

## **Social, Cultural and Religious Barriers of Women: How it affects their progress in India**

**Amal Krishna Saha**

*Associate Professor,  
Pailan College of Management and Technology,  
Bengal Pailan Park,  
Kolkata—700104, West Bengal.  
amal.saha.07@gmail.com*

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In this study, an attempt was made to investigate the attitudes of young women towards social norms, cultural tradition and religious doctrine which create discrimination against them in the family, working place and society at large. The research findings suggest that women in Indian society are still considered as commodities and they are abused at all sphere of life. The birth of a girl child is still considered as a source of misery whereas the birth of a son(s) is considered as a blessing. This century old attitudes did not change much even to-day. Girls compromise her career in favour of her brother when there is a financial constraint in the family. It reflects the social norms and inferior position of a girl in the family. The finding also reveals that women should take care of the family, especially the elder ones. Society is changing with time and nuclear family is becoming the norm. In nuclear family, parents do not discriminate boys and girls as long as they are blessed with a child. Girls are now entitled to get equal share of father's property which was not a social norm even few years before.*

**Key Words:** *culture; discrimination; economic independence; education; nuclear family*

### **Introduction:**

The life of Indian women is guided by social norms, cultural values and religious doctrine. Women have been trying to break these barriers consciously and sometimes unconsciously. One of the factor which plays significant role not to fight against these barriers is their economic dependence. Women are economically dependent on their father, husband and son in different phases of

their life, if they are not employed. At the present time, numbers of women are coming in the job market after their college and university degree. As a result, economic dependency on husband and son are reducing in the society especially among the middle class family.

Nowadays, to lead a comfortable life and to improve quality of life, both partners

of middle class families have to work. Majority of people in India works in private sectors, where there is no job security and any social benefits for them. If two partners work, there will be less insecurity in life. During marriage, whether arranged or love marriage, bride groom and his family give a lot of stress on working girls with few exceptions. Young generation, both boys and girls believe that both spouses should have a job to run the family smoothly (Saha & Dey, 2014).

Social, cultural and religious barriers change with time. In Hindu religion, some remarkable changes have been taken place such as prohibition of 'Sati', where a widow immolates herself on her husband's funeral pyre. This inhuman religious practice was banned on December 4, 1829 (Gilmartin, 1997). Other changes, like introduction of widow marriage, encourage of girl's education and their hereditary right etc were introduced to uplift the condition of women in the society. During the British rule up to the formation of Indian Republic in 1947, the number of literate women among the female population was between two percent to seven percent and it increased to 15.35 percent in 1961 and 64.63 percent by the year 2011 (Government of India, 2017).

From the inception of Indian independence, the Constitution of India provided equal rights to men and women. Due to illiteracy and oppressive social and cultural norms, women are generally unaware of their rights and privileges. They do not represent the country according to their proportion of

total population. To bring 33 percent women in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, Women Reservation bill was proposed in 2008. The Rajya Sabha passed the bill in 2010 but it was lapsed in Lok Sabha in 2014. It indicates that in patriarchal society, Members of Lok Sabha did not want to share their power with his counterpart.

After 2005, girls are entitled to get equal share of her father's property which is not the social norms of Indian society. During daughter's marriage, father used to give some dowry in the form of gold, furniture, car and cash. But dowry related death in the country is alarming. Thousands of married women commit suicide each year by burning or hanging themselves when the demand for dowry become too much for their parents to meet. The system of dowry in the Indian society indicates inferior position of daughter in the family.

Religion in India is not just an institution of past and it plays a very powerful role in society even today to shape the social and cultural norms of people. The culture of Hinduism drew its inspiration from Sanskrit works on religion, philosophy, ritual, law and science and particularly the two epics, the Mahabharata and Ramayana. The spirits of these books became irresistible creative force which has shaped the collective culture of the Indian people. But the culture of Hinduism has greatly discriminated the role of male and female in the society. The norms assigned to women by male religious authority made them marginalized in the society. In Sabarimala temple, where

Supreme Court had recently ordered to open the door for women devotees of all ages, but the entry of women between the age of 10 and 50 was barred by a group of people and priest of the temple (Economic Times, 2018). It again proves that even in 21st century women are not treated as per with the men. Women may be treated differently or abused in different phases of their life such as parental phase (sex selective abortion), infancy (differential treatment for girl child, female infanticide etc), adolescence (rape, marital rape, trafficking, sexual abuse in working place), reproductive age (dowry abuse & murders, psychological abuse etc.), and old age (abuse & neglect). The abuses of women are well spread all over the world and it is revealing through #Me Too movement. Abuse of women is a direct corollary of inferior position of women in the society. As long as men made social, cultural and religious barriers will remain in the society, women would remain in inferior position and would not be able to breathe freely.

### **Review of Literature:**

The present population of India is over 1.21 billion (census, 2011). Nearly half of this population is women. They are not treated equally as per men in all sphere of life. They are captive by men made rules in the name of religion and culture and these oppressions have been going on since Vedic age. Though, Mahabharata and Ramayana are considered as epics, but its influence as religious books in the mind of Indian people is remarkable.

If we look at the civilization of Vedic age in Mahabharata without religious fervour, we find very little freedom of women during that period of time. They were treated as commodities (Apeta, 1996b). Durapadi, one of the colourful characters in the Mahabharata was a daughter of king Durapada. She was forced to marry five Pandava brothers which was not a norm during that time. Polygamy was acceptable norms in the society but not polyandry (Apeta, 1996a). She was also used as a stake during chess playing by Judishter, one of her husband and king of Pandava. There are some other incidents in the Vedic literature where wife was used at the will of husband or elders to get son(s) by *Niyoga* practice. *Niyoga* practice permits a childless widow 'to cohabit with her brother in-law until the birth of a son' (Apeta, 1996a). Kunti and Madri, wives of impotent Pandu were forced to cohabit with some accomplished men during that time to have sons. Kunti and Madri had three and two sons respectively by this *Niyoga* practice. They are the well known Pandava in Mahavarata. In the same family father of Pandava (Pandu) and Kaurava (Dhritarashtra) were the sons of widow Ambalika and Ambika. They were also forced to accept *Niyoga* practice. Being a daughter and wife of noble kings, these women could not go against the social, cultural and religious norms of the society. It reveals the position of women in the society at large. Ancient history was remarkably silent about the condition of general people especially about women, their progress and sufferings. Even if it was mentioned,

it was found just a lip service. Very few women came into lime light in Indian history, but that numbers are not statistically significant. If we go through the history of subsequent periods, most of the kings/rulers had more than one wife. They used to have 'harem' where numbers of young girls were kept for their enjoyment. When a man has more than one wife and number of other girls in harem, it is a humiliation of first wife. At the present time, businessman, politician and man with power and position are exploiting women in different fields of working situations. Max Clifford, U.K's celebrity publicist guru was found guilty, because he sexually assaulted seven girls aged 14 to 19 between 1966 and 1984 (Millard, 2014). In the judgement, it was mentioned that he used his power and celebrity contracts to prey on girls. Very recently, a women's rights campaigner in London was abused by a Lord Anthony Lester promising to make her a Baroness in the House of Lords (Times of India, 2018). A report from Department of justice in America revealed that approximately 1, 27,000 women are raped each year. Another 6,646,000 are the victims of other sexual crime (Department of Justice, 2010). Harvey Weinstein, a Oskar winner film producer and executive of America abused more than eighty women over a period of at least 30 years (Kantor & Twohy, 2017) giving hope of casting them in his film. Indian film industry is not an exception. Here, women are also sexually exploited (Das, 2018). Recently, reports of sexual abuse are also coming from Business arena, sports,

academic area and religious places from all over the world. The Swedish Academy, which has been awarding the Nobel literature prize since 1901, postponed prize-giving ceremony in 2018 due to sexual misconduct and harassment of number of women by the husband of an influential Academy member (Times of India, 2018).

In political scenario, a Union Minister of India was accused of sexual harassment by more than 20 women and was forced to resign very recently as India's #Me-too movement (Safi, 2018). If we look around us in the present time, the position of women in our society has not been changed remarkably. In strict sense, even today a woman is protected in her childhood by her parents, after marriage by her husband and in old age by her son /daughter especially those who are economically dependent for their survival.

Preference of son is still very much prevailed in our society. Sometimes a prospective mother is forced to go for abortion, if it is detected as a girl by ultrasound sonography, though sex detection in India is prohibited by law. The main responsibility of a woman lies to give birth to a son(s) (Apeta, 1996b). When a child is born and brought up in these social, cultural and religious norms, he/she will be influenced throughout his/her life by these norms. The discrimination against women has psychological consequences which may cause anxiety, depression, trauma, sleep disorders, nightmare and suicidal tendency (Briere & Jordal, 2004).

In India, crime against women has increased steadily since 2010. A total of 3, 37, 922 case of crime against women were reported in 2014 compared to 2, 13, 585 in the year 2010, recording an increase of 58.21 percent. More specifically, rape, kidnapping and abduction and cruelty by husband and relatives have increased by 65.68 percent, 92.35 percent and 30.66 percent respectively (National Crime Records Bureau, 2014).

### **Objectives of the Study:**

Every day, we come across the news through newspaper and electronic media that women are being abused all over India. Young girls are constantly warned by their parents and family members against this unsocial behaviour. As a married woman, she has to adopt the culture of spouse's family. She also listens 'it is not our family culture' from her mother in law and family members. The spouse family are always concerned that she should not violate the social norms and religious traditions of the family. Nowadays, society is going to a sea change. Working culture of bride is taking a firm root in the society due to economic reason and the desire of bride to be economically independent. Sometimes very conservative or well-to-do family forbid bride to work especially after a child birth. But, generally bride does not want to give up her economic independence considering unknown future of married life. In this context, the present study wants to investigate:

- (i). What are the social, cultural and religious barriers women face in their life in Indian society

- (ii). Relationships, if any, between few selective bio-graphical variables and the factors derived from the Factor analysis

- (iii). The reliability and consistency of the scale

### **Methodology:**

The data was collected from graduate and post-graduate girls' students in an engineering and management college in West Bengal. Students were chosen randomly from engineering, management and bachelor of education courses. Young women faculty members were also chosen from engineering, management and bachelor of education department. The questionnaire was designed with five point Likert scale with anchors using strongly agree, fairly agree, do not know, fairly disagree and strongly disagree. The questionnaire had two parts. The first part contained information about socio-demographic variables of the respondents. The second part contained 20 questions regarding social, cultural and religious constrained face by women in their life. The sample consisted of 150 women. The statistical package SPSS (version 17) was used to analyse the data. Factor analysis was carried out to find the factors / components that are responsible to create barriers in their life. The form of factor analysis used was principle component analysis with Varimax rotation. To justify the factor analysis, Kiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test for sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used. A series of analysis of variance (ANOVA) were conducted to find out the relationship between the

bio-graphical variables and the components derived out from the factor analysis.

Cronbach alpha was used to measure the internal consistency of a multiple scale. The coefficient of Cronbach alpha varies from 0 to 1, and the value of 0.70 to 0.80 implies good reliability between the various items of a multiple item scale. The generally agreed upon lower limit for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70, although it may decrease to 0.60 in exploratory research (Robinson, Shaver & Wrightsman, 1991). In present research, the value of Cronbach alpha is 0.792 which justify the consistency of the scale.

### **Socio-demographic variables of the Respondents:**

The Socio-demographic variables of the respondents are presented in table-1. Among the respondents, around 79 percent were female students and 21 percent were young faculty members. Around 43 percent of the respondents were below the age of 20 years, 36 percent was between the age group of 20 to 25 years. Around 8 percent, 7 percent and 6 percent were the age group of 25 to 30, 30 to 35 and above 35 years of age respectively.

**Table-1: Socio-demographic variables of the Respondents**

Characteristics	Sample	Frequency	Percentage
Participants	Student	123	79.35
	Academician	32	20.65
Age	< 20	66	42.58
	20-25	56	36.12
	25-30	13	8.39
	30-35	11	7.10
	>35	9	5.81
Family Income	< Rs. 25000.0	50	32.26
	25000.0-35000.0	38	24.52
	35000.0-45000.0	32	20.64
	> 45000.0	35	22.58
Residence	Urban	112	72.26
	Rural	43	27.74

Around 32 percent of the participants' family incomes were below Rs. 25,000.0, while around 25 percent, 21 percent and 23 percent participants' family incomes were Rs. 25,000.0 to 35,000.0, Rs. 35,000.0 to 45,000.0 and over Rs. 45,000.0 respectively. Majority of the respondents (72 percent) live in urban areas whereas only around 28 percent live in rural areas.

### **Factor Analysis: Results and Discussion:**

To find out the factors which create social, cultural and religious barriers for women in Indian society, factor analysis was conducted. Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant (Chi-square = 820.72,  $p < 0.00$ ) and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was 0.710 which

justify the factor analysis (Malhotra, 2007). Factor analysis produced eight components from 20 variables, which are capable of explaining the observed variance. The Eigen values of all the components, the variance explained by each component and the cumulative variance were calculated and shown in Table-2. To decide how many components

to retain, several procedures have been suggested such as use of Eigen values, Scree plot and Percentage of variance (Malhotra, 2007). The Eigen value approach suggests that component with Eigen value greater than one should be retained. The present research suggests that only eight components have Eigen values greater than one.

**Table-2: Social, Cultural & Religious Barriers of Women  
(Rotated Component Matrix)**

Description of Variables	Components							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Parents do not discriminate boys and girls in the family						0.806		
2. During children higher education, if there is any financial constraint in the family, girl compromises her career in favour of her brother								0.807
3. Do you agree on the statement 'girls should be protected by her father in their childhood, after marriage by her husband and in old age by her son'?				0.520				
4. In Indian society women are still considered as commodities		0.781						
5. After 2005, girls are entitled to get equal share of her father's property, but it is not well practiced in the society							0.649	
6. Indian organizations are not ready yet to recruit women at par with men							0.572	
7. Women are abused in our society at all sphere of life		0.736						

8. As long as dowry is perceived in the society, women won't be treated properly in spouse family			0.532					
9. Family members and especially husband decides when and how many children she should have. She does not have any control over her own fertility	0.523							
10. Indian society demands absolute submission of wife to husband					0.580			
11. Indian society expects women should take care of the family, especially the elder ones					0.860			
12. Do you agree on the statement 'a daughter is a source of misery and a son alone can be the saviour of the family' (Aitereya Brahmana)				0.854				
13. Women empowerment is an illusion in patriarchal/ male dominated society				0.588				
14. Women are exploited in the name of religion and culture in our society			0.653					
15. Even in nuclear family, husband rarely helps wife in household activities due to social norms	0.708							
16. Social, cultural and religious barrier works hand in hand against Indian women			0.728					
17. Women empowerment is long way to go, until women gets education and economic independent						0.572		



18. Nowadays working women do not compromise their career with child bearing and rearing responsibilities						0.522		
19. Women are generally bypassed in household decision making process	0.611							
20. The keen desire for male progeny (child) reflects comparatively inferior position of female child in the family	0.582							
Eigen Values	4.527	1.872	1.581	1.507	1.443	1.292	1.154	1.059
% Variance	19.683	8.138	6.874	6.550	6.272	5.616	5.019	4.602
Cumulative variance %	19.68	27.82	34.70	41.25	45.52	53.13	58.15	62.75

Note: Extraction method: Principle Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Component 1: Even in nuclear family, husband rarely helps wife in household activities due to social norms

Component 2: In Indian society women are still considered as commodities & they are abused at all sphere of life

Component 3: Social, cultural and religious barriers work hand in hand against Indian women

Component 4: A daughter is a source of misery and a son alone can be the saviour of the family

Component 5: Indian society expects women should take care of the family, especially the elder ones

Component 6: Parents do not discriminate boys and girls in the family

Component 7: Girls are entitled to get equal share of father's property, but it is not well practiced in the society

Component 8: During children higher education, if there is any financial constraint in the family, girl compromises her career in favour of her brother

The first component accounts for 19.683 percent of variance, while second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth components account for 8.138, 6.874, 6.550, 6.272, 5.616, 5.019 and 4.602 percent of variance respectively. They together contribute 62.75 percent of total variance. The remaining other components are not statistically significant.

In the present study, variables nine, 15, 19 and 20 co-relate and combine with component one after rotation, because of their common nature. This component may be labelled as 'even in nuclear family, husband rarely helps wife in household activities due to social norms'. In Indian society boys are generally treated as 'protected child'. Parents rarely ask them to do any house

hold work. On the contrary, girls are trained in household activities. After marriage, they will move out from parent's house and start living with her husband in their house. She has to take care and manage the household activities of that house. If the couple live by their own only, she has to take more burdens of household activities. So, the parents train their beloved daughter some house hold activities. She may get some help from her husband, if he is considerate and be able to break the century old tradition.

Component two is associated with variables four and seven and may be named as 'in Indian society, women are still considered as commodities and they are abused at all sphere of life'. Indian women have been walked a long way since Vedic age to overcome some of their inferior position in the family and society. They have attained some degree of freedom with the help of the country's Constitution and rules and regulations promulgated by the court of justice time to time. But, still they shall have to go a long way to overcome all the barriers they face in their life. As long as women are economically dependent on her father, husband and son in different phases of their life, they would not enjoy their life as per men. Education of women creates job opportunities for them which will subsequently give them economic independence. Economic independence will provide them freedom to control fundamental requirements for life i.e. food, clothing and shelters. These will also provide them strong footing to take decision

regarding marriage, career, fertility and family planning.

Component three is related with variables eight, 14 and 16 and may be named as 'social, cultural and religious barriers work hand in hand against Indian women'. Religion plays a very significant role in one's life. Culture and social norms mainly develop on the basis of religious doctrine. In Vedic age, women neither owned themselves nor inherited father's property (Apte, 1996c). As a result of this domination, century after century in Indian society, women were dependent on their father, husband and son in different phase of their life. To abolish this discrimination, Hindu succession Act, 1957 was amendment in 2005 and now a daughter is equally legit mate heir to her father's property as much as that of a son. Indian parliament took nearly 60 years after independence to bring this change. It indicates that male dominated parliament were very much reluctant to bring this change.

Component four is related with variables three, 12 and 13 and may be labelled as 'a daughter is a source of misery and a son alone can be the saviour of the family'. The desire for offspring especially for male offspring is the chief aim of marriage in Indian society. It is not only practiced now but it was practiced even in Vedic age. They prayed constantly for sons along with cattle and land but there was no desire for daughters. The Atharvaveda also deplores the birth of daughters (Apte, 1996b). As India does not provide its citizen with social security in their old age, parents depend

on their children especially on their son for economic support. The son is considered as bread winner. On the contrary, the daughter has to move out from parent's house after her marriage. Daughter may desire to take care of her parents, but it depends on the attitudes of husband and his family (Saha & Dey, 2013)

Component five is associated with variables 10 and 11 and may be labelled as 'Indian society expects women should take care of the family, especially the elder ones'. Women are generally considered as primary care giver in the family. This is a very stereotype character of women which has evolved through generation after generation. Century old extended family is becoming nuclear day by day due to economic reason and to avoid misunderstanding and conflict among the family members. Everybody desires to live in peace. Some families do not prefer to have a bride who is employed. The conservative family even ask working bride to leave the job and take care of the family. Women working for money go against their family value. Very recently a working woman was killed disobeying the family tradition and values in Alwar, Rajasthan (Sharma, 2018).

Component six is related with variables one, 17 and 18 and may be named as 'parents do not discriminate boys and girls in the family'. In nuclear family era, modern educated middle class families prefer to have one child. They welcome any sex of child. They want to provide good education and quality of life to their beloved child. Scientific education

brings social and cultural change in the society. Religion does not influence their life, the way it did on their parents. The responsibility of child bearing and rearing creates a big challenge to a young couple, if they live by their own. Work life pressure creates big challenge to have more children. They do not discriminate boys and girls just like before as long as they are blessed with a child.

Component seven is associated with variables five and six and may be named as 'girls are entitled to get equal share of father's property, but it is not well practiced in the society'. Historically Indian women did not enjoy the legal right to inherit parent's property before the year of 2005. During marriage, parents used to give some dowry in the form of gold, cash and kinds to make her settle in spouse family. But after 2005, girls are entitled to inherit parent's property which provides her some degree of economic independence and decision making rights on her own affairs. But society does not look at it graciously.

Component eight is related with the variables two only and it may be named as 'girl compromise her career in favour of her brother, if there is any financial constraint in the family during their education'. This is an unwritten social norm in India. Though, parents try their level best not to discriminate boys and girls in the family, but sometimes their behaviour towards them may be biased and it generally happens when there is financial constraint in the family. When a baby is born and brought up in certain social, cultural and religious

environment, his/her thinking and behaviour is influenced by these social variables. The girl observes her surroundings and learns what is expected from her.

### **Influence of Age, Income and residential area of respondents on Components: ANOVA Analysis:**

A series of analysis of variance (one-way ANOVAs) were conducted to find out the relationship between some selective

socio-demographic variables and the components derived out from the factor analysis. Socio-demographic variables such as age, incomes of the family and residential area of the respondents were considered in the analysis. Demographic variables were considered as independent variables and components derived from factor analysis were treated as dependent variables. Only significant values are presented in the Table-3.

**Table-3: Relationship between socio-demographic variables and the components derived from Factor analysis (ANOVA analysis)**

Components 1 vs. Age; Income & Residence					
Age	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	218.215	4	54.554	4.545	0.002**
Within Groups	1800.469	150	12.003		
Total	2018.684	154			
Income	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	131.138	3	43.713	3.497	0.017*
Within Groups	1887.546	151	12.500		
Total	2018.684	154			
Residence	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	125.889	1	125.889	10.176	0.002**
Within Groups	1892.795	153	12.371		
Total	2018.684	154			
Component- 2 vs. Age; Income & Residence					
Age	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	74.931	4	18.733	3.220	0.014**
Within Groups	872.643	150	5.818		
Total	947.574	154			
Income	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance

Between Groups	93.587	3	31.196	5.516	0.001**
Within Groups	853.987	151	5.656		
Total	947.574	154			
Residence	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	63.005	1	63.005	10.898	0.001**
Within Groups	884.569	153	5.781		
Total	947.574	154			
Component- 3 vs. Age					
Between Groups	93.022	4	23.256	4.219	0.003**
Within Groups	826.720	150	5.511		
Total	919.742	154			
Components- 4 vs. Age; Income & Residence					
Age	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	201.513	4	50.374	5.622	0.000**
Within Groups	134.061	150	8.960		
Total	1545.574	154			
Income	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	127.298	3	42.433	4.518	0.005**
Within Groups	1418.276	151	9.393		
Total	1545.574	154			
Residence	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	71.839	1	71.839	7.458	0.007**
Within Groups	1473.735	153	9.632		
Total	1545.574	154			
Components- 5 vs. Age & Income					
Age	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	92.336	4	23.084	5.056	0.001**
Within Groups	684.799	150	4.565		
Total	777.135	154			
Income	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F-Vale	Significance
Between Groups	38.392	3	12.797	2.616	0.053*
Within Groups	738.744	151	4.892		
Total	777.135	154			

Components- 6 vs. Age					
Between Groups	107.298	4	26.824	3.117	0.017*
Within Groups	1290.741	150	8.605		
Total	1398.039	154			
Components 8 vs. Residence					
Between Groups	10.212	1	10.212	5.076	0.026*
Within Groups	307.827	153	2.012		
Total	318.039	154			

\*Significant at 0.05 level & \*\* Significant at 0.01 level

One way ANOVA analysis allows us to test whether several means are equal across one variable and this is done by analysing the variance. The respondents differ in their opinion regarding component one (even in nuclear family, husband rarely helps wife in household activities due to social norms), component two (in Indian society, women are still considered as commodities and they are abused at all sphere of life) and component four (a daughter is a source of misery and a son alone can be the saviour of the family). The respondents with their different age group differ in their opinion regarding component three (social, cultural and religious barriers works hand in hand against Indian women) and component six (parents do not discriminate boys and girls in the family). The respondents with their different age and family income differ in their opinion regarding component five (Indian society expects women should take care of the family, especially the elder ones). The participants of the study with their different residential area differ in their opinion regarding component eight (girl compromise her career in favour of her brother, if there is any financial

constraint in the family during their education).

All the participants in the study regardless of their age, income and residential area did not differ in their opinion regarding component seven i. e. 'girls are entitled to get equal share of father's property, but it is not well practiced in the society'.

### Conclusion:

Women, all over the world, especially in India are facing discrimination in the family, society as well as in the working places. Discrimination comes from social norms, culture and religious doctrine. Religion plays significant role to shape the social norms and cultural behaviour. Women are fighting consciously and unconsciously to overcome these barriers created by religious leaders and rulers of a country in the name of religion and protection of women. Women in Indian society are still considered as commodities and they are abused at all sphere of their life. The birth of a girl child consider as a source of misery whereas the birth of a son consider as a blessing. The main responsibility of a woman is to give birth to a son and takes care of the family

members, especially the elder ones. In nuclear family era, parents do not discriminate boys and girls in the family as long as they are blessed with a child. But, when there is a financial constraint in the family during their education, girl compromises her career in favour of her brother. It reflects the social norms and inferior position of a girl in the family. In the present time, significant numbers of women are employed in different fields of work. They face work-life balance problems in their life. They work hard to manage the household activities along with their employment activities. Even in nuclear family, spouse hardly helps wife in household activities due to social norms. Inferior position of women in the society encourages their counterpart to exploit them in the name of social norms, culture and religion.

Scientific education and logical thinking of both men and women may help to remove man-made social, cultural and religious barriers from the family, society and country at large. Education of women helps her to get a job which will bring her economic independence. Economic independence of women will help her to overcome the century old social and cultural norms from the society.

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