



BLOCK 2
GENDER AND FAMILY

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BLOCK 2 GENDER AND FAMILY

Introduction

This Block aims to develop your understanding with regards to the institution of family and how its related processes impact life of each individual in a society in different ways. We have already read in Block 1 that gender intersects with both public and private spaces. Block 2 aims to look into the gender issues in private spheres like family, marriage and motherhood.

Unit 5 of this Block is titled “Family and Marriage” discusses family and marriage from gender perspectives. Family is considered as the basic unit and an egalitarian social structure of a society. Here, we discuss how patriarchal values are reinforced in the family that makes women settle for a subordinate position. We would also look into the institution of family from feminists’ perspective. Queer critique of family is also appended. Family is considered as safe heaven for girls and women. But, data from National Crime Records Bureau on domestic violence shows that the family cannot be considered as safe and protected space for women.

Like family, Marriage, a social institution, is traditionally considered as sacred and life long relationship between an adult male and a female in our society. Mainstream sociological research has contributed much to the institution of marriage. But, Feminists have critiqued mainstream research on marriage and have contributed in the form of creating new understanding of the social institution. The Unit discusses feminists critique on marriage, violence in marriage life and the issue of divorce.

Unit 6 in this Block is on “Motherhood”. It starts with explaining gender roles related to motherhood and fatherhood. Culture and patriarchy play important role in construction of motherhood. Further, the Unit explains the relationship between motherhood and class, caste structures in rural and urban India. Learners may have heard about the issue of surrogacy and reproductive rights of women in India. There are various factors that contribute to the migration of population from rural to urban areas. The issue of migration and motherhood is also explained from a feminist perspective. Finally the Unit discusses the challenges and necessary policy interventions.

Thus, after reading this Block you will be able to critique the institutions of family and marriage, and understand motherhood in a new light.

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UNIT 5 FAMILY AND MARRIAGE

Structure

- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Objectives
- 5.3 Nature and Functions of the family
- 5.4 Feminist Perspectives
- 5.5 Feminist Studies on Family
- 5.6 Domestic Violence: Undermining the Notion of Family as a Safe Heaven
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5.1 INTRODUCTION

Family and Marriage are the basic units of the society. Family is also an institution that is considered as the seat of nurturing, care and socialization of an individual. It is also supposed to be an institution that protects a person from the threats of outside world. But, on a closer look with patriarchal background and gender lens, the institution of family is found not to be an egalitarian but hierarchal structure. In this Unit, you will read about how family can be a seat of power and subordination and oppression of some members namely, women, girl child and also of the members of non-normative sexuality. Along with understanding family, marriage as an institution, we will discuss the different kinds of discrimination inherent to marriage. It should be stressed that marriage by itself and as is understood today wasn't/isn't a universal system in terms of time, space and communities and how the patriarchal and sacramental nature of marriage keeps women subordinated and perpetrates violence against them.

Let us now a look at the objectives of reading this Unit.

5.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this Unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the nature and function of family;
- Describe various forms of marriage in India; and
- Critique subordination and hierarchy within the structure of the family and marriage in India

5.3 NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY

Various studies from across the world have elaborated upon the nature and functions of the family. Majority of these studies emphasize on the universality of family as a social institution, that in provides socialization, support, love and protection to its members. These studies portray family as an egalitarian space whereby all members enjoy equal patronage and love, and consider it as a heaven otherwise insecure and violent world. However, there are studies which challenge such unilateral understanding of family. These studies come mainly from feminists and queer scholar. They bring forth the ways in which family operates within family determining differential access to resources both material and non-material. Violence and discrimination are used as tools to maintain family “integrity”, status, power, and honour. Let us read about functionalism which is important to study family as a form social institution.

Functionalism

Functionalism states that family forms the basic institution of every society and is universal in nature. Through its various functions, family meets the functional pre-requisites of the society and helps maintain its equilibrium.

This theory is based on the understanding that the biological imperatives of motherhood predispose women for indoor work, whereas the greater physical strength of men leads them naturally into the provider role.

The most basic relationship within the family is that of mother and child based on the physiological facts of pregnancy and lactation. Therefore the mother is primarily responsible for rearing and nurturance of the child whereas the father plays an indirect role.

Functionalists propose that the wife is required to give direct help to the husband's work. She is expected to adjust and assist the husband in meeting the various demands the occupational sphere places on him.

Talcott Parsons is the most prominent proponent of functionalist theorist. According to Parsons family is the basic agent of socialization and every member of the society derives their role and status from their position in the family. (Parsons and Bales, 1955). Parsons also describes that a nuclear family is the best form of family for an industrialized world. In nuclear families, the wives are mainly responsible for raising children and not expected to hunt for ascribed status and the children are not yet grown up for competition. Therefore, the authority and ascribed status of the husband is not threatened, thereby maintaining the stability of the family and society.

Feminist studies critique functionalism bringing forth the various ways in which power operates within family leading to hierarchy, discrimination, and violence against various members. They show family as not just a space for love, peace and cooperation but also of conflict, violence and negotiation.

5.4 FEMINISTS PERSPECTIVES

Mainstream studies described the family as an indispensable social institution based on cooperation, harmony, common interests and equality. To a large extent

they have also taken 'man' within the family as the basic unit of their study and have neglected women's experiences. Feminism challenged this vision of the family and drew attention to examine experiences of women in the domestic sphere.

Let us read how different strength of feminism critiques the institution of family.

Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism argues that women and men are different not due to their biology but due to the process of sex-role socialization. They recognize that through sex-role socialization women taught to be primarily housewife and thus are prevented from realizing their full potential. This relegated women to the so called private sphere of family, make them dependent upon their husband which lead to their subordination. They demand equal opportunity for women in all spheres as they believe that women are capable of achieving anything as much as men. They argued that this equality can be achieved by bringing women out of the domestic sphere through equal opportunity for jobs which can be brought by legislation and social reforms. Betty Friedan, Ann Oakly, Susan Okin Moller are among the many liberal feminists who have studied the family and women's position within it.

Socialist Feminism

According to Marxists feminists, women's subordination is related to the ownership of property. They argue that family along with exploitation of women will be wiped out with the usurping of capitalism. Socialist feminists contest such ideas and point out ways in which even the working class male benefits from the family. They point at the ways in which the structure of the family in capitalism affects and appropriates women's labour and renders them unequal both within the family and in the labour market.

Radical Feminism

Radical feminists emphasize on sexual rather than economic exploitation. They link women's oppression to their sexual and reproductive role performed basically within the family. They call upon women to reject their biological reproductive role and take the help of technology to subvert male domination. Some of the important radical feminist analysis of family comes from Kate Millet, Shulamith Firestone, and others.

Kate Millet (1971) unites that the patriarchal family insists upon legitimacy of offspring. It pronounces that the status of both child and mother is chiefly dependent upon the social and economic status of the male.

Shulamith Firestone in her book *The Dialectic of Sex* (1972) opines that the material basis for the inequality between men and women is produced within the biological family.

5.5 FEMINIST STUDIES OF FAMILY

Feminist scholarship began by pointing to the wide gap between the everyday experience of women within family and anthropological-sociological knowledge available. Therefore, the immediate task that they undertook was to underline the invisibility of women in the existing studies (Rege, 2001, p.14).

Much feminist work has targeted the family in terms of the structure of marriage, unequal distribution of resources between men and women and gender division of labour. They argue that women face discrimination in access to health, education, food and clothing, son preferences within family domestic violence and many other such issues occurring within the family structure.

Critique of Mainstream Research: Feminists pointed out that early Indian sociologist for all purposes assumed the Hindu joint family of classical, sanskritic usage as the Indian family. It excluded the family structures and kinship ideals and practices of non-Hindus, that of south and north-east India, lower castes, of non patrilineal communities and others. They thus ignored the various ways in which different kinship patterns in different regions and communities affected the lives of its members, especially that of women differently (Uberoi, 1993, p.39). It was only the work of Irawati Karve in which she undertook a comparative study on kinship and marriage in north and south Indian families that some light has been thrown on differential pattern of kinship and its effects on its members especially that of women. Thus, mainstream studies, feminists argued failed to inform or confront practical challenge related to the institution of family in India and wrongly portrayed it as an egalitarian and harmonious institution benefitting all (Uberao, 2001).

Familial ideology and women's subordinate status

Scholars focused on the violence perpetrated on women in the name of family honour and showed how the rationality of the family honour subordinates women and grants men the power to exercise control on women's self and sexuality (Das, 1996).

Family honour and purity of caste is believed to be dependent upon control over and purity of female sexuality. Family, according to feminists, plays an important role in maintaining this purity through socializing its members especially women to control their sexuality. Girls are expected to be feminine and not attract male gaze to remain pure. Family itself controls and punishes arbitrary behaviour in this regard. Restrictions on mobility, maintaining *purdah*, stress on virginity, chastity and fidelity, stigma of illegitimacy, importance on early marriage of girls are all mechanisms through which family actively contributes in maintaining caste boundaries and protects its purity and honour.

The responsibility for protection of family and caste honour that family confers its male members gives men the right to exercise power over the females.

Another such aspect of oppressive family structure that was neglected by mainstream studies was the process of gender socialization which forms one of the basic functions of family. Feminists argue that mainstream studies did not critique the gendered nature of the process of socialization because mainstream scholars agreed with patriarchal ideology and saw nothing wrong in its reproduction.

Feminists argue that the process of gender socialization in India primarily takes place through rituals and ceremonies, the use of language, and practices within the family. Gender division of labour is ingrained in children very early in childhood. Little girls are expected to help in domestic work such as cooking and looking after infants. Boys on the other hand are reprimanded if they show any interest in the above works. They are expected to accompany their male

elders to the work site outside the home. Girls, feminist studies show are expected to learn to bear the pain and deprivation, eat anything that is given to them, and acquire the quality of self-sacrifice. (Dube, 2001)

Feminists also point out that given the fact that son preference is ingrained in Indian families which are largely patriarchal, patrilineal and patrilocal in nature, girls grow up with the notion of temporary and secondary membership within the natal home.

Rajni Palriwala (1990) addresses household within the context of women's work. She argues that such division of labour kept women away from the market oriented income generating productive work thus making women economically dependent on men.

Other critique of the family comes from the dalit feminist thought and queer theory.

Check Your Progress Exercise 1

Note: i) Use the space given below to answer the questions.

ii) Compare your answer with the Course material of this unit.

1) Explain 'Liberal Feminist' understanding of family

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2) Explain how familial ideology subordinate women.

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In the coming section, you will read about dalit feminist's critique of family queer critique of family studies and domestic violence within family.

Dalit Feminists Critique of family studies

Feminism in India assumed the experiences of Hindu upper caste, middle class, urban women to be the experiences of all women. Dalit –Bahujan critique took Indian feminist to task for the seeming invisibility of caste inequality and emphasized on the 'Politics of difference' (Guru.1995). Dalit Bahujan feminists argued that this 'difference' is essential for understanding the dalit women's subjugation,

Queer critique questioned Indian feminist negligence of, the role sexuality played in determining family form, and the unequal distribution of power within. They argued against feminist non-questioning of heteronormativity. According to queer critiques, feminist questioned gender roles, subordination of women, violence against women, unequal rights to property and decision making and others within family. Rinchin (2005) writes 'within the family, violence is seen as a serious concern but never as a threat to the validity, relevance and existence of the institution itself.

According to her, 'members of the family are burdened with the duty of replicating the structure. Families are also not open for any and every one as the gates for entry are birth and marriage. The use of force and violence for submission and compliance is not unknown.

5.6 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: UNDERMINING THE NOTION OF FAMILY AS A SAFE HEAVEN

Some of the major forms of domestic violence in India are discussed below. You will read about a few more forms of domestic violence in the next unit on 'Marriage'.

Sex Selection of female infanticide: Aborting girl children even before birth is a pattern of violence largely perpetrated in Indian society. Even before the female baby is born she is killed inside her mother's womb by abortion. The decline female-male sex ratio over last few decades confirms this fact. With the spread of amniocentesis, a medical technique to discover birth defects which involves sex determination of the foetus, female infanticide has become a common form of violence against women.

Female foeticide and infanticide are often the manifestation of a dominant ideology which valorizes the male child. The desire for a male child is linked to the Hindu belief that the son facilitates the passage of his parents to the next world. This belief along with the construction of son being the provider and daughter being an economic burden is the cause for increasing female foeticide and infanticide.

Unequal Access to Facilities and Resources

The dominant ideology assumes that girls are inferior, physically and mentally weak, and above all sexually vulnerable. Based on this discriminations and restrictions are imposed upon the girl child. Distribution of basic resources within the family is regulated along the factors of gender and age. These basic resources include nutrition, health care, education, other material assets as well as parental attention and care. Evidence indicates that girls and women are usually far less privileged than boys in access to material resources. The male child gets the larger share in food and girl child gets only left over. Forms of discrimination in access to food exist even in upper castes middle class homes indicating that factors other than scarcity are crucial.

Child Abuse

'Children are victims of substantial abuse of a physical, psychological and emotional nature. This includes sexual aggression, beatings, as well as extracting

hours of labour from children who should be in school or at play (Karlekar: 1998: 1744). Given her burden of the household duties, it is the girl who is abused more, she experiences only daughterhood and is deprived of a carefree childhood which is generally reserved for boys (Kosambi: 1998). Child sexual abuse is one of the most rampant forms of child abuse which is rarely talked about.

Families rarely talk about such sexual abuse. When the rapist is a father, brother, uncle or cousin the chances of reporting are even lower. Though the girl child is more vulnerable to sexual abuse especially in Indian context one cannot deny the prevalence of male child sexual abuse. If there is a silence around the sexual violation of the girl child in the family, this is equally true of cases of sodomy and abuse of the male child (Karlekar: 1998: 1745).

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment also occurs in the domestic sphere. Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitutes sexual harassment. Sexual harassment forms one of the basic tools of men to keep women in their patriarchal defined space. It can be in the form of comments on the physical appearance of the female and abuse with sexual overtones, fingering, jostling against women, manhandling, ogling etc. It creates an atmosphere of fear and hurts the dignity of the woman concerned.

Sexual Assault or Rape

Rape is broadly defined as non-consensual sexual act through the use of physical force, threats or intimidation, including the rape of a woman by her husband—which is marital rape. Rape may also occur between people who know each other and between people who have previously had consensual sexual relations. Unlike common belief that rape is committed in dark streets by ugly and fearful looking strangers, most of the rapes happen within the four walls of the home by family members, acquaintances, neighbours, cousins and other close relatives.

Violence against Aged Persons and Widows

A situation of dependency on the younger generation results in neglect and in some cases, ill-treatment and different forms of violence against older people, in particular women. Widows and aged persons are usually economically dependent upon their relatives. Therefore, they are more vulnerable to violence by their family members who include in-laws, sons, daughters-in-law, and other relatives. Widowhood exposes a woman to new forms and networks of exploitation and violence. In patriarchal society, widows are considered a curse and an evil omen and their movement is restricted in various ways. Sexual vulnerability of the widow is widely prevalent. They are prone to sexual abuse within the marital family and are sometimes forced into prostitution by their in-laws. (Karlekar: 1998)

Violence and discrimination against LGBTQ members

As discussed earlier the idea of family is based on heteronormativity and therefore any deviation from such norms leads to discrimination and violence. Traditionally, children born as transsexuals called as *hijras* are abandoned by the family or killed in the form of infanticide. Homosexuality is unaccepted and violence including life threatening consequences is used as a tool to bring confirmation.

Rape is used to cure daughters of homosexuality and make lesbians confirm to heterosexuality. Homosexual men and women are forced into heterosexual marriages and threatened of dire consequences if they do not confirm.

The above forms of violence reflects a part of the various ways in which different members of the family live a life of hierarchy and unequal power and status within family. These violence show that family is not always a space of safe haven and eternal love but actively hierarchies, discriminates and violates its own members in different capacities.

5.7 DEFINITION AND MEANING OF MARRIAGE

Marriage is traditionally considered to be a socially/legally recognized relationship, between an adult male and female. Marriage brings with it certain rights and obligations. According to Anthony Giddens (2009) marriage can be defined as a socially acknowledged and approved sexual union between two adult individuals. When two people marry, they become kin to one another. The marriage bond also, however, connects together a wider range of kin people. Parents, brothers, sisters and other blood relatives become relatives of the partner through marriage’.

Heteronormativity is about only opposite gender i.e a man and women being allowed to marry.



Source: <http://previews.123rf.com/images/oksanaok/oksanaok1111/oksanaok111100011/11100014-Cartoon-the-bride-and-groom-during-the-wedding-ceremony-contours-Vector-Stock-Vector.jpg>



Same sex marriage is tabooed and not allowed socially and legally except a few countries which grant legal sanction to such marriages.

Couples from the same sex i.e. as shown in this picture a woman and a woman in love are not allowed to marry.

Source: <http://previews.123rf.com/images/atthameeni/atthameeni1407/atthameeni140700020/29650244-hand-drawing-cartoon-concept-happy-same-sex-couple-wedding-Stock-Vector.jpg>



Same sex couples like in this picture a man and a man marrying is tabooed, stigmatized and made illegal by both society and law. <http://f.tqn.com/y/politicalhumor/1/S/2/Y/4/same-sex-mariage-division.jpg>

In India too same sex love and marriage is tabooed and banned both by society and the law.



Source: https://www.google.co.in/search?q=cartoons+of+law%27s+sanctions+of+heterosexual+marriage&biw=1280&bih=589&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAmoVChMIytr1t_6xwIVxSSOCh1OdgyH#tbn=isch&q=posters+on+section+377+&imgcr=rZxti0ZjZ9bgoM%3A

It is believed that at the basis of almost every kinship systems is marriage. Marriage is a social or a binding legal defining the union of a man and a woman, living together in a sexual relationship with the expectation of producing offspring. This relationship is defined and sanctioned by tradition and law.

Traditionally marriage involves a man, a woman and their children. One of the important purposes of marriage is believed to be for biological reproduction.



Source: https://www.google.co.in/search?q=cartoons+of+law%27s+sanctions+of+heterosexual+marriage&biw=1280&bih=589&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAmoVChMIytr1t_6xwIVxSSOCh1OdyH#tbn=isch&q=indian+cartoons+of+family+in+india+&imgc=XxFfOhBybON9uM%3A

Today this understanding needs to be amended, as men and women do not necessarily include having children as one of the purposes of marriage. In certain societies couples reproduce even without entering into marriage and then may or may not choose to marry. There are couples who enter into marriage but chose to be childless or opt for adoption rather than have their own biological children. Further as same-sex partners are entering into marriage, such couples may go for adoption, medical inception and other scientific and legal methods to include children in their family.

A homosexual couple with their child.



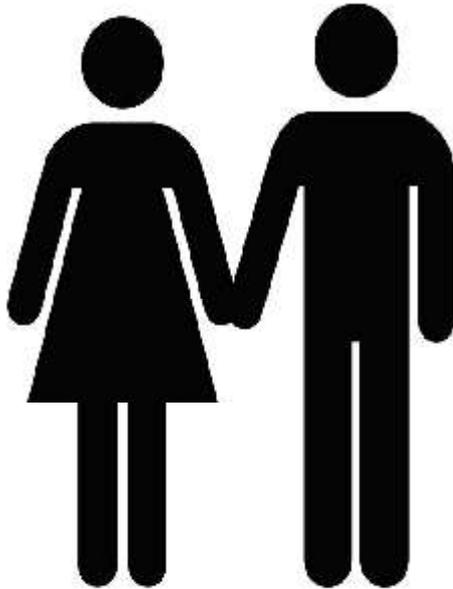
Source: https://www.google.co.in/search?q=cartoons+of+law%27s+sanctions+of+heterosexual+marriage&biw=1280&bih=589&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0CAcQ_AUoAmoVChMIytr1t_6xwIVxSSOCh1OdyH#tbn=isch&q=cartoons+of+family+and+offspring&imgc=-xm7AOG5ZF-FM%3A

Thus, the importance of marriage no longer remains exclusively attached to the notion of biologicvla reproduction but is also undertaken for the purpose of companionship (Scott and Marshall 2005).

5.8 FORMS OF MARRIAGE

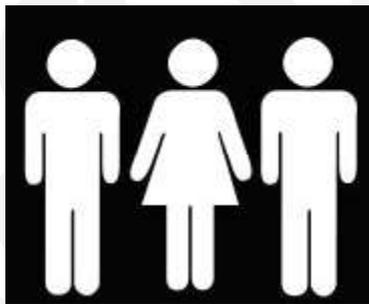
Marriage has taken various forms in different societies. The two broad commonly accepted **subdivisions in forms of marriage** based on number of partners are **monogamy** and **polygamy**. Monogamy refers to the marriage found across modern contemporary societies.

One man marrying one woman is monogamy.



Source: <https://zorach.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/man-woman-holding-hands-icon.jpg?w=640>

Polygamy is the term for plural marriage. It can in turn be subdivided into **polyandry** or the union of one woman with several men; **polygyny**, or the union of one man with several women. Group marriage, involves several emn living with several women. Within polygamy polygyny is more common than polyandry.



Source: <http://www.olivercowdery.com/smithhome/1880s-1890s/polyg2.jpg> <http://cdn.theatlantic.com/static/mt/assets/food/polyandry.jpg>

Based on rules of marriage, marriage takes palce in two broad forms- endogamy and exogamy. Endogamy ensures that partnes in the marriage belong to the same social group. i.e the same caste, tribe, religion, class and others.

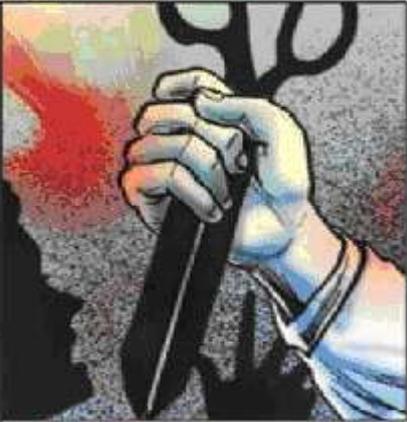
Marriage between Brahmin Woman and Brahmin Man- Endogamy i.e Caste Endogamy. Marriage between Dalit man and Dalit Woman – Endogamy i.e Caste

Endogamy Marriage between Christian Woman and Christian Man – Endogamy i.e Religious Endogamy

Marriage between Bodo Man and Bodo Woman- Endogamy i.e Ethnic Endogamy.

In India Hindu social order through its caste system strictly followed and continues to follow caste endogamy. Any violation of it entailed punishment including what is known as honour killing. Endogamy and Violent enforcement of it continues rather rigidly even in contemporary times.

MORE MURDERS FOR 'HONOUR'

<p>Feb 2002 Nitish Katara murdered by his girlfriend Bharti Yadav's brother Vikas, son of politician D P Yadav, and a cousin</p> <p>June 2010 Asha (19) tortured to death along with her 20-year-old boyfriend Yogesh Kumar by her uncle, father and others at her home in Swaroop Nagar</p> <p>May Delhi-based journalist Nirupama Pathak killed by her family in Jharkhand as she wanted to marry into another caste</p> <p>June 21 Kuldeep and Monika murdered by the woman's brother and his friends in Ashok Vihar</p>	 <p>April 2012 Deepti Chikara, a 26-year-old teacher, killed by her mother, brother and uncle in Sultanpuri as her boyfriend belonged to a lower caste</p>
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News paper's report on honour killings in India.

Such honour killings are largely perpetrated when caste endogamous rules of marriage are challenged by young couples i.e. when couples belonging to different castes especially the girl belonging to higher caste marries a boy belonging to lower caste.

Further, marriage between individuals belonging to different castes is called **hypergamous marriage**, if the woman belonged to a lower caste and the man to a higher caste. The marriage of a higher caste woman to a lower caste man is called **hypogamy**. In Indian society hypergamous marriage is relatively easily accepted as compared to hypogamous marriages. Hypogamous marriages often lead to violence against the caste group to which the man belongs by the upper caste group to which the woman belongs.

Exogamy on the other hand entails that individuals marry outside their own group. *Gotra* exogamy whereby individuals are expected to marry outside their *gotra* (lineage group), and village exogamy (which was the norm of marriage in some north Indian villages) entails that members married outside one's village, are some among the various forms of exogamy. Exogamy of gotra is also strictly followed in India. Breaking of gotra exogamy rules can also lead to honour killings.





Source: <http://image.slidesharecdn.com/4418honourkillings-120930061915-phpapp01/95/honour-killings-14-728.jpg?cb=1348985994>

Based on sex of partners, marriage can be of two kinds' i.e heterosexual marriage and home sexual marriage. In heterosexual marriage, partners belong to opposite sex, where as in homosexual marriage the partners belong to same sex.

Before reading further attempt the following.

Check Your Progress Exercise 2:

- Note:** i) Use the space given below to answer the questions.
 ii) Compare your answer with the Course material of this unit.

1) Explain different forms of marriage

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2) Write short notes on:

- a) Endogamy
- b) Exogamy

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In the following sections you will read about feminist theories on marriage, violence in marriage and queer perspectives on marriage.

5.9 FEMINIST THEORIES ON MARRIAGE

Various feminist researchers across the world brought forth that women take on the lion's share of domestic and caring giving work which is not recognized as

productive labour with any market value. You will read about women’s work in detail in block 3.

Women are socialized into acceptance of feminine domestic roles in marriage which makes them “good” and “respectable” wives. (friedan, 1963).



Gender Socialization whereby girls are told that their task is to cook, clean, and perform repetitive uncreative work and be subordinate. Whereas boys are told to occupy position of power, do masculine creative task and enjoy the fruits of women’s work.

At the same time when they go for work outside home they are paid much less than men. There is continuity between women’s subordination within the “private” sphere of marriage and family and the “public” sphere of wage work. Further, research also show that even when women go out to work in similar positions as men, they are still burdened with house work performing “**second shift**” – one shift at office and another taking care of home and family by doing housework.



Based on the Studies feminists argue that they advocating of gender division of labour in marriage harms the position of women as a whole, merely by constraining their options and ambitions. Confining them to domestic sphere and placing on them the exclusive burden of housework, gender division of labour limits women's choices and life chances.



Source: <http://www.virudh.com/uploads/picture-3-1398683428.png>

They become economically, socially and politically dependent on men hampering their self confidence, forcing them to tolerate discrimination and violence. Thus, gender division of labour directly and indirectly coerce women to accept subordination in marriage.

Amongst the different strands of feminism, Marxists feminists argue that monogamous marriage is a social institution that has nothing to do with love and everything to do with private property. Thus, marriage benefits the capitalist class and women's subordination within marriage can be overcome only by overthrowing. It is the exploitative system of private property.

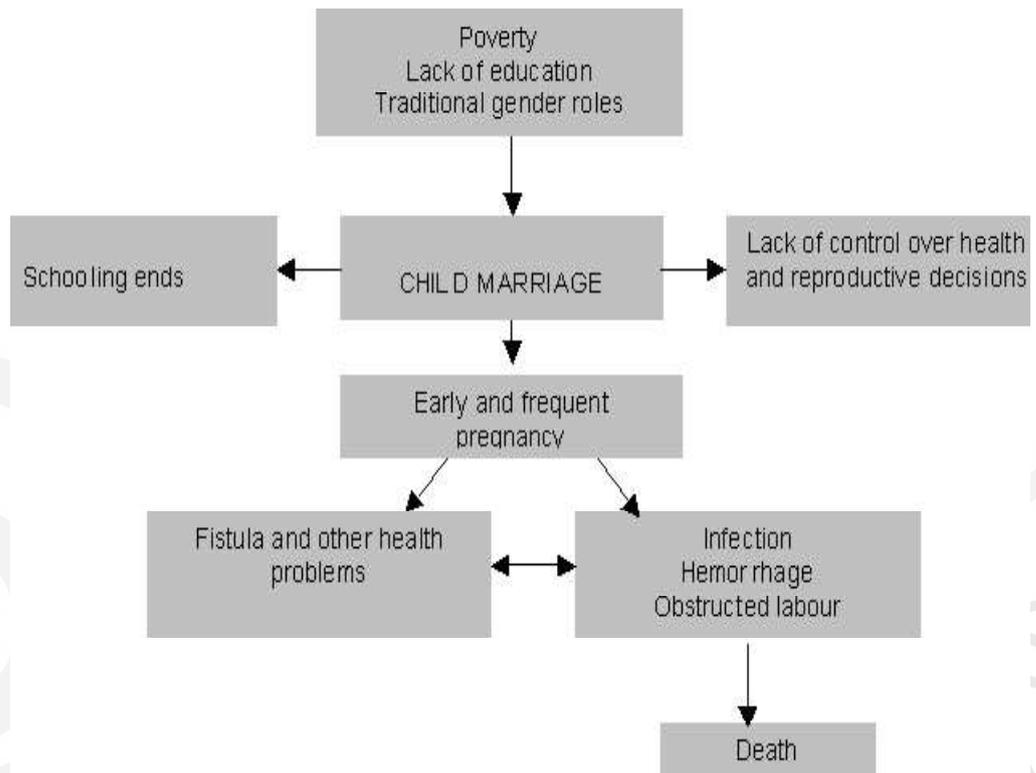
For radical feminists, marriage is a tool of patriarchy which through its heterosexual norms keeps women subordinated. Patriarchy is the first form of social exploitation. In this system of patriarchy, men as a group hold power over women. Power lies with men (Abbott et al. 2005).



To summarize, feminists see marriage not as an egalitarian harmonious institution but that which is fraught with contradictions. According to feminists, marriage is a hierarchical institution whereby women are given secondary status. Gender division of labour, capitalist economy, unpaid housework, unequal wage system in paid work, heterosexual norms, control over women’s sexuality, eulogizing of masculinity and femininity, violence, unequal property and other rights, along with discriminatory laws make marriage an unequal exploitative institution.

Let us now read how violence is perpetuated in marriage.

Ill effects of marriage



Marital violence can be perpetrated both in active and passive manner, it can be in an overt and covert manner, and can be physical, sexual and psychological in nature or all at a time. Violence in marriage involves kicking, beating with hand or stick, dragging the woman by hair, cutting her body, abusing her with foul language, keeping her hungry, having forced sex, shouting, scolding, threatening, desertion, restriction in her movements, restricting her from employment, and many other means of torture. Some of the forms that it takes in India are discussed below:

Early Marriage: Early marriage is encouraged to control the sexuality of the girl. She should be passed safely from her natal home to the marital home without bringing in danger to the family name. A girl’s sexuality has to be controlled as if she misuses her freedom it may bring disgrace upon the family honour. Early marriage results in early pregnancy, which is harmful, and life taking for the mother.

Dowry: is an age-old practice related to marriage in India. It is the exchange of wealth especially from the bride’s home to the grooms. It can be in the form of cash, ornaments, lands, modern gadgets or other movable and immovable property. Dowry forms one of major causes of wife battering. Wives are beaten, deserted, tortured, murdered, burnt for extracting more dowries.

Wife battering: the most widely practiced and widely denied form of domestic violence is upon the wife that sometimes leads to the death of the woman. It is a wife battering. Wife battering involves physical, psychological and sexual abuse inflicted complex social phenomenon of power relationships within the family.

Marital rape: is commonly defined as any unwanted intercourse or penetration obtained by force, threat of force, or when the wife is unable to consent. Rape in marriage is a sexual violence, an abuse of power by which a husband attempts to establish dominance and control over his wife who he feels is his “property.”

For a long time most of these violence were not even legislated against by the law. It is mostly through the efforts of the women’s movement that today most of these forms of violence are declared illegal through legislations. However, violence such as marital rape is now recognized as a crime by the law.

5.10 DIVORCE

In many societies divorce has become an accepted part of marriage. All legal systems today grant the right to divorce to both women and men in marriage. Divorce laws have become simpler with granting of mutual consent divorces. Though divorced status is considered as normal in many societies, in India it is still difficult to opt for divorce especially, for women.

India has different marriage and divorce laws for different religions. Almost all religions have their own marriage and divorce laws.

Grounds for divorce in India mainly include adultery, desertion, cruelty, impotency, chronic diseases, and conversion into another religion. Though several laws have been passed the divorce procedure in India is still complex and time taking. The judiciary in India largely believes that marriages should be saved and often grant extended time span and provide marital counseling before actually hearing their case for divorce..

Divorce still is seen as an act of breaking of marriage and family even when sought under conditions of cruelty.

5.11 SUMMING UP

The unit discusses the nature and functions of family especially taking the help of functionalist studies of family. It describes how largely family is accepted as the basic unit of all societies and is functional to the maintenance and progress of society.

Feminist rejected such understanding on family and their efforts in bringing out the discrimination present within family. Indian feminist and queer studies on family and their attempt to unfold the important role family and familial ideology have played role and the subordination of women in family and marriage were discussed. In India, discourse on women’s rights within marriage and family is a complex and contentious matter as it is closely intertwined with religious and social identity politics/issues.

5.12 KEY WORDS

Hemorrhage : A flow/oozing of blood from a ruptured blood vessel.

Access &Control of Resources: Resources are important to ensure livelihoods of individuals.. Women have been denied access to education, health services, credit, land and technologies historically due to gendered divisions of labour, patriarchy, economic inequalities and socialization.

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5.14 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) What is functionalist explanation of family?
- 2) Explain gender socialization in India and how it affects women's lives within family.
- 3) Explain dalit feminist critique of family ideology and its relation to caste in India.
- 4) What is heteronormativity and how does it violate rights of different members of the family?
- 5) Explain feminist theories of marriage
- 6) Examine how violence takes place in the institution of marriage

UNIT 6 MOTHERHOOD

Structure

- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Objectives
- 6.3 Gender Roles: Motherhood and Fatherhood
- 6.4 Patriarchy, Capitalism and the Maternal Body in a Cross-Cultural Context
- 6.5 Motherhood in Indian Contexts: Urban-Rural, Class and Caste Divides
 - 6.5.1 Rural and Migrant Mothers
- 6.6 Reproduction and Surrogacy
- 6.7 Mother India: Mothering as Metaphor and Reality
- 6.8 Contemporary Challenges and Breakthroughs
- 6.9 Summing Up
- 6.10 Key Words
- 6.11 References
- 6.12 Suggested Readings
- 6.13 Unit End Questions

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In most contemporary societies, since it is mostly women who mother, we tend to associate the terms ‘motherhood’ and ‘mothering’ primarily with women. Besides this, we usually have very fixed notions about who is an ‘ideal mother’, and how ‘ideal mothering’ should be carried out. While there is no doubt that women reproduce, why is it that the act of giving birth and the responsibility of childcare have become conflated to become associated only with women? What does motherhood involve and invoke and how does it impact the lives of women who are mothers? In this Unit, we will look at motherhood as an institution and examine its impact on women’s life choices, life styles and economic and social conditions, and also see how mothering is in turn often determined by these conditions. We will critically analyze the notion of motherhood in an attempt to understand its role in women’s lives. We will also specifically examine the implications of motherhood upon women from different class and caste backgrounds, and across the rural/urban divide. In doing so, we will attempt to identify the challenges presented by socially and culturally determined notions of mothering upon women, and seek out some affirmative possibilities for mothers in the future.

6.2 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you would be able to:

- Achieve a critical understanding of motherhood in the context of gender roles in India;
- Locate motherhood within the cross-cultural context of patriarchal and capitalist structures;

- Comprehend the relationship between motherhood and class and caste structures in urban and rural India;
- Discuss the issues of reproductive rights and surrogacy from the perspective of Indian women;
- Examine the notion of mothering as work from the perspective of urban and rural migrant women;
- And engage with the changes in women's lives within the context of contemporary transitions in culture and economy.

6.3 GENDER ROLES: MOTHERHOOD AND FATHERHOOD

We often hear that women are, by their very nature, more caring and nurturing and that motherhood is the most valuable gift that women enjoy. Such sentiments are usually accepted as compliments to women and their innate abilities to provide love and care, and to be able to sacrifice their own needs for those of others. However, such seemingly complementary assertions may very well conceal prevalent social biases against women. They may also work to the disadvantage of women. For instance, because of social and cultural expectations, those women who may not wish to see marriage and motherhood as their primary function in life may feel like social anomalies. In the field of education, girls may opt for certain disciplinary fields and careers rather than others (such as Mathematics or Science) which do not disturb their sense of internalized gender roles and abilities. Women may also feel the social pressure to live up to cultural ideals which associate self-sacrifice and self-abnegation primarily with one gender. Consequently, girls are often influenced by ingrained cultural values which tell them that it is their duty to sacrifice better nutrition, educational opportunities, financial resources and right to property to the male members of the family.

Due to such culturally ingrained values and gender biases, women who become mothers may often do so at the expense of other desires and ambitions. Motherhood may thus interrupt or interfere with women's ability and desire to work and follow professional careers. At the same time, the association of childcare responsibilities primarily with women can also place pressure on men to function only as providers and alienate them from a fuller realization of their roles as fathers. Prescribed gender roles for women and men consequently impact the level of freedom in terms of personal choices exerted by both genders. They also influence how women and men perceive their roles as mothers and fathers in a given culture. Owing to rigidly defined prescriptions, many women see marriage and motherhood as their life-goal. Some may become mothers without really questioning their preparation for this role or give up their professional ambitions completely once they become mothers. It is also true, of course, that many women may genuinely desire to become mothers, and may happily opt for domestic responsibilities over professional ones. However, an interrogation of gender roles in society shows us that freedom of self-determination is greatly influenced by cultural norms. Consequently, what one may believe to be a 'free' choice may actually reflect internalized perceptions of idealized roles, and the uninterrogated 'performance' of such roles by individuals. (For further reading on the notion of 'performativity' and gender, you may refer to work by Judith Butler.)

Women who become mothers of their own free will may also succumb to certain behaviors and traits that are expected of mothers. For instance, they may be compelled to abandon pursuit of higher education goals, not seek employment or give up established careers. Many women from the middle and upper-middle classes single-handedly shoulder the burden of domestic chores associated with mothering, such as preparing family meals, getting children ready for school, overseeing homework and other educational requirements. But it is not only women who are at a disadvantage as far as gender roles are concerned. Cultural stereotyping of parenting roles in patriarchal societies can also influence men in a detrimental way. For instance, fathers may feel obliged to limit their interaction with their children in terms of their prescribed functions – that is, primarily as breadwinners and providers, rather than as sources of emotional or intellectual support. This serves to restrict emotional bonding between fathers and children and could be counter-productive for the emotional growth of children. It can also limit men's perceptions of their roles as fathers and keep them from enjoying the pleasures of a more wholesome relationship with their children. An examination of motherhood in the context of gender roles thus helps us to take a serious look at the notion of freedom of choice, as well as how both motherhood and fatherhood get prescribed in pre-determined ways due to gender stereotyping.

6.4 PATRIARCHY, CAPITALISM AND THE MATERNAL BODY IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CONTEXT

Although our main focus here will be to look at motherhood in Indian contexts, it would be useful to first locate Indian motherhood within a larger cross-cultural framework. Given the fact that most contemporary societies are influenced, to various extents, by patriarchal norms, mothering continues to be conceptualized from male-dominated perspectives across the world. Such perspectives influence the way mothering and the maternal body are understood and experienced as lived realities.

The objectification of women's bodies in patriarchal cultures can result in efforts to make the body conform to certain cultural expectations and beauty myths (such as the emphasis on being thin or light-skinned). In terms of maternal bodies, this has specific implications. Feminist scholars in the west have noted that maternal bodies are 'disciplined' into conforming with set patterns of behavior and appearance. In the US, for instance, some feminists, like **Eva Feder Kittay**, and **Jana Sawicki** have emphasized the impact of patriarchal control and power on women's bodies, pregnancy and childbirth. In contemporary times, these larger power systems may include capitalism, racism and other forces. These larger forces impact how relations and identities get defined at the micro level. For instance, the unpaid work performed by mothers (including childcare and housework) may benefit both patriarchy and capitalism. This is because women's unpaid housework sustains male dominance as well as provides economic benefits to one part of the population at the expense of the other. When seen from this perspective, it is not patriarchy alone that is responsible for the oppression of women and mothers; rather, patriarchy works together with other repressive forces, such as capitalism, racism and casteism. In each of these hierarchical systems, those with less power become the victims of various kinds of oppression. Based on our analysis, we could then say that women are one such category

victimized by the collusion between patriarchy and capitalism. This perspective helps us to see how motherhood is located within these larger structures of power. It also tells us that in order to question some of the negative ways in which mothering roles impact women, we would need to begin by interrogating the larger power structures to which women and men belong.

6.5 MOTHERHOOD IN INDIAN CONTEXTS: URBAN-RURAL, CLASS AND CASTE DIVIDES

As you have already seen, the way motherhood is conceptualized and experienced is very often impacted by larger forces such as class, caste and ethnicity. Due to the patriarchal nature of Indian society, motherhood in Indian contexts is determined to a large extent by the cross-section of these forces. The impact of globalization and economic liberalization has created a complex class hierarchy in contemporary urban India, with each class aspiring towards the ones above it. The coming together of patriarchy and capitalism results in a culture of consumerism which promotes a greater objectification of women's bodies. This may have specific consequences for the maternal body. For instance, the maternal body tends to be valued for what it offers the patriarchal culture – the promise of offspring, especially male, who will continue to ensure the sustenance of patrilineal society. It is thus reduced to its reproductive function and identified primarily with the idea of the 'womb' as vessel or container. While the reproductive function is overvalued in this process, the maternal body is also desexualized because of it. In other words, such a body is envisioned as the chaste mother but not as lover or sexual partner. Similarly, the non-maternal but sexualized female body may be devalued since it is perceived primarily as sexual object. In both these cases, the 'personhood' of the woman and the mother is diminished since her *function* as 'reproducer' or as 'sexual object' is given more importance than any other identity. Thus, women in patriarchal societies may find themselves struggling to exert agency in terms of life decisions – decisions whose hold is often in the hands of male members - husbands, fathers, brothers, or the larger patriarchal family.

These influences have significant effects on different classes and castes, and for women across the urban/rural divide. For instance, in the urban middle classes, women, in their roles as mothers, are expected to be the upholders of traditional family values and impart the same to their children, even when some of these values may reinforce sexist perceptions towards girls and women. These may include the subordination of wives and daughters to the husband, or the subservience of wives to the in-laws. Mothers are also often expected to instill in daughters a sense of compromise and the ability to 'adjust' to difficult circumstances, especially those which demand that they put their own welfare behind that of male members. This may be something as small as giving up the choicest share of the family meal to a brother or father, or as substantial as the giving up of property rights by sisters in a silent recognition of their brothers' first right over inherited property. When mothers instill such values as instances of 'ideal behaviour' in their daughters, they nurture future generations of women and mothers who remain trapped in gender hierarchies.

6.5.1 Rural and Migrant Mothers

In the case of rural women, motherhood often comes at the cost of extreme danger to the lives of both mothers and their offspring. Poverty and lack of adequate healthcare facilities result in unwanted pregnancies and high mortality rates for mothers and infants. According to 2011 census data, sex ratio in India is 943 per 1000 males. The Maternal Mortality Rate is 167 according to 2011-2013 data. Additionally, taking care of young children is often a responsibility which is undertaken in competition with the urgent need to perform labour in fields, households, or factories. Rural women continue to face challenges and struggle for basic necessities in terms of nutrition, health and education for themselves and for their children. Due to a lack of educational and economic resources, they may lack access to contraceptive measures and consequently suffer from unwanted pregnancies at a risk to their health, or be unable to take decisions regarding the number of children they produce. Many rural women working in the agricultural sector perform labour both outside and inside the home; however, much of this work goes unrecognized due to gender biases. According to 2011 census, working hours of rural women (both Private and Public Sphere- Home and Agriculture Sector) is 25.6 and men is 51.7.

Rural migrant women in particular face extreme conditions in fulfilling maternal responsibilities. You may have noticed such women working at construction sites, often with babies and very young children left to take care of their own safety in dangerous conditions nearby. The option of providing security, nutrition and educational facilities to their children is something not available to many poor women both in urban and rural settings. Many migrant rural women are employed by middle-class and upper-class urban households as maids. Even when childcare and ‘mothering’ work is performed by maids, caste and class divides are almost always upheld. In terms of raising their own children, many rural and poor women are restricted by severe economic considerations. As you can see, mothering continues to remain embedded within the complex caste and class generated oppressions which define the lives of these women.

Even a brief look at urban and rural women from different classes and castes thus shows us that while women continue to shoulder domestic and economic burdens across classes, motherhood as an institution is determined by patriarchal forces beyond the control of the majority of women.

6.6 REPRODUCTION AND SURROGACY

Reproductive rights, or the right to choose when, how and whether or not to bear a child, are an indicator of women’s personal freedoms in many societies. In many western countries, the antagonism between ‘pro-choice’ and ‘pro-life’ groups is marked by religious as well as cultural factors. For instance, in the United States, the women’s movement struggled for many decades for the right of women to choose whether or not to carry through a pregnancy. In 1973, the Roe vs. Wade case awarding a single woman from Texas the right to terminate her pregnancy became a landmark judgment in terms of women’s reproductive autonomy (see <https://www.oyez.org/cases/1971/70-18>). In India, the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971 legalized abortion for women over the age of 18 (with written consent from a guardian in the case of unmarried women). However, despite legal rights, many cultural restrictions continue to limit the

choices that women can exert in terms of their reproductive rights. For instance, both female foeticide (termination of the life of a female fetus) and infanticide (killing of an infant girl within one year of her birth) remain ongoing problems in a culture which privileges sons and sees the girl-child as a burden, if not a curse to be borne by the family. Tandon and Sharma describe female infanticide in the following words: “It is a deliberate and intentional act of killing a female child within one year of its birth either directly by using poisonous organic and inorganic chemicals or indirectly by deliberate neglect to feed the infant by either one of the parents or other family members or neighbours or by the midwife” (Tandon & Sharma, 2006, 3). Although sex selection procedures have been declared illegal in India, many young mothers are still forced to go through these illegal procedures and to abort female fetuses. Female infanticide also remains a persistent problem across urban and rural India. The Infant Mortality Rate is 40 according to 2013 data.

Moreover, as we have previously noted, many girl children, even when they do survive, continue to suffer disadvantages in terms of nutrition, education, financial resources and employment opportunities. Adoption practices still reflect a ‘son bias’ in our nation, with a larger number of parents preferring to adopt male children. According to 2014 data, around 6,750 girls and 4,460 boys were adopted in India. Maharashtra tops the adoption count with 1,465 girls and 1,208 boys. From April to June 2015, child adoption centres across India have received around 1,240 requests from couples to adopt a girl against 718 requests for a boy.

As you have seen above, capitalist and consumerist forces exert a vast influence on the ongoing objectification of the maternal body. Surrogacy, which involves providing one’s womb for gestational purposes, very often in return for monetary advantages, has become a contested and hotly debated institution in India. Surrogate mothers often tend to be poor/ rural women who choose to rent out their wombs in exchange for financial benefits. Surrogate mothers perform a kind of ‘work’ which is monitored and controlled by those with greater power and resources (see Amrita Pande for a detailed discussion of this issue). Based on a ‘contract’ between biological parents and surrogate mothers, surrogacy is now treated as an ‘industry’. As such, it is an indicator of the influence of commercial and capitalist forces on mothering practices. Surrogacy can also be misused. Women who are severely constrained by poverty may ‘choose’ surrogacy as a method of economic survival. In such cases, it can lead to the exploitation of poor women’s bodies by those with greater financial resources, especially by foreigners looking for ‘cheap’ surrogacy options in third world countries. Although the state has imposed many regulations on surrogacy in India, with recent restrictions on non-Indian parents attempting to hire Indian surrogate mothers, it still remains an area of concern (see <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/oct/28/india-bans-foreigners-from-hiring-surrogate-mothers>). Surrogacy practices continue to reveal to us the extent to which the female body is perceived and utilized as a reproductive vessel, with little concern regarding the personal agency of women who choose to become mothers.

As you have seen, reproductive rights and reproductive practices are a reflection of the extent to which mothering as an institution is still deeply marred by gender, class and caste biases.

6.7 MOTHER-INDIA: MOTHERING AS METAPHOR AND REALITY

You may wonder why, in a country where we have worshipped the female form in the shape of goddesses for so many centuries, and where we continue to revere our goddesses alongside gods, mortal women face so many difficulties and challenges, and are placed at a social disadvantage compared to men. It is a well-known fact that mother-goddess worship holds an important place in the religious and cultural fabric of our country. Mothers have been worshipped in the form of idealized goddesses such as Sita, Lakshmi and Durga in many parts of the country. Mother-goddess worship goes back to pre-Vedic times and evidence of the worship of fertility goddesses has been traced back to the Indus valley and Harappa civilization (see Mandakranta Bose; Sukumari Bhattacharjee; Liddle & Joshi). The association of fecundity with the female body and the early dependence of ancient civilizations on agriculture as the chief mode of survival solidified the idealization of fertility mother-goddesses over time.

Despite these ancient ties to mother goddess worship, it is astonishing to note that in today's society, women continue to be denigrated, sexually violated, raped and killed just for being women. How do we explain this apparent contradiction? Feminist scholars have suggested that there was a gradual denigration of the female goddess from pre-Vedic to Vedic times due to a growing caste hierarchy and increasingly rigid patriarchal social structures (see Bose; Liddle & Joshi). Both territory and the female body play a significant role in sustaining the rigidity of these structures, since 'ownership' of both can be claimed and secured by men in patriarchy. Equated with 'territory,' the female body is viewed in terms of its potential to uphold patriliney – that is – the tracing of descendency from fathers to their male progeny. Just as territory can be protected and safeguarded against invasions by foreign forces within patriarchal structures, the female body gets projected as a site to be controlled. The purity and chastity of the maternal body plays a significant role in terms of maintaining caste and ethnic 'purity' of future offspring. The objectification of women's bodies, as 'vessels' of reproduction, helps to sustain patriarchal control over class and caste structures. Symbolic representations which associate the maternal body with territorial land are consequently embedded in culture, as seen in common expressions such as 'mother-earth' and 'mother-nation'. The association of the mother's body with that of the nation is deeply embedded in Indian culture, as can be seen in the iconic Bollywood film 'Mother India'. While the male son is projected as the brave soldier who will lay down his life in order to defend the honour of the nation personified as mother, this leaves very little space for the mother as individual outside of the mother-son relationship. It further serves to desexualize the maternal body and leaves women struggling to attain their status as subjects. In other words, the emphasis on female bodies as wombs and as territory to be controlled upholds the worship of women in their role as mothers and goddesses. But the flip side of this equation is the denigration of the sexualized female body when she is not seen primarily in her mothering role. Today, many feminists (for instance, see works by **Hélène Cixous** (1975) and **Bracha Ettinger** (1995) are questioning such oppressive portrayals of mothering and exploring the maternal in a positive light by interpreting maternal energy with artistic creativity.

6.8 CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES AND BREAKTHROUGHS

In her well-known book *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), **Nancy Chodorow** had argued in favour of the practice of shared parenting as the only way out of the conundrum in which the burden of mothering is placed squarely on the shoulders of women, and keeps them from achieving their full human potential. Since then, many feminist scholars have shown us the way forward in terms of transforming the perceptions and practice of motherhood from the perspective of gender equity. Much work has been done in this regard in the fields of mothering and psychoanalysis, sociology, anthropology, history, education and science, among others. Across the world, feminist scholarship and research on motherhood continues to generate new ways of re-examining and experiencing mothering.

Although we have seen how motherhood, as an institution, remains embroiled in age-old gender biases in India, it is also true that we are beginning to see many positive changes during contemporary times, such as availability of paternity leaves for single fathers. As more and more urban and rural women begin to gain educational capabilities, employment and economic independence, they are able to chart out their individual destinies as women and mothers with greater degrees of freedom. Traditional family and social structures still continue to limit the choices that women make in terms of marriage and motherhood; however, these structures are also adapting to the personal freedoms which women are acquiring through educational and professional opportunities. As an increasing number of men become active participants in parenting and childcare, gender relations begin to reflect a more equitable balance between genders, and both motherhood and fatherhood are re-defined. Public as well as private policies in favour of the girl child, education for girls, employment opportunities for women, improved maternal and child healthcare, and extended maternity as well as paternity leaves, all help to provide a more secure environment within which women can define their roles as mothers in more personally satisfactory ways. These are all promising signs for the future.

6.9 SUMMING UP

In this Unit, you have seen how motherhood is inextricably linked to gender roles in patriarchal societies such as ours. Through a critical analysis of the impact of patriarchy on mothering practices across urban and rural divides, and class and caste structures, we have attempted to unravel some of the detrimental effects of hierarchical social structures on women who mother. We have also seen the impact of increasing consumerism on the maternal body, especially in practices such as surrogacy. The impact of cultural legacies on the representation of maternal roles has also been examined. These discussions would have helped you to develop a critical insight on a very important aspect of women's lives, namely, mothering. An introduction to feminist perspectives would have also enabled you to identify some affirmative perceptions of mothering, both as lived reality and as metaphor.

(A few of the ideas discussed here have been adapted from the Unit "Maternal Bodies in Urban India", MWG 004, Gendered Bodies & Sexualities, 193-208, MA in Women's & Gender Studies Programme, IGNOU, 2013).

6.10 KEY WORDS

Maternal Mortality Rate: Maternal Mortality Rate is number of women who die from pregnancy related causes while pregnant or within 42 days of pregnancy termination per 100000 live births.

Workers Participation rate: The participation rate refers to the number of people who are either employed or are actively looking for work.

Under Five Mortality rate: Under five mortality rate is the probability per 1000 that a new born will die before reaching age five, if subject to age-specific mortality rates of the specified year.

Infant Mortality Rate: The infant mortality rate (IMR) is the number of deaths of infants under one-year-old per 1,000 live births.

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6.13 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) What impact do stereotypical gender roles have on motherhood practices in India? Discuss with the help of suitable examples from day to day life.
- 2) Do you think that caste and class differences matter in terms of motherhood? Explain with the help of examples that you may have come across.
- 3) Discuss some obvious links between patriarchy, capitalism and surrogacy in your own words.
- 4) What do you understand by the notion of the mother-nation as ‘maternal metaphor’? Explain in your own words.