus deprive the mother-in-law of a son.

Not all marriages were confronted with the severity, intensity, and the trauma of adjustment. There were a whole set of families where the transition from one family to another and a new role was easy and meaningful. It provided space and people with whom to feel free and comfortable. The new bride was pampered, loved, teased and helped to feel a member of the new home. The mother-in-law, aware of the hopes, dreams and aspirations of the younger generation, provided as much space as possible to the son and the daughter-in-law to grow together. A sort of comaraderie developed between the young bride and her peers in the husband's family. Many young women were encouraged to go in far higher education and to take up activities which were beyond the traditional role and home. The infrastructure for this kind of role taking was provided by the family as a whole and the woman integrated with the family easily and with grace.

There were also a set of young women who did not experience the conflict with the in-laws. Their role, their career aspirations, and their desire to be a professional was started right from the beginning. They defined their goals and priorities. Families, whether nuclear or extended, were a reality and their roles in it a part of living. They had their vision of a role which would require tremendous investment, hard work, and effort from them. They tolerated manyof the dysfunctional processes from the social setting. Self-contained and self-reliant they coped the best way they could and continued to mobilize their effort for their own vision of their roles. Their convictions for themselves and their life were the sustaining force. They displayed courage to accept the consequences of their choice. They had faith and trust in themselves to get up a and walk with many setbacks.

In the family setting after marriage the husband most often got caught between his role as a husband and a son and ended up being a mediator between two women. Unable to confront either of the two new roles he often escaped into work settings to find peace and sanity. His passive stance added to the burden of the young bride.

Our data from many a women suggests that as compared to women's entrenchment in daughter's role the men's role was deeply anchored in being forever a son. The cultural lore at least prepares the women to uprrot herself and shift the anchors. In case of men the cultural lore very often reinforces the commitment of the son. As such, the Indian male is at odds to resolve the psychological as well as social role of a son. In marriage at best he ends up establishing a bio-social roles of a husband. He rarely claims the psychological role.

The man finds himself as helpless to take initiative to create psychological togetherness. Love and affection and all other softer feelings often tend to converge to a simple sexual act or erotic purpose. It does not seem to create a fundamental security and trust between young men and women. The man discovers that his only alternative which is socially approved is to get over engaged with work or other settings of masculine world.

The women become holders of pathos of living a dependent life. Their role is to provide security, stability and a sense of continuity and consistency at home. They are relegated to a symbolic state of being

nothing but a context for man and his mode of life. Women thus become captives with no sense of their own location. Historically, and over time this led to patterns of subjugation and secondary status. It created a promoted myths of women being fragile, helpless, and needing constant protection.

Indian women, for centuries growing up in the social design of Indian agrarian society internalised the processes which they internally detested. They too came to believe that women are to be property, owned and protected by a successive set ofmales -- father, brother, husband and sons. At no point in time do women receive the message that they are human beings who can be autonomous, can make choices for themselves, create a life of their own and work from their own identity. They, at best, could adjust, adapt and accommodate to the setting they are in. They have no privilege to define their situation through their active participation. They are expected to sacrifice, suffer and through patience, create a context for the well-being of the family.

Today's women caught in such a process often see their only escape in physically moving away from the proximity of the husband's family. In the name of work and transfers many young couples opt for geographically

distant locations. Evidence from Indian families settled abroad also reflect a similar pattern. The migration justified is in the name of better opportunities and economic securities, but at a deeper level many of the young men and women accept their inability to deal with the monolithic social processes of the family in the Indian society. Men and women who have migrated abroad to the western nations, carve out roles which appear appropriate and meaningful to them today. The women have learned to take up roles and activity patterns which even their mothers could not dream of ever actualizing. In our experience it is the migrant woman who does not want to return to live in India.

However, physical separation and initiation of new roles activity patterns does not free the menand women from the deeply internalised social attitudes, orientations and the relating to the world and people. In many direct and indirect ways the role expectations of men and women are embedded in traditional role models. These deeper internalizations still continue to bother the marriage partners. The woman and perhaps the man too remains psychologically unfulfilled.

Marriage as an institution and social living gets loaded with expectations of traditional roles. Marriage is no more the marriage between two families where men and women's expectations of each other were secondary to the expectations of the context. Today marriage is an institution to counter loneliness of existence, experience deeper intimacy, freedom of re-designing relatedness with the world outside and freedom to engage in meaningful activities for themselves. The deeper introjections of earlier roles, expectations and altitudes are counter points to these expectations. Marriage as such, becomes an institution where besides current expectations men and women seek to be free from feelings, of deprivation - discrimination and 'dominance - subjugation'. As such, each partner loads the other with expectations of support to seek psychological fulfilment. What psychological satisfaction they seek may not be clear to both. Thus, marriages have become rather fragile.

Inspite of genuine efforts by both, men and women keep regressing to older modes. Men regress to the role of a provider and controller of relatedness outside the home. He does not sustain the new role of sharing the turmoils of the outside world.

Similarly the woman tends to regress back into a home maker and a mother role. She gets pre-occupied with them. She expects the husband to bestow all love and care and also to sustain the initiative to keep marriage a partnership.

Essentially, both men and women remain pre-occupied with the residual feelings as well as the frames of role expectations - one emotive, and one cognitive. They fail to make the most of the autonomous state they have already created. In their behaviour they very often reflect the prisoner's dilemma. Thus, marriage for both men and women get located in restoring and replenishing the endless barrenness and dehydrating experiences of the past and hoping to turn it into an ever-flowing spring or an oasis. This expectation left very little space for men and women to explore and discover each other as human beings and as themselves to design and create a new life space.

Caught between rising aspirations for a new world view and role definitions and the persistence of beliefs of centuries-old traditional agrarian societyo of India created a metaphor of making women into martyrs and the persecuted. Their life space has become overloaded with

the struggle to create a sense of psychological equality, respect and autonomy. The forces of traditionism and modernism have made their internal and external life a battle ground. Instead of any constructive outcome the struggle has acquired an either-or polarisation. Women's lib and male chauvinism their slogans syntex and arguments have raged through their life space. While the slow fire of discrimination, deprivation andd denial have burnt inside the women, their external life has been characterised by helplessness and resentment.

The attempt of women to focus their issues on the social and interactional level has often led to a dysfunctional confrontation with society, - has generated fear. What women begin with heroic efforts ends up in denying themselves their legitimate space. They ignore their real resources and potential and get entrenched into demanding from the society and their male counterparts bestowal of equality and affirmation of their competence, indispensibility and functional abilities. Male counterparts get hooked into their own needs of giving patronage, inadequate and insufficient resources and marginal support. It leaves women feeling marginal and secondary. They experience the inclusion as half hearted.

The current social industrial and urban realities have further compounded the struggle of Indian women. In the traditional agrarian society women lived and worked in groups. Their defined role had well designed infrastructures wherethey could experience some kind of personhood in their own sex groups. Through rituals and festivals and similar other institutions women had space to share, express and discharge their psychological stress. These infrastructures did not allow the accumulation of 'frustration - and aggression'. Thus, life though still without a fundamental location and autonomy had sufficient support for well being of the role. Today, women live alone and work in mixed heterogenous groups.

All infrastructures for role sustainence have become eroded or destroyed. No new institutions and infrastructures have been built. The persistent social stereotype about women deny them any setting or space to experience their own personhood. In our experience those few women who tried to create infrastructures or who acted to experience their personhood found themselves caught in controlling, sexually exploitive or degrading relationships. In the experience of many women the psychodrama of male-female entanglement got replayed repetitively.

Besides, the universe of identities of the cultural lore also gets replayed by the Indian female child. Perhaps the role models of the cultural lore are internalised as deeply as the universe of identities are introjected. The three significant and persistent models through mythology to history are that of a virtuous woman who suffers, virtuous and assertive woman who fights and the one who escapes into religion.

Seeta, the mythical heroine is the arche type of the virtuous women who suffers. A series of such role figures culminating in Padmini Rani of Chittor symbolises loyalty to the role of being an ideal, chaste woman. They lived to follow the footsteps of the husband. In times of crisis when they had to act for themselves they had the choices of sacrificing their dignity of choose death. In this they were glorified not for the choice of personhood but for the chastity of the role ideal. Evidence that such a role model is internalized by many women today is reflected in many incidents in society. Self emolution, being burnt by aggressors, and other kinds of aggression within the bounds of the family are not uncommon. Caught in the rigid role expectations, the will of husband and the family, denied opportunity

to be themselves, pressurised into conformity the women either suffer insult, indignity, oppression and exploitation or choose the patho of self-destruction. Alternative is to give in turn into an ideal mother and wife.

Kali in the myths, Kannagi in Literature and Rani of Jhansi in history depict the role model of virtuous, and in the final crisis an assertive and aggressive model of virtuous woman. They fought the existing belief about women being fragile and helpless. They took up arms against an unjust system bent on victimization of the weak and the helpless. "They fought, succeeded or died fighting". This model is internalized by many women in India. There are many instances where an individual woman has taken this stance and started to function constructively in their own life space. They create nucleus of voluntary work around themselves and establish an ethos for dignity, justice and well being for woman. The strategy of such women is that after a time the society comes around to pick them up and provides them resources. Very soon these organizations become captives of elite groups and defeat the purpose for which they were set up. No substantive changes take place. The role holders become patrons and the victims continue to remain victims. The social processes continue to be

perpetuated. These organizations get lost in the wilderness of mammoth and monolithic traditions. The contribution of many such women remain an insignificant memory of their heroic struggle for the downtrodden. Alternatively, these women create a viable space in their community and become the resident counsellors for women in stress. They are trouble shooters and often intervene supportively in the struggle of neighbourhood women. The third model of virtuous women escaping into religion is by far the most common. In mythology there is no model of this. From Sant Sukhobai to Meera, and in todays times Anandmai Ma, and 'Mother' are significant models.

This role model is internalized by many women in India. Caught in the social familial milieu, disenchanted and disillusioned with people, desperate to hold onto some sanity and survival these women turn to religion and God. Religion becomes their anchor to counter the stress of the role. They have experienced barrenness of emotions and lack of support for their pursuits. The shackles of traditional ideals clasp them in their mighty grips. Indian traditional agrarian society allows suspending the role and dropping out of the system in the name of religion and spiritual

salvation. Being the holders of virtue in the mind of the society women in India found this as the best solace to hold onto . In our experiences women from urban as well as rural settings resort to this option. Gathering around "gurus", "kathas, pravachans and religious cults is a frequent engagement for women.

In terms of the three role models from history women attempt to either confront, react or sidestep the system without directly confronting it or modifying it. All models chose death - either physical or psychological. These women became the martyrs who with all good intentions and personal struggle perpetuate the processes of dehumanization of women in the system.

Within the frames of identity and role models women attempt to transcend the social milieu but fail to create real space for themselves in the social system. They attempt to define new roles but fail to trigger new processes within the system. In the ultimate analysis they are captives the social traditions and role prescriptions.

Neither the identities of the princesses, nor the role models seem to fulfill the basic need of a women to seek, find and sustain that one relationship where she can be with all her potentials without being the

subject of aggression, exploitation, criticism, condemnation and such other experiences. In living the universe of their identities women have to take the burden of proving themselves and yet at the end they have to be owned up and bestowed with social grace. In the final process of being owned up and bestowal of grace they are once again squarely put into the role.

Indian cultural lore provides many other social, historical, and religious role models. Role models like "Durga", "Kali", "Chandi", are but a few examples. They act once in their life time for a social cause. They act upon the unjust individuals and are forever defied and glorified. However, their acts of positive assertion do not get institutionalized as a living reality for women. History has many women performing heroic deeds in times of crisis. There is "Kaikaiye", for example, who in the war put her finger in the crack of the chariot of King "Dasharatha" and contributed to the winning of the war. But all these are transient acts enacted in times of crisis and once performed the women return to the social roles.

In the face of these models women find it difficult to actualise their potentials and achieve an integration. In process of experimentation they get confronted with the inevitabilities of these models. The struggle allows them to achieve many insights into the areas of self whose exploration and actualization has been prohibited or heavily censored. The models and identity frames are themselves so compulsive that women rarely achieve the ideal in which these frames and models are anchored. 'Fall' is an inevitable event. There is always scope for an accusing finger. "Sita" who is held as the ideal of them all falls short in one washerman's eyes and the king, her husband, exiles her from the kingdom. The cultural lore provides no role model or role processes whereby a woman can integrate her processes of "being" and "becoming" to generate a socio-psychological identity for herself in the system.

Independent of these models but within the frames of identity there are women like Gargi and Lopa Mudra in myths and in recent times literary figures have taken recourse to an intellectual life. Lopa Mudra became a casteaway from the group. Gargi and the rest retained their role boundaries. They became inspirations

of role integration as well as acquiring their own meaning. However, they failed to modify the processes of the system.

Today's Indian women are caught in fragmented and narrow roles. Opportunities of education, to discover their intelligence and abilities, encouragement to learn the arts - music, dance, painting and to actively participate in the world of work alongside their male counterparts opens a whole new horizon for them. However, the social and psychological stigma attached to such an active role taking leaves women vulnerable as persons.

Our experience is that most of these women who finally succeed get surrounded and buffetted by a whole set of attributions of courtesans. Their success if attributed to their linking up with some male. They are rarely given credit for achieving what they achieve with personal sense of integrity and dignity. The social system does not seem to have objectives or willingness to help women acquire a womanhood and their personhood. A majority of women get entrenched in the dilemmas of woman-person encounters. Each attempt to get out sucks them deeper into confronting the inter-

personal relationships of their social and work poles. With each successive attempt they are sucked further into the vicious grasp of double-binds of role processes of social and work organizations.

Women are at a cross-road. The question is whether there are any alternatives for women to define new locus for themselves. Are there any models available in society to facilitate such a new location? The answer to the first question is "yes" but to the second question the answer is "no". In today's timesone charismatic woman cannot generate an ideal model which other woman can follow. This kind of a leader-follower model would only repeat the historical process of turning others into echoes and shadows of a giant model. Women will only turn out pale replicas of others. The only alternative seems to be that women become "heroines" in themselves to initiate a search to discover their own identity.

Some women who have attempted to integrate in themselves their woman-person role in both social and work settings have had the courage to choose a path which has not been travelled before. In each critical moment they have made choices and not compromises. They have accepted the intended and unintended consequences of their choices without bitterness.

These women have had the courage to come to a cross-road. Like heroes of the past in search of their existential identity, these women have time and again asked this question to the old witch spinning a wheel at the cross-road - which road do I take?

The witch gives this answer. "One is a road to the right. This road will take six months and a day. It is a widely travelled road. It has familiar landmarks. It has many travellers who could be companions. There are shelters for rest and food along the way. It is an easy road and a road of little effort. A known and familiar road which has existed for ages. It has a history and a tradition. The other road is the road to the left. It is a road with many dangers. It is filled with unknown paths, barriers, turbulent rivers, deserts and high mountains. Very few people dare enter that way. There is no road. You will have to create and make a path. There are no landmarks and no shelter. The road takes a year or more and is a lonely road. And you may not come out alive. 'CHOOSE'.

Indian women at this juncture get caught with the choice of the familiar road with the landmarks of Sati, 'Sati', 'Seeta' and 'Savitri'. They get caught in the iron grasp of the social system which demands a price

of surrender of their existential beings to acquire a role-based security. However, some women have opted for the road to the left to create a landmark for themselves. They have had the courage and convictions to choose the road to adventure, to discover the vissicitudes of their existence and grapple to discover an integrated identity which includes the multiple facets of social and work roles. They have claimed their existential and psychological identity beyond the social roles. Only then fulfilment and wider horizons have been experienced, acted upon and actualised.