

**IMPACT OF GENDER ROLES ON MIDDLECLASS CHILDREN  
A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES IN  
TRIVANDRUM**

*A Dissertation Submitted to the University of Kerala in the  
Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Masters of Arts  
Degree Examination in Sociology*

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## **DECLARATION**

I, **NIRANJANA VINOD PILLAI** do hereby declare that the Dissertation Titled **IMPACT OF GENDER ROLES ON MIDDLECLASS CHILDREN -A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES IN TRIVANDRUM** is based on the original work carried out by me and submitted to the University of Kerala during the year 2021-2023 towards partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree Examination in Sociology. It has not been submitted for the award of any degree, diploma, fellowship or other similar title of recognition before any University or anywhere else.

Thiruvananthapuram

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## **CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL**

This is to certify that this dissertation entitled **IMPACT OF GENDER ROLES ON MIDDLECLASS CHILDREN - A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE-CLASS FAMILIES IN TRIVANDRUM** is a record of genuine work done by Ms. NIRANJANA VINOD PILLAI fourth semester Master of Sociology student of this college under my supervision and guidance and that it is hereby approved for submission.

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## **Abstract**

Every individual is different so are families. Families come with a set of rules, that control their behaviour, interactions, gender roles, financial matters and the children also become impacted by this and become a part of this. In order to understand how different families behave, a study was conducted on five families in Trivandrum. Trivandrum was chosen because it a capital city with higher level of literacy. There are also many migrants here who came from different part of the state in search of job and better life style.

From the study it was understood that, economic status, social status, religion and education, employment status of the female member etc... influenced families' perception about gender roles and the children are also influenced by this.

# **CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Statement of the Problem

1.3 Significance of the study



## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Gender roles are the expectations, stereotypes, and behaviour expected of people because of their gender. These expectations come from societal norms. Gender roles can be expectations about someone's personality, job, appearance, behaviour, and even voice. Since modern society based itself upon older cultures where the men did all the work while the women stayed home and raised children, these elements are still prevalent today.

Research on gender roles and aging involves viewing maleness and femaleness as more than demographic or ascribed characteristics. It begins by distinguishing between sex – biological differences between males and females – and gender – cultural distinctions between masculinity and femininity. Gender is not a biological given, but is what people collectively agree that sex attributes mean. Societies construct men and women differently, and those differences reflect and perpetuate inequalities. To understand these inequities, scholars focus on gender relations: dynamic, constructed power relations embedded in social processes and institutionalized in social arenas, with consequences for life chances. As a concept, gender relations emphasizes that gender serves as a social organizing principle and that men and women gain identities and power in relation to one another. Because they result from social interaction, gender relations are dynamic. What is considered masculine and feminine varies by culture, by time, and across groups within cultures – including age cohorts. This translation of sex into gender shapes men's and women's experiences across the life course and into old age.

Gender is embedded in social relationships at all levels, from individual interactions and identities to institutional processes. Societies organize on the basis of gender such that what is taken to be masculine and feminine influences and reflects a division of labour, the performance of which is evaluated and rewarded in a differential fashion. Thus, the gender identities that emerge in social interaction also serve to privilege men – give them an unearned advantage – while they usually disadvantage women, even as people resist and reformulate seemingly natural gender differences and meanings.

Gender relations are systematic, embedded in patterns of behaviour such that they are taken for granted as simply the way things (i.e., families, jobs) work or the way things are. Thus, even though individuals enact them, gender relations are not dependent upon any one individual's actions or intentions, and they are often invisible. Because men's privileges are intimately tied

to women's disadvantages, the situation of one group cannot be understood without at least implicit reference to the position of the other.

Gender relations underlie gender roles – behaviours that are expected of men and women in institutional situations (such as family, work, public, recreational, and other settings), based on their gender. Gender roles are upheld by ideologies (systems of beliefs) that justify the appropriateness of these behaviours. As one example, we relegate care tasks to women in a variety of situations, whether they involve physical activities such as cooking and cleaning or emotional care work. Women are the ones who should provide care within families (gender role) because they are, by their nature, more nurturing (ideology). Because we assume that girls are more nurturing than boys, we give girls dolls but give boys trucks. Then, when they grow up to emulate these beliefs and develop divergent skills, we take that as evidence that these differences are natural and that men's privileges in the family and work spheres are somehow more deserved. Further, because care work is natural and is performed out of love (ideology), it need not be remunerated. Women are segregated in care work professions and are paid less than men in positions of comparable worth for these reasons. The relatively low pay renders many women dependent on male breadwinners. The ability of men as a group to be breadwinners (gender role), to compete with other men for status and wealth and make significant wages, also rests upon the often invisible, unpaid care work and reproductive labour provided by women in family homes (gender role) out of love. Because these gender relations are embedded in the structures and collective beliefs of families, they do not depend upon any individual's intentions.

#### Gender-Role Attitudes

Despite gains that women have made over the last decades in the domains of health, education, the labour market/economic participation, and political representation, the ordinal hierarchy that advantages men over women remains (Cotter, Hermsen, & Vanneman, 2011; Ridgeway, 2011). The resilience of gender inequality may partly be due to factors at other levels of the social ecology. Specifically, scholars argue that traditional attitudes toward gender roles are also responsible for the persisting inequalities between women and men (Farré & Vella, 2013; Inglehart & Norris, 2003). Gender-role attitudes (also often called sex-role attitudes or gender ideology) refer to an individual's approval or disapproval of traditional gender roles or the shared cultural expectations about appropriate role-related behaviours for men and women and girls and boys (McHugh & Frieze, 1997). Usually centred on notions of femininity and masculinity, these attitudes are often conceptualized as falling on a continuum ranging from

traditional to egalitarian (Amato & Booth, 1995). Individuals with a traditional view support a gendered division of family labour, regarding women as homemakers responsible for parenting and men as the wage earner and decision maker. Egalitarian gender-role attitudes include a more equal view on participation in decisions, paid labour, and domesticities (Amato & Booth, 1995; Katz-Wise, Priess, & Hyde, 2010).

### Measurement of Gender-Role Attitudes

Gender-role attitudes have been operationalized and measured in a range of ways (Davis & Greenstein, 2009; McHugh & Frieze, 1997; Vespa, 2009). Although some work has used interviews and participant observation to categorize individual gender-role ideologies (e.g., Hochschild & Machung, 1989), typically, self-report surveys are used to ask respondents whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements about women's and men's roles and responsibilities (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Davis and Greenstein (2009) identified six common dimensions across the various ways in which researchers have conceptualized and measured gender-role attitudes: (1) belief in separate spheres based on gender; (2) primacy of the breadwinner role; (3) motherhood and the feminine self; (4) working women and relationship quality; (5) household utility; and (6) male-privilege acceptance. For example, the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth and its Child/Young Adult Supplement (Centre for Human Resource Research, 2006) includes an item, "A woman's place is in the home, not in the office or shop," tapping belief in gendered separate spheres.

### Parents and their attitude towards children

Child-rearing practices vary widely across different cultures, and views about differences change over time, but there do seem to be some clear consistencies in the way boys and girls are treated, especially during the first few years of life. According to Albert Bandhura's social cognitive theory of gender development, parents often have clear gender stereotypes about "appropriate" behaviour for different genders and rely on punishment and rewards to ensure that their children abide by these expectations. Boys are often discouraged from playing with dolls or acting "effeminately," while girls are often prevented from doing any physically risky activities.

Some studies suggest that mothers talk more with their daughters and actively prevent them from any activity that might lead to their being injured. On the other hand, both mothers and

fathers appear more prone to engage in "rough and tumble" play (RTP) with boys rather than girls. There also appear to be gender differences in how parents respond to emotional outbursts. In a 2005 research study, fathers were found to be more receptive to daughters when they showed submissive emotions or prosocial behaviour, while they were more likely to respond to boys when they acted out or showed temper tantrums.

As far as children are concerned, gendered socialization should vary according to the parenting style, which depends on parent's education. High educated parents are much more involved in their children's lives than less educated parents and regardless of parental labour supply, in order to actively support their children's skill development early on. (Laurea, 2003) This implies empirically open predictions, as highly educated parents can either relieve their children of housework in order to free up their capacities so that they can invest in education, for example, or regard housework itself as an educational activity that promotes responsibility and provides guidance for growing up. (el.al, 2003) Basically, highly educated parents can transmit their more liberal approach to gender role attitudes to their children, which can at least reduce gender inequality in housework between daughters and sons. All of these arguments concerning the influence of education should be most pronounced in case of educational homogamy, especially if both parents have completed tertiary education. In this case, parents are said to share similar "liberal" attitudes toward gender roles, a lower propensity to specialize, and a similar sense of fairness concerning the distribution of work and time use (Bonke & Esping-Andersen, 2011; Greenstein, 1996). This might affect gendered socialization relative to gender composition of sibships and might translate into less gendered patterns of children's housework contributions, as parents then would transmit their sense of equality of equity to their children.

### Gender roles in India

Jayaji Krishna Nath, M.D. and Vishwanath R. Nayar wrote in the Encyclopaedia of Sexuality: "While it is mostly the husbands who are breadwinners, the women generally take care of the household activities, besides bearing and rearing children. However, due to widespread educational programs and improvement of educational facilities for girls, women nowadays are accepting jobs outside the home, and thus contributing financially to the family budget. Also, because of constant efforts in making women aware of their rights and the importance of their involvement in day-to-day family matters, the status of women has increased

significantly. Due to all these measures, women nowadays actively participate not only in their family affairs, but also in social and political activities in the communities

The occupations that were earlier monopolized by men are gradually being shared by women. Similarly, various professional courses like engineering, architecture, and allied disciplines are also studied by women. In spite of these changes initiated for the benefit of women in India, the people's attitude to equal status for women has not changed significantly in actual practice, and in this regard various educational programs for men are still in great need of changing their outlook. For instance, although the legal age of marriage for girls is set by the government at 18 years, people, especially in rural and tribal India, encourage early marriage for girls, mostly within a short time of their attaining puberty. Similarly, in the educational development, the dropout rate among females is very high.

Due to rapid social and technological changes, it is observed that in the recent period, traditional gender-role differentiation is breaking down, especially in the fields of education and work. The historical analysis of the status of women shows that in Vedic India, as revealed by its literature, women were treated with grace and consideration. However, in the post Vedic age, there was a slow but steady decline of their importance in the home and society. A decline, indeed a distinct degeneration in their status, is visible in medieval India. The purdah system of female seclusion, the sati tradition of immolating the widow on the husband pyre, dowry, and child marriages were obvious in the preindependence period. Following independence from England, however, there was a distinct, if uneven, and gradual liberal change in the attitude toward and status of women.

In India's male-dominated tradition, and everywhere in Vedic, classical, medieval, and modern Hinduism, the paradigms in myths, rituals, doctrines, and symbols are masculine. But just as goddess traditions encroached successfully on the territory of masculine deities, so too has the impact of women's religious activity, the ritual life in particular, been of increasing significance in the overall scale of Hindu tradition. To put this another way, in traditional life the unlettered folk have always shaped Hinduism, and half of them have been women. It is not feminine roles in Hinduism that have been lacking but rather the acknowledgment of such in literature, the arts, and institutions such as the priesthood and temple and monastic administrations. Only now, in a world rapidly changing because of education opportunities, are such institutions and media beginning to reflect accurately the total picture of Hindu class, caste, gender, and regional life. (knipe, 1991)

## 1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Recent research reveals that mothers of infants show a gender bias in favour of their sons. In one particular study, mothers were questioned on their young babies' crawling ability before it was objectively measured. Mothers of daughters believed their baby could crawl up slopes of 14 degrees, whereas mothers of sons believed their baby could crawl up slopes of 20 degrees. It seems that from a young age, parents have lower expectations of their daughters than their sons.

Research has been done to look at how differently parents treat their children depending on if they are a son or a daughter, and they looked at the type and amount of praise that the children were given. According to the US National Library of Medicine, when praise was looked at, they found that boys and girls got the same amount of praise from parents, but the type of praise they received was very different.

Boys were given more "process praise" than girls, they received 24.4 of this type of praise, when girls only receive 10.3%. Process praise is defined as praise for a child's efforts, a lack in process praise can mean that they lack motivation and persistence when they grow, and it could lead to low academic performance

Evidence suggests that parents are more likely to be involved with the school such as attending school meetings and contact teachers, when they have a son. The same research also more worryingly showed that parents are likely to have saved more money to further their son's education. Not having the same financial support from their parents may stop daughters from maximising their full academic potential.

It appears that fathers are prepared to invest more time in a son than a daughter, an effect which is thought to occur because fathers and sons have common ground and can share masculine activities. However, this effect is unfortunately not counterbalanced by mothers spending more time with their daughters (instead, mothers share their time more equally). Other research has shown that parents are more likely to engage with their son's play rather than their daughter's. Together, these findings suggest that parents interact more with sons than daughters, which has an impact on their social skills in later life.

Parents often assign chores to their children that are stereotypically for girls or boys. Boys are more likely than girls to have maintenance chores like mowing the lawn or painting, while girls are given domestic chores like cooking and cleaning. This segregation of household labour tells children that they are expected to take on different roles based on their gender.

While both parents influence their children's perceptions of gender, fathers in particular are more likely to reinforce common gender stereotypes, preferring to encourage gendered toys, sports and rough play with their sons versus their daughters. In addition, the way fathers treat their wives can have a long-term impact on their sons and daughters' personality and life choices.

United Nations Children's Fund data shows a consistent pattern of girls doing more housework than boys on a daily basis and across a diverse range of socio-economic and cultural contexts.

Society teaches children about socially accepted behaviour for boys and girls. For example, women are often expected to be accommodating and emotional, while men are usually expected to be self-confident and aggressive. Some people expect that women will take care of the children, cook, and clean the home, while men take care of finances, work on the car, and do the home repairs. Some people are quick to assume that teachers and nurses are women, and that pilots, doctors, and engineers are men. Women are expected to be thin and graceful, while men are expected to be tall and muscular. Men and women are also expected to dress and groom in ways that are stereotypical to their gender (men wearing pants and short hairstyles, women wearing dresses and make-up)

The present research aims at arriving at an understanding of how gender roles influence the family structure and shaping the mindset of children in it.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The present study gains significance in the scenario of urbanized middle class nuclear families where both husband and wife have equal roles in sustaining the financial security of the family. Only a financially stable family can foster the children in it in the right direction.

## **CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Reviews

2.3 Conclusion



## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Gender is not just a word but a system that is imparted to people before they are even born. Associating roles and colours and behaviour of the individuals and even justification of certain acts all comes under the system that has evolved with influence of the age-old practices. If time is changing by every second and minute and we are evolving with the rise in technology and education then the concept of gender and its roles should have been abolished many years ago. But unlike many practices that are considered a thing of the past gender has accompanied people across the world into the modern age. It has however modified in the past few decades. According to society, the role of a woman is to stay at home and take care of the children and her husband. An ideal woman should know how to cook and clean, and she should be soft-spoken. To them education is not an important aspect of a woman's life. An ideal male for them is someone who would go out and work to provide for his family. A barren woman and an unemployed man is of no value. Coming straight to today's generation the roles are quite similar in terms of women with having to take care of children and cooking whereas for men the roles and the power they hold in the family still remains the same. Has the society changed or are we still the same or even worse? Are we using the fact that now women can work and earn money, or has it changed at least the dependency that once women had on their husband and their sons? In the context of Indian society, I see a lot of women around me who cook and clean in the morning and then leave for the job and they are solely responsible for the household chores. They come at night and do the laundry while their husband are sitting ideally. Wouldn't it be good if this woman had help? Why doesn't she ever ask her husband to help her? These questions aroused in my mind as I tried to interpret these roles. Does education only means accumulating degrees and not becoming a better version of yourself? Are men insensitive because of their gender or are they a product of the stereotypes? Does money ensure freedom of choice? (Mishra, 2019)

### Women and Gender

Gender roles and stereotypes related to women The status of women has undergone many changes that have been influenced by the changing values and beliefs through decades. Although women are allowed to get education and work, they aren't considered as the authority figure in a household. The ever-growing society has added additional roles for women outside the household. Stereotypes following females in Indian society are enough to confuse anyone.

The birth of a female is still not considered as a good thing in the family as only male heirs are given supremacy. The birth of a girl is still a subject of debate and following this the sex determination before birth is banned in India. This step was taken to ensure that there were enough girls to maintain the sex ratio in some of the states which was dangerously getting low. This shows that we are still not into the modern age where we can accept and respect both the sexes. To this date females are pressurized to give birth to a male child irrespective of their own wish and risks to health. On the other hand, females are worshipped all over the country as they are considered as goddesses. People search for children to feed them and to give them gifts in the Navratri, but they do not want a goddess in their own home. The intent of this favouritism for men differs in households but the common fondness towards the boys remains the same (Mishra, 2019)

#### Women stereotyping their own self

In a lot of households, the elder generation of women are not particularly fond of the younger generation. Some of them even want to make their daughter in-laws go through the exact same thing as they have endured when they were young justifying the actions as right. A lot of children learn to differentiate between man and women by the way they are treated by their grandparents. The affection that is showed towards one gender (Mishra, 2019)

#### **Education for women**

It is still a common belief that it is better to send the sons in a good school rather than sending the girls as their ultimate role is to get married and have kids. They are not even the ones who would continue the name of the family. Getting good education for girls is still a matter of struggle and compromise. Most of the girls are still forced to skip school for helping their mother in household chores or for looking after their siblings. Even in so called educated and rich families girls are married off in the middle of their education as the parents fear they might want to take their own decisions in their life. The education for women is still not given importance and for them to have a career after marriage is a challenge in itself. (Mishra, 2019)

#### **Marriage**

Marrying a daughter off is probably the biggest concern of parents in Indian families. The stereotypes that define the role of women in the society requires them to be married off in a family which is considered suitable by the parents. Marriage is one of the biggest hindrances in the education of a girl. There is far more amount of pressure on a girl to get married as

compared to a boy. As a human being every girl has the right to choose their own partner and to choose the time appropriate for a milestone like marriage. It's very common to see a huge age gap between a husband and a wife with the wife being the younger in the relationship, but the opposite is rare and considered bad by the society. Women are still linked to their function of birthing children and raising them. A young wife is always considered ideal for the job. (Mishra, 2019)

### **Housewives and Working women**

A woman who stays at home is wife of the house. Her world revolves around the house and the responsibilities of its members. Raising children, cooking and cleaning are all done by these women. But these roles are also performed by those who are working these days. The only factor that is different between the two is money and the financial freedom that comes with the status however has little difference when it comes to decision making in the family and even sometimes about the woman herself. Money is only a way to express the freedom one has by spending it or saving it the way one wants, earning money does not indicate freedom of choices for an individual. (Mishra, 2019)

### **Childbirth and the stereotypes related to it**

Having children is probably the most important part of one's life. Imagine having to go through the whole period with stressing over the gender of the child. Not knowing what gender, one is carrying and the pressure of having a boy. The gestation period for female is filled with anxiety especially for those who already have given birth to a girl before. Women go to great lengths in hope of having a boy from praying to going to people for spiritual advice on having a boy are just one of a few examples on how the society has not changed its customs that favor the birth of a boy over a girl. The stigma around having children and the responsibility of producing a male is still prevailing in the country. Even though science has explained that it depends on the father, still women are considered as the reason behind it (Mishra, 2019)

### **Men and Gender**

What does it take to be a man in a society and in a household? Well, that depends upon the type of men a boy has seen while growing up. The behaviour of a man is what he has observed for many years of his childhood. Stereotyping men to be what is thought as strong and a typical starts from birth by associating them with blue colour. How many times have you seen a boy

rocking an all-pink outfit? Little things like the toys and the bedroom colour creates an image inside the mind of the children. (Mishra, 2019)

### **Expectations**

Just like women, men also go through a series of phases where they are expected to perform certain roles and duties in the household. The major acts and rituals in the family are all expected to be done by the male members of the family. Getting involved is often not a choice for the young children. (Mishra, 2019)

### **No Female Role Models at Home**

Instead of treating women as things to worship or as property the female figures of a home should have a stronghold in the family. The decisions made by them should be focused on creating an environment which shows equality and respect for both the genders. It's rare for a boy to say that he wants to be like his mother and do what she is doing. Children are conditioned in such a way that they associate their idols with their gender and not the things they want to achieve. The portrayal of a perfect home where girls look upon their mothers to be pretty and delicate like a flower and for boys to be tough and play football is never going to resolve these ideas but only sow them deep in their hearts (Mishra, 2019).

### **Masculinity**

Masculinity is a concept, influenced by the stereotypes running in the society for years. The concept of being a MAN is not based on human values rather it only shows the authoritative patriarchal view of the society. Men who do not find themselves falling along with everything that being a MAN stand for often find themselves in criticism and scrutiny by the society. (Mishra, 2019)

### **Insensitivity of Men**

Are men insensitive? Why do we always have to categorize human beings on the basis of their gender? Just like any other human being men are also raised to become what they become as they grow up. It is not inherent of any man to be insensitive of women in his life. It is sowed deeply as they grow up in a patriarchal household. Children always see and repeat things that happen in their house. If a young boy sees his mother and his sister in the kitchen working and he is even prohibited to enter, then as a young adult he would assume his wife and daughter to

do the same. Nobody has to tell the child about the gender roles in the society, they learn it as they grow up depending on their surroundings. Involvement of a child in household chores equally with his siblings is a subtle change that can go a long way to make them realize that there is nothing wrong with cooking and cleaning and that these processes are important to learn and to do as a human to survive. Gender discrimination and stereotyping starts at home and home is the first school of a child. Children are blank slates and the environment that they are raised in acts as a base for their principles and values in life. It's high time that we evaluate what we want to pass on to the future generations. We read a lot of cases everyday which involves a woman suffering at the hands of her husband or by the male figures in her life. But the opposite of it also exists and is very much true. Just because men are considered to be rough and tough does not change the fact that men are also humans, and they often go through the similar issues. These cases are fewer as compared to the vast number of cases that are reported by women. These cases are not given as much importance as the cases related to women. Sometimes men are also prohibited by the society to tell others about what they are going through to protect their masculinity and the image of a MAN. The world has all kinds of men and women and both could be either victims or the torturers. (Mishra, 2019)

Gender and its concept are deeply rooted in the society and is blindly followed by the people. Small changes in our household can make long lasting effects on this system. Treating children equally at home can bring about the changes in the ways future generation will think about gender. A society is made and developed by all of its members and fairness is essential in building a society that is at least free of the challenges that come along with gender discrimination and the roles related to it. Male, Female and Transgender are the pillars of the society and without acknowledgement of one the others cannot sustain on their own (Mishra, 2019).

Gender stereotype refers to the application of a gender behavioural model to people who are classified as a certain gender role, which has both nature and nurture basis [6]. From the perspective of nature, male and female are biologically and fixedly opposed to each other, with distinctions in bodies, brains, genes and hormones [7]; from the perspective of nurture, gender stereotypes are social constructs that compel people to "adapt to" stereotypical societal roles and behaviours with feminine or masculine characters [2]. Men are considered as powerful, supporting sustenance for the entire family, whereas women are regarded as weak and gentle, taking nurturing and caring roles [6] [7]. Gender stereotypes have become normalized in many cultures and their educational systems. In view of genetic and hormonal differences in male

and female brain development, children are more likely to form gender stereotypes [8]. Such a discourse consequently leads their gender stereotypical preferences to become "a natural expression of biological difference", with boys preferring physical activities such as fighting and tree climbing, while girls opting for quieter activities such as reading and role-play games [2 (Wang, 2021)].

In Southeast Asia, where the conventional patriarchy and gender roles are entrenched in raising children, it is common for parents to send their daughters to singlesex schools to shield them from "contamination" by boys [6] [9]. In fact, such a phenomenon also occurs in some Western countries. Many girls are sent to female exclusive schools, where they follow subtly different curriculum and sports activities with separate learning objectives and standards from coeducational or boys only schools [9]; these 'normalized' perspectives and approaches are intended to protect girls, who are biologically regarded 'vulnerable'. However, these stereotypes have long-term effects on children's awareness of gender equality and gender identities (Wang, 2021)

Notwithstanding the genes and hormones, children's acquired nurturing and individual experiences play the most critical roles in their development, which means that children are heavily shaped by role models from family members, teachers, and communities by accepting sociocultural expectations from surroundings and formulating their gender behaviours [10]. Therefore, a gender-divided environment could restrict children's mental and physical development, as such negative and stereotyped information places limits on their expected actions [11]. (Wang, 2021)

On the one hand, children who do not adhere to "proper" gender roles are more likely to be rejected by their peers or even penalized by adults if they fail to show their inherent masculine and feminine traits [2]. Consequently, children's emotional health and wellbeing could be long-term influenced by surrounding gender stereotypes. Meanwhile, girls, who are often considered as weak and innocent, may be entitled to more safeguards and limitations than boys. Despite its good intentions, this trend can lead to a submissive mentality with an inferiority complex among girls this trend will lead to the development of a submissive mentality with an inferiority complex in girls [2]. (Wang, 2021)

On the other hand, different cultural comprehensions and expectations on gender may also impact on children's future career choice. In modern society, especially in early childhood, gender division is still evident. As Breneselovic and Krnjaja (2016) claim [1], the dominance

of female early childhood teachers exposes the mainstream biased discourses of teachers' role is still the 'family replacement' to take care of children, since this is regarded as women's natural expertise. In this context, children are more likely to form biased views on gender roles through observation, interaction and role modelling [12]. (Wang, 2021)

Moreover, subjects in school curriculums are usually divided along gender lines and children may express their preferences to align with their gender characteristics. Physics, for example, is deemed as a masculine scientific discipline whereas biology has more feminine overtones [13]. Consequently, a wider gender inequality will continue to exist in children's learning environments, impacting on their future career paths and employment opportunities. (Wang, 2021)

At an early age, children demonstrate stereotyped beliefs about the gender roles that are dominant within their culture (Berk, 2009) . Researchers have documented young children's tendency to "essentialize gender"—that is, to make assumptions about males and females based on their sex (Gelman, Taylor& Nguyen,2004, p.1). Rigid adherence to stereotypical gender roles can have negative consequences in childhood and beyond, as these stereotypes can limit children's educational and occupational aspirations, perceived academic competency, emotional expression and social development (Liben, Bigler, & Krogh, 2002; Rainey & Rust, 1999). Without the ability to question socially prescribed gender norms, male and female children alike may fail to recognize the full spectrum of their cognitive and social capacities (Rainey & Rust, 1999). Empowering children to broaden their views of gender-appropriate behaviour depends, in part, on identifying the factors that contribute to children's gender-role attitudes.

Research suggests that the gender of both parent and child play a role in how gendered beliefs are passed across generations; however, there is conflicting evidence regarding the nature of these relationships. On one hand, a study of 346 infants, toddlers and 5-year-olds and their parents concluded that fathers' communication about gender roles is directed more toward sons than daughters, and that ideologically traditional fathers enforce more traditional behaviour in children (Fagot & Hagan, 1991). In a related study of 134 Israeli families with adolescents, Kulik (2002) found that fathers and sons have stronger ideological agreement than fathers and daughters. A study of 158 mothers and their fifth-grade children found that egalitarian mothers provided equal help to sons and daughters with math homework, but highly educated mothers with traditional views gave more instruction to sons than daughters

(Lindberg, Hyde, & Hirsch, 2008). In contrast, other findings suggest that familial gender socialization is similar for boys and girls. For example, in a study of 550 high school and college students, the gendered content of parent-child discourse varied little between families with sons versus daughters (Epstein & Ward, 2011).



## 2.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Despite progress towards gender equality, women still lag behind men in career advancement, a disparity that becomes most pronounced once women become mothers (Stone, 2007). One factor that blocks women's achievement in the paid labour force is inequality in unpaid domestic labour (Croft A. , 2014). Even in heterosexual families in which both partners work full time, wives report doing twice as much housework and child care as their husbands, a phenomenon known as the *second shift* (Hochschild & Machung, 2012). Not only does this discrepancy at home pose a barrier to women's professional advancement, it can also model gender roles to children (Croft A. , 2014).

Role models have been shown to be effective at enabling young women to envision themselves in counter stereotypical roles in leadership (Beaman, 2012) and science (Stout, Dasgupta, Hunsinger & Mc Macnus, 2011). Mothers' employment outside of the home predicts children's attitudes and aspirations. (Barak, Feldman, & Noy, 1991).

Much of the research documenting the transmission of gender-role beliefs from parents to children has used self-reported measures, which have revealed a moderate but significant relationship between the beliefs of parents and children (Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002). However, parents' explicitly reported gender-role beliefs are only weakly predictive of children's self-views and aspirations (Fulcher, 2011; Fulcher et al., 2008; Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002). One reason for these relatively weak effects could be that children receive conflicting information about gender roles. Given evidence that normative pressures and egalitarian values can lead to self-reported beliefs about gender equality that are distinct from implicit associations and actual behaviour (Devos, Blanco, Rico, & Dunn, 2008; Nosek, 2005; Rudman, Greenwald, & McGhee, 2001), parents might report more egalitarian beliefs about domestic labour than their actual behaviour or implicit associations support. For example, even couples who are motivated to divide domestic labour equally still report a distribution of household tasks along traditional gender lines (Doucet, 2001; Wiesmann, Boeije, van Doorne-Huiskes, & den Dulk, 2008).

Furthermore, research on implicit cognition has revealed that implicit stereotypical associations between social groups can predict biased behaviour even among egalitarian-minded individuals (Greenwald, Poehlman, Uhlmann, & Banaji, 2009). For example, undergraduates' implicit associations of "dad" with "work" and "mom" with "home" predict

how they expect to resolve work family conflict (Park, Smith, & Correll, 2010). On the basis of such findings, we hypothesized that parents' implicit gender role associations and observable behaviours would independently predict Childrens' 'developing aspirations, irrespective of parents' explicit gender beliefs. (Croft,2014)

To test these hypotheses, we measured parents' explicit beliefs and implicit associations about gender roles, their implicit and explicit self-stereotypes, and their self-reported work and domestic contributions. We tested these as predictors of their children's beliefs about domestic gender roles, self-stereotyping, and self-reported occupational aspirations. Replicating past research (Tenenbaum & Leaper, 2002), we expected Childrens' gender-role beliefs to be predicted by their parents' explicit gender-role beliefs. In contrast, we expected that children's future aspirations would be predicted by parents' implicit gender-role associations, self-stereotyping and contribution to domestic labour, independently of parents' work hours and explicit gender-role beliefs (Croft, 2014).

We also tested child gender as a moderator of how mothers' and fathers' implicit and explicit beliefs and associations, as well as their behaviours, predict their Childrens' outcomes. Although we had no clear a priori hypotheses based on the current literature, we considered several theoretically derived alternatives. For example, if children model themselves after their same-sex parent, we might observe a higher correspondence of beliefs between mothers and daughters and between fathers and sons than between children and their opposite-sex parent (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1961; Fulcher & Coyle, 2011). Alternatively, if women are the power brokers at home (Williams & Chen, 2013), then women's beliefs and behaviours might best predict both sons' and daughters' beliefs when it comes to domestic stereotypes. A third prediction however, is that men's higher status in society (e.g., Conway, Pizzamiglio, & Mount, 1996; Ridgeway, 1991) gives fathers a gatekeeping role that could accord their beliefs, implicit associations, and behaviours a unique power in shaping their Childrens' aspirations. (Croft, 2014)

Our results showed that children's explicit beliefs about gender differences in domestic labour were predicted by the same beliefs held by their mothers, as well as by their fathers' tendency to self-stereotype as more work oriented than family oriented. But for daughters, in particular, a tendency to self-stereotype as more family than work oriented in the future was uniquely predicted by their parents' beliefs and behaviours. Specifically, girls were more likely to envision themselves as working outside the home when their fathers reported more gender-

egalitarian beliefs about domestic labour, but also when their mothers reported doing relatively less domestic work and self-stereotyped as more work oriented (Croft, 2014).

### **Indian Family structure**

The importance of family structure in India had been recognized since Vedic age. The concept of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* (The earth is one family) was given to the world by India. Indian people learn the essential themes of cultural life within the bosom of a family. However, the last two decades have drastically changed Indian social scenario. A sudden shift from joint to nuclear to single parent or childless families is apparent. In such a situation dealing with financial, social and moral obligations is becoming more and harder for the earning member of family. Be it time, location or desired attention, the earning members find themselves trapped in middle of conflicting responsibilities. And, even if they chose one of them, the other side always hankers for attention. Where to compromise becomes the decision point and family appears as the easier solution. But this decision makes the compromised party the detached or distressed one. The problem aggravates when the family members have to reposition to distant lands. Manageable problems such as, time, money and attention has shifted to serious problems of security and health issues. In the recent past, the effect globalization has further intensified the change of social and family structures in the world and India is not an exception. India's fertility rate has fallen, and couples have begun to bear children at a later age. At the same time, life expectancy has increased, resulting in more elderly people who need care. All of these changes are taking place in the context of increased urbanization, which is separating children from elders and contributing disintegration of family-based support systems (Srivastava and Sasikumar 2003)

#### **Change in Fertility:**

The reduction in average annual rate of population growth primarily occurred due to reductions in fertility levels. An inevitable outcome of declining fertility rates and increasing age at first birth in most of the countries in the world, including India, is a reduction in family size. Fertility declined due to the combined effect of substantial socio-economic development achieved during the last two decades and the effective implementation of family planning programs. Hence, it has become irrational for many people to have large families as the cost of children is increasing. A main, emerging feature of modern family is the changing attitude towards the value of children. In traditional societies, where human labor was a source of strength to the family, more children were preferred to fewer. But as the economic contribution from the

children in a family decreased, because of a move away from agriculture, the need for large numbers of children decreased. Improvements in health care and child survival also contributed. The emphasis was on the quality of life rather than the quantity of children, a new concept added to family values.

### **Change in Age at marriage:**

In many countries in world where significant declines in fertility are being experienced, reductions in the proportion of people never married have often coincided with or preceded declines in marital fertility. A substantial increase of the proportions never married, among both males and females, at young ages, has been noted in many countries. A consequence of the increase in the proportion of never married young adults is the gradual upward trend of the average age at marriage. The highest increase in average age at marriage of females during the period 1970 to 1990 was observed in India. A higher median age at first birth is an indicator of lower fertility. Postponement of marriage among females resulted postponement of childbearing with reduction in family size.

### **Change in Mortality:**

Mortality declines, particularly infant mortality, everywhere preceded the decline of fertility. Improved survival rates of children mean that when women reached the age of 30, they increasingly had achieved the completed family size they desired. Earlier, much larger numbers of births were required to achieve the desired completed family size. In the last three decades infant mortality has declined significantly in every country and this trend undoubtedly influenced the fertility decline. Mortality decline, followed by fertility decline, altered the age structure of the population and also the structure within individual families.

### **Change in family Size:**

In India, the reduction of the family size could be attributed partly to economic difficulties, low levels of income, the high cost of living, the costs of education of children and the desire to maintain a better standard of living, which is best achieved within the more affordable smaller size family. Consequently, the nuclear family with its Parents and children became the model of society and soon ruled out the traditional, extended family usually constituting three generations. In the meantime, female headed households have become a steadily growing phenomenon (Bruce and Lloyd, 1992) and increasing in India.

### **Marriage Dissolution:**

It is no longer the case that all marital unions, whether formal or informal reach final dissolution through death. A considerable proportion of unions are disrupted suddenly for reasons such as desertion, separation or divorce. An obvious failure in family relationship is where husband and wife cease to live together. Those women who are divorced at latter ages mostly remain single for the rest of their lives and live with their dependents. The idea that when a couple has children it will be less likely to divorce is widely accepted in most societies. However, it is believed that in the last couple of years even in most of the Asian cultures, including India, a growing proportion of divorces involve couples with young children (Goode, 1993).

### **Participation of Women in Economic development:**

The commercialization process which opened markets in many developing countries has succeeded in replacing the traditional co-operation in economic relationship, with that of competition. In this process, the social institutions in these countries found themselves in conflict with the key aspects of the new economic systems. The economics of the family and the sexual division of labor within the family are very much determined by opportunities in the labor market. The developing economic of system India has facilitated the freeing of women from household chores and their entrance to the labor market. The declining ability of men to earn a 'family wage' along with the growing need for cash for family maintenance has resulted in an increasing number of female members (particularly the wife) in the family engaging in economic activities (Lloyed and Duffy, 1995).

### **MIGRATION:**

#### **1. The Impact of International Migration on the Family:**

The migration of married persons in substantial proportions and delayed marriage of women have had an impact on patterns of growth of the population in India. Transfer of the dependency burden of the family from the younger to older generations in the short run is an immediate outcome of the migration of prime working age members of the family with increase in the proportion of older persons. Migration has Changed the age composition, with a skewed effect in the direction of a larger proportion of older persons in the family (De Silva, 1994a). The workers long absences from their households - especially in the case of married persons with young children - made it necessary for them to seek the assistance of parents or other siblings to attend to the needs of the young children and to assist the spouse left behind

(Andrews, G.R. and M. M. Hennink, 1992). One outcome of short-term overseas migration for employment is that grandparents are called upon to play a significant role as members of the extended family. The extended family system, which was virtually collapsing due to lifestyle changes brought in by various urbanization and westernization processes, has risen again.

## **2. Internal Migration:**

Rural to urban migration enhances the process of urbanization and is inevitably linked to the process of economic development. The flow of people from rural to urban areas occurs largely for economic reasons. There are other reasons, such as the better educational or health services available in urban areas, that function as pull factors to draw people from rural to urban areas. Social and economic disparities and lack of job opportunities in rural areas have resulted in increased rural to urban migration in the country (Perera, 1992) with a remarkable change in the family structure.

### **Effects of Urbanization on Family:**

The increased proportions of population residing in urban areas of country have been observed during last the two decades. This urbanization processes have a tendency to stabilize the nucleation of the family system because urban congestion and housing patterns, particularly of the low-income groups, discourage large households. A gradual collapse of the extended family system tended to create new problems of family support for the young dependents and older persons in the family. Moreover, consequent to rural to urban migration and rapid urbanization processes, a small average household size is observed for urban areas, compared to rural, almost in every part of the country.

### **Impact of Ageing on Family:**

Caring for older persons seems to have other implications that are an outcome of changing societal norms and the resultant changes that had taken effect within families. The traditional obligations towards parents and the duty, to provide them with the love and care that they deserve, are now difficult to fulfill. The prospect of the younger people living with their parents is becoming increasingly difficult if not impractical, as the search for employment opportunities takes them away from their homes and to distant lands (UN, 1999). Changing out looks and the need for adult children to move in search of employment is result in declines in coexistence of multi-generational members of the family. This is particularly the case in the event of rapid urbanization, where the members of the extended family living in rural areas are

left behind in rural areas, as children move to the cities. This is an important process affecting the family structure. (IPS, 1998; De Silva, 1994a). Further, western values of individualism and self-realization are making the younger generation less willing to sacrifice time to provide physical care for elderly parents (Mason, 1992). This may be a major problem in the family in relation to care giving aspects of support for older persons in future (Bloom, D.E., A. Mahal, et al., 2010). Further, Population ageing leads to increased health care costs. After the age of 65 years or so, the probability of disability or of impairment in general functioning increases dramatically. As the number of disabled older persons increases, these individuals will need additional support in order to maintain themselves (Rannan-Eliya et al., 1998).

### **Impact of Globalization:**

Globalization accelerates the free flow of labour across continents. Globalization and open economies have created opportunities for migration, and this has influenced the family to change its structure. Specifically skilled men and woman in large numbers are migrating to middle east countries seeking employment. As a result, the traditional decision-making responsibility of the male head of the family, in a patriarchal society started collapsing with foreign employment and improved economic status of women. In most of the families, with overseas employed women, the husband become “house husband” as opposed to the “bread winner” of the family; he in fact was dependent on the wife and it has affected changes in traditionally defined familial relationships, roles and duties of the household.

### **Concept of Nuclear family:**

In recent decades, globalization has tended to promote the nucleation of family units. Difficulties of childbearing and rearing due to formal sector employment, lack of government incentives, global cultural influences, and rural to urban migration have diminished the importance of the extended family. The nuclear family has a high capacity for mobility. This capability is advantageous as families move from one place to another within short periods of time due to the instability and working routines involved with new kinds of jobs. Another adaptive method of coping with new trends is for families to consume services they no longer provide directly to their members. Moving towards substitutes for familial functions and services is marked by a growing number of day care centers, supermarkets and take-away restaurants, homes for the aged, and paid hospitals for health care. So, as we try to understand how families in this region respond to the process of globalization, we are left with only one

general conclusion which implies that the future outcome will be nothing but complete nucleation of families and westernization of family norms and structure with emerging family types such as single parent families.

Family is the cornerstone of many concepts in the social sciences, and especially in demography and sociology. It is generally regarded as a major social institution and is positioned as the locus of much of an individual's life-course decisions. It is a social unit created by blood relation, marriage, or adoption. The family is the basic and important unit of society because of its implied role in the generation of size and quality of human capital and livelihood resources. Social and religious institutions have also vested power in family and kin to influence behaviours and attitudes at the individual, household, and community level. The family is also often treated as a protective unit for the vulnerable groups that is, children, women, and the elderly. It stands as a major source of sustenance, care, socialization and an institution that works as a bridge between individuals and society. Thus, the family has always been an important unit of analysis in an effort to improve and understand human development. (Swastika Chakravorty, 2021)

Family dynamics are best interpreted in the context of household and individual as a component of the family. To study the emerging inequalities in transiting Indian society, it is important to recognize the role of the family in reproducing these inequalities among individuals and within the family itself. Indian society is dynamic and complex and at the same time, it is traditional and conservative with higher importance for the prevailing socio-cultural norms (Kapadia, 1958; Karve, 1953). In recent decades, though the family has emerged as an important domain of study globally, its potential as an intervention or as a unit for the well-being of its members is yet to be realized in India. Also, no studies in the past have been able to make a clear demarcation between families and households. Most studies use these terms interchangeably since most large-scale surveys in India collect data at the household level (Swastika Chakravorty, 2021)

One of the major reasons for the transformation within families is the distinctive shift in marriage and kinship patterns (Cherlin, 2004; Das, 1976; Shah & Patel, 2011; Uberoi, 1998, 2004). Despite holding its significance as a necessary event in an individual's life course, there has been a shift from viewing marriage as a cultural norm to view it as an economical choice by individuals who prefer to enter into a union rather than staying single (Becker,



1974; Shah, 2005). They exercise autonomy in selecting their partner and women, in particular, are continuing their jobs after marriage managing both the personal and professional lives (Swastika Chakravorty, 2021)

Most of the large-scale surveys in India, define households based on co-residence and sharing of the same kitchen. However, it is largely agreed that families can exist beyond the perimeters of residence with strong emotional, behavioural and financial inter-dependencies (Bender, 1967; Borell, 2003; Shah, 1974; Uberoi, 2004). For instance, increasing employment and education-related migration has led to emergence of a new form of families known as transnational families (Singh, 2016). In India, such families play a crucial role in economic well-being of specific regions through remittances. Ratha et al. (2016), estimated that India received a total of US\$78.6 billion as remittances. Moreover, such families also serve as effective mediums of cultural and behavioural diffusion. However, to study such family forms, we need to capture the much larger and dynamic concept of “families” rather than “households” in future surveys. The lack of uniform definitions of the concepts regarding structure of families that can be operationalized in large-scale surveys and the conflation of families and households are two of the basic issues that need to be dealt with to advance more complex and dynamic ideas of family demography. (Swastika Chakravorty, 2021)

Most of the demographic characteristics, socio-religious beliefs and practices influence the nature of the Indian family system and also reflect the changes taking place in it. The Indian family is by and large patriarchal in structure (Kapadia, 1982). In a patriarchal family set up, all male that is, husband, elder brother and father, perform duties like decision making for the rest of the family, and their physical and moral protection. This patriarchal set up is changing slowly towards equalitarian interaction among the educated, urban middle classes, and also among some rural set ups (Mullatti, 1995). Even in matrilineal and matrilocal cultures patriarchy seems to be prevalent in the form of power held by the brother and not by the women herself. Patriarchal structure – roles, responsibility, control, and distribution of resources within the family are strictly determined by age, gender and generation. The establishment of the family system is believed to be mainly for the fulfilment of religious obligations like ancestor worship, begetting a male child and passing social religious traditions to the next generation. Patriarchal families continue to be patrilineal and patrilocal; and the lineage is based on the father’s family. The Hindu Code Bill of 1954-1956 (as cited in Pylee, 1979) has introduced a few changes in this system by allowing some share of the property to the daughter, inter-

religion and -caste marriage rights, equal rights to women with respect to adoption, divorce, and remarriage.

In India an ongoing tension between microstructurally- generated pressures that increase the desirability of education for women and microstructurally- generated pressures that constrain women's education in order to preserve a set of social institutions and associated beliefs that we call *patrifocal family structure and ideology*. As in most intensive agricultural, socially stratified, state level societies, there have been evolved in India a set of predominant kinship and family structures and beliefs that give precedence to men over women- sons over daughters, fathers over mothers, husbands over wives, and so on. While more pronounced among upper castes and classes than lower status ones and while more predominant in North India than in South India, these male-oriented structures and beliefs, we suggest, constitute a socio-cultural complex that profoundly affects women's lives, and, hence their access to education and educational achievement (Mukhopadhyay, 2021).

### **Kerala Family Structure**

In the past, the size of the family was relatively big, the kinship network was large and kinship obligations more. Now a day, most of the households are simple in composition. This is part of development [1]. This view is applicable to Kerala state also. The high cost of living and the new opportunities for the expression of egoistic impulses have made the family composition simple. A wide change in the perception towards family has occurred in the minds of people of Kerala. Through demographic transition and the influence of Western culture, the traditional values have been greatly modified. They come to know that by reducing family size, they can also enjoy a better life with all facilities as in other developed countries (Thomas, 2017).

Social and cultural factors are very predominant in determining the pace of the demographic pattern of a region. Generally, gender inequalities are manifested in the form of early marriage of females, dowry, female infanticide, female child labour, poor education to females, strong preference to sons against daughters, long breast feeding to male infants, cultural restrictions on some kind of food to females etc. (Thomas, 2017)

It is interesting to note that all the cultural traits mentioned above holds good for Kerala at a lesser degree. In Kerala, the position of the females is far better than their counterparts in the rest of India. The credit of positive trend observed in Kerala is due to the uniqueness of its culture evolved through the ages. In Kerala, female child has far attraction than in any other part of the country. Even though, the parents prefer the first male child, they seldom detest the birth of female child and hence reports of female infanticide are absent among different castes of Hindus and other religious groups [2]. Inter-state migration of females and their subsequent employment outside the state has enhanced the social and economic status of females in Kerala (Thomas, 2017)

. The emergence of micro families has radically changed the attitude, attention and responsibilities of males towards the health care and food requirements of their wives and children. The female partners are treated as steppingstone to build the family life which has reduced the gender inequalities among the middle-income status groups. The high female sex ratio existing in Kerala has not rendered any positive effect upon the socio-economic and cultural development of the state (Thomas, 2017)

. The sex ratio implies the number of females per thousand male populations. In Kerala, the female sex ratio increased at an alarming rate from 1005 in 1901 to 1084 in 2011. One of the important reasons that have contributed to the favourable sex ratio is the family organization in Kerala. The system of female inheritance the right of female residence and the right to divorce and remarry if widowed, gave to women in Kerala a unique status unknown to the rest of India [3]. (Thomas, 2017)

One of the striking and most impressive changes that have taken place in the state during the last three decades is the decline in fertility. With levels of income and nutrition among the lowest, this state has achieved results in controlling population growth comparable to those in the most successful middle-income countries. In the 1980s mortality decline accelerated in Kerala and fertility decline and increase in age at marriage continued without much deceleration [4]. Even with the very low infant mortality rate, fertility has reached replacement level. (Thomas, 2017)

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) for the Kerala state stood at 4.1 in 1971 and came down to 1.7 in 2011 [5]. This fertility decline aroused the attention of demographers and other

researchers. Rajan and Gulati (1991) and National family Health survey (1992-'93) analysed the age specific fertility rates for Kerala between 1971, 1981, 1992-93, 2000 and 2012 and their studies show that the decline in fertility has occurred in all age groups, but the decline is very impressive in ages above 30 [3] (Thomas, 2017)

Fertility has reached replacement level in Kerala. Fertility preference in Kerala has registered a major shift since 1980. Kerala women now want a very small family with one or two children. A larger proportion of women were able to implement their fertility preferences than in previous years, thus reducing the proportion of excess fertility women and the proportion of unwanted births (Thomas, 2017).

### **Gender Roles and Stereotyping in Indian Families**

Gender roles can be defined as “often unspoken rules that govern the attributes and behaviours that are valued and considered acceptable for men, women, and gender minorities” (Heise et al., 2019, p. 2441). The behaviour patterns that females and males exhibit in the private and public spheres are regarded as gender roles. These gender norms play a significant role in shaping education, distribution of power and resources, health and well-being, and work opportunities. In India, researchers are increasingly looking into unequal gender norms and attitudes among children and adolescents. Males and females adopt gender roles depending on personal choice and the prevalent social norms (Patel et al., 2021, p. 2).

According to social structural theories, these ideals can span from conventional to non-conventional (Early & Wood, 1999, p. 409). According to recent research, even young adolescents comply with unfair gender roles with girls steadily reporting more egalitarian attitudes than boys (Patel et al., 2021, p.2). Traditional gender roles and beliefs have far-reaching consequences for both girls and boys.

Furthermore, a person's gender ideology could have a significant impact on how their family functions as well as their parenting methods (Katz-Wise et al., 2010). The role of parents, especially mothers, in influencing children's gender attitudes has been recorded in a few of the studies that have intensively evaluated the development of gender attitudes in India (Basu et al., 2017). The division of labour in a family can be interpreted as problematic and inequitable between mothers and fathers, creating friction amongst them (Gordon & Mickelson, 2018;

Twenge, Campbell, & Foster, 2003). Traditional gender-role beliefs could strain couple relations, adversely affect parenting, thereby increasing parents' risk to engage in harsh or abusive parenting (Gowda et al., 2019, p. 3). It is also interesting to note that fathers that are less engaged in child-rearing practices seem to be more likely to be found in homes where women and men embrace conservative values regarding marriage and parenthood (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). A detailed analysis of the social construction of gender could reveal interrelationships between ecocultural factors and child development that result in differences in boys' and girls' preconceptions of similar tendencies (Langer et al., 2019 p.1)

### **Concept of Middle Class**

Karl Marx gave one of the first few theories on social class. Marx postulated that the middle class forms a social group—he called it the “petite bourgeoisie “of the individuals who possess private property but enough to employ people in wage labour. Marx believed that this group would disappear as the capitalist system progressed. Max Weber’s theory on class was similar to Marx’s idea in many ways. Weber, like Marx, believed that the middle classes can be defined by economic criteria. However, he also believed that classes in a market economy share the same economic position and thus received the same rewards. Weber also differentiated non-property-owning classes into two groups: individuals with marketable skills, termed the middle class and those without it, called unskilled labour. Unlike Marx, he believed that the middle class would expand as the capitalist system grew.

In the West, the merchant class of the 14th-16th centuries established the roots of the middle class. By the 18th century, the merchants, industrialists, doctors, etc. separated themselves from the aristocracy and poor classes. With industrialisation and the French Revolution, this new social class grew even bigger while aristocracy declined. With an increase in urbanisation, the direct interaction of merchants and consumers declined, leading to the growth of new financial and trading institutions. Smaller classes of doctors and engineers began growing and became known as the new middle class. In India, the social conditions that led to the growth of middle-class families were different from the West. Western ideas of administration and modern industrial activity emerged under British rule in India. But unlike the West, the average Indian middle-class family was not a merchant or a business owner, but a lawyer, doctor, or civil

servant, because of the high demand for employees in the new administrative institutions started by the British.

After independence in 1947, many of these British institutions were carried forward by Indian leaders, and it was the Indian middle class who took on leadership roles in these institutions. Thus emerged three classes in Indian society: unskilled and skilled manual labour— clerks, peons, etc., who were at the lower end of the spectrum; big industrialists and zamindars, who formed the upper class; and finally, the middle class made up of government officers, doctors, professors in universities, etc. An uneducated but rich trader in India would not be considered middle class. Thus, the Indian middle class was defined more by education than income. (Milan Vaishnav, 2014)

After independence, government policies directed towards equitable growth led to significant changes to the Indian social demographic. Some of these include:

- The green revolution, establishment of industries in backward areas, and spread of education led to the rise of big farmers as well as individuals who were stakeholders in industries
- The new Indian government laid more emphasis on the growth of the service sector than the industrial sector, which led to an increase in the demand for professionals in banks, hotels, financial companies, etc
- Reservation policies also led to increased social mobility for repressed classes, like the Dalits, in government schools and offices. This led to the emergence of a Dalit middle class in India (Milan Vaishnav, 2014)

Even within the same income categories, however, there are marked differences between rural and urban India. There could be several reasons for this. For one, we are comparing nominal incomes and not real incomes, given the much higher cost of living in urban areas. Second—and this reflects disagreements about whether a coherent middle-class identity comes about due to social or economic factors or is instead the result of political factors—ascriptive identities (especially caste) are more salient in rural relative to urban India. Historically, the “middle class” construct has been a production of the forces of industrialisation and urbanisation. Middle class belonging also increases with educational attainment: the more educated one is, the more likely she is to claim to be middle class (Milan Vaishnav, 2014)

## **Middle Class Children**

A child's experience of their childhood is shaped by who they spend their childhood with. This revolves around which social class they belong to. Middle-class children rarely see their relations even if they live close by, whereas poor and working-class children have strong ties with their relations and see them often (Lareau, 2002). Middle-class children have such busy schedules they do not have time to visit extended relatives. Poor and working-class children spend their birthdays almost entirely with their family and not their peers from school or activities like middle-class children (Lareau, 2002). A child's experience of their birthday was different depending on their social class. Middle-class children are listened to more and given more attention, although not always and not by every middle-class family. They are given a greater number of opportunities to negotiate and discuss issues or events (Lareau, 2002). Middle-class children have the ability to use their debating and reasoning skills to get what they want from their parents. They picture themselves as worthy of and entitled to their parent's time. In comparison to middle-class children being entitled, working class children are "viewed as subordinate to adults" (Lareau, 2002; 77). Working-class children are listened to but not always responded to. Conversations are not seen as opportunities to expand their critical thinking skills or analytical skills, whereas they are among middle-class families. Working-class parents and children were uneasy during these interactions, whether formal or informal. They distrusted and feared most social institutions as many working-class families had experienced negative ordeals with social institutions such as schools. In Lareau's study (2002), Harold's mother who is black and poor, gets her nephew to observe a weigh in and pass on the information, rather than trusting what the doctor says. Working class parents felt inferior to professionals who themselves were middle-class. Parents from working-class families passed on feeling of powerlessness when dealing with professionals to their children (Lareau, 2002). In contrast, middle-class parents were confident when criticising professionals such as educators as a result of their own education. They also had a wider vocabulary so they understood the interactions with professionals more than working class parents did. Working class parents were not as aware of the terms being used in these interactions and often appeared confused (Lareau, 2002)

## **Gender stereotypical parenting**

When it comes to general parenting practices in early childhood – being warm, being sensitive and applying parental control – differences in the treatment of boys and girls are small. Yet differences appear in “implicit” parenting practices. As soon as a child is identified as a boy or a girl, parents form expectations about the child’s interests, skills and behaviours, and these expectations appear in gendered parenting practices. Mesman and Groeneveld define two types of implicit gendered parenting in early childhood: (1) direct messages conveyed to the child about his or her own behaviour and (2) indirect commentary on the behaviour of others.

Much research has examined how parents choose films, books and commercial products differently for boys and girls, even if these parents do not endorse gendered messages explicitly. When parents consistently buy female-stereotyped toys such as dolls and tea sets for their daughters, or male-stereotyped toys such as trains and dinosaurs for their sons, they implicitly link their children’s sex to gender roles. These roles are encouraged as the children play with the toys in different ways.

Parenting also respond differently to disruptive behaviour in boys and girls. Studies have shown that mothers respond less negatively to a son’s risky and disruptive behaviour and are less likely to encourage a son’s prosocial behaviour. This is consistent with the stereotype that boys are risk takers and challenging, but girls are nice to others.

When researchers observed parents reading books with their toddlers, they found that mothers tended to comment more positively about drawings of children doing stereotypical activities than about those doing the opposite. Fathers commented even more often than mothers to confirm gender stereotypes. Fathers with two boys made fewer negative comments about drawing of boys being mean than about drawings of girls being mean. In the same study, both mothers and fathers were more likely to label sad children as female and angry children as male, even though the children were drawn in a gender-neutral way.

Parents also convey indirect messages during early childhood via how the household is organised. They may model stereotypical male and female behaviour in the way they divide work, care and housework. Because children generally identify more with the parent of their own sex, they are motivated to imitate that parent’s interests and activities.



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Researchers acknowledge that biological factors are involved. For example, boys are more physically active in general during early childhood, and parents' greater use of physical force with boys may reflect this.

However, researchers also observe that parents apply gender stereotypes early in children's lives, before many differences appear. A now classic piece of research showed that adults treated babies dressed in blue and in pink differently, regardless of their sex.

Parents from different social and cultural backgrounds also approach parenting differently, with people from lower-income backgrounds being more likely to endorse traditional gender roles. Few studies have looked at non-Western cultures or ethnic-minority families, however.

Research has shown that parents with stronger gender stereotyped beliefs are more likely to parent in gendered ways. In one study with toddlers, fathers with more stereotypical gender attitudes used more physical control with sons than with daughters.

The difference between what parents say against stereotyping and do in favour of it could be deliberate subterfuge, or they could genuinely be unaware of it. In the pink/blue baby experiment, for example, the parents did not realise they were treating the babies differently.

Primary source of social learning in early childhood is interaction with parents. Researchers refer to “vicarious social learning” – when talking about their own actions and behaviours, children pick up on parents’ gender evaluations. Children notice salient social models of gendered behaviour around them

## 2.3 CONCLUSION

The major trends in family structures and their shifts across the industrialized world over the past decades are well known: fertility rates have declined below the level sufficient for the replacement of the population and childbearing occurs later and more often outside marriage. Marriage, too, is being postponed and is more often foregone, and couple relationships—both marital and non-marital ones—have become more fragile. These changes have led to increasingly complex family compositions and to a previously unprecedented diversity of family forms and relationships over the life course. The new family trends and patterns have been paralleled by changes in gender roles, especially an expansion of the female role to an economic provider for a family, and lately also transformation of men's role with more extensive involvement in family responsibilities, mainly care for children. In contemporary family scholarship there is an increasing awareness of gender and family changes being interconnected, and conceptualization of the gender revolution has gained terrain (Goldscheider [1990](#); Puur et al. [2008](#); Esping-Andersen [2009](#); England [2010](#)). Developments related to women's new role are seen as weakening the family and have been attributed to the first phase of the gender revolution, while more recent family changes and the emerging caring male role have been linked to the second phase (Goldscheider et al. [2015](#)).

To understand the everyday realities of modern societies we need to recognize that the family is a dynamic entity, characterized by growing complexity with respect to decision-making processes regarding transitions over the family life course and organization of family life. Indeed, the family can no longer be described simply as a set of well-defined roles; it is negotiated on a daily basis, constructed by interactions between partners at the micro-level (Morgan [2011](#)), and influenced by macro structures of the political and economic spheres. Work and family lives are increasingly influencing each other as both women and men engage in earning as well as caring activities, often reinforced by the labour market developments with specific skill demands, together with increasing employment instability and precariousness. Gender relations and related values and attitudes have become more fluid, changing dynamically over the life course in the context of blurring boundaries of family and work life.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Title

3.3 Research Question

3.4 Research Design

3.5 Study Area and Universe

3.6 Sampling

3.7 Sources of Data

3.8 Tools of Data Collection

3.9 Methods of Data Collection

3.10 Limitations of the Study

## Research Methodology

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Methodology is the philosophical framework within which the research is conducted or the foundation upon which the research is based. Research methodology is the path through which the researcher conducts the research. It is the path through which the researcher formulated the problem and the objective. It presents the result from the data obtained during the study period. Thus, this chapter discusses the orientation of the research (epistemological and ontological), the topic under study, the design employed for the study topic, the general research and question and specific objective, the data collection technique's

### **3.2 TITLE**

Impact of gender roles on middle class children-A sociological analysis of middle-class families in Trivandrum

### **3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

#### General Research Question

1.How stereotypical gender roles in families influence the mindset of children?

#### Specific Research Questions

- 1.Are the gender roles imposed on families by the society?
- 2.Will the society alienate the family who practise role reversals?

3. Will change in stereotype gender role performed lessen the qualitative output of the role performed?

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Explanatory research is a method developed to investigate a phenomenon that has not been studied or explained properly. Its main intention is to provide details about where to find a small amount of information.

With this method, the researcher gets a general idea and uses research as a tool to guide them quicker to the issues that we might address in the future. Its goal is to find the *why* and *what* of an object of study.

Explanatory research is responsible for finding the *why* of the events by establishing cause-effect relationships. Its results and conclusions constitute the deepest level of knowledge, according to author Fidiás G. Arias. In this sense, explanatory studies can deal with the determination of causes (post-facto research) and effects (experimental research) through hypothesis testing.

Explanatory design is the design used for the study and the approach used is qualitative approach.

### **3.5 STUDY AREA AND UNIVERSE**

The present study was conducted among 5 families in Trivandrum district. The present study focuses on the experiences faced by children in a middle-class family. The universe of the present study is a middle-class family in Trivandrum district. The study “Impact of gender roles in middle class children-A sociological analysis of middle-class families in Trivandrum” is of paramount significance in addressing the impact of gender roles in middle class children. By focusing on their experiences, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of gender and gender roles.

### **3.6 SAMPLING**

Purposive sampling refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques in which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In other words, units are selected “on purpose” in purposive sampling.

Also called judgmental sampling, this sampling method relies on the researcher’s judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study’s objectives.

In this research, 5 cases were selected from the population by using the method of purposive sampling.

### **3.7 SOURCES OF DATA**

This research is grounded on the strong foundations derived from extensive reading of existing studies in the area and relevant publications from different organizations.

#### **Primary data**

Primary data has been collected for this study using an interview guide from a sample obtained through the process of sampling. The primary data so collected serves as the basis for all interpretation and analysis, which will help achieve the objectives of the study.

#### **Secondary data**

To substantiate the study, secondary data is collected from the vast reserves of existing literature and other sources like books, journals, magazines, and related websites.

### **3.8 TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION**

An unstructured interview guide is a data collection method that relies on asking participants questions to collect data on a topic. Also known as non-directive interviewing, unstructured interviews do not have a set pattern and questions are not arranged in advance.

In research, unstructured interview guides are usually qualitative in nature, and can be very helpful for social science or humanities research focusing on personal experiences.

In this research, an unstructured interview guide was used for collecting data.

### **3.9 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Data analysis is systematically applying analytical techniques to describe, illustrate, and evaluate the data. An essential component of ensuring data integrity is research findings' accurate and appropriate analysis. The researcher wanted a face-to-face interaction with her respondents. So that the respondents can talk in-depth choosing their own words helps the researcher develop a real sense of the respondent's understanding of the situation. Therefore, the researcher chooses an unstructured interview. An unstructured interview allows the researcher to collect data using open questions. The unstructured interview allows the respondent to talk in some depth, choosing their own words. This helps the researcher develop a real sense of a person's understanding of a situation. The researcher analysed the data collected from this study through themes. So, thematic analysis is used as a method for analysing the data. It is a method for identifying, analysing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set.

### **3.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

1. In a society with diversified socio – economic profile, sampling a few families and arriving at a generalisation will be difficult.
2. Correct and authentic feedback from the children who represent the target of the study is a big challenge.
3. Breaking into the privacy of families to gather inferences that make up the study is another big challenge.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

4.1 Case 1

4.2 Case 2

4.3 Case 3

4.4 Case 4

4.5 Case 5

## **4.1 CASE 1**

**Name- Mr A, Age-47 years**

**Mrs A, Age- 46 years**

**Elder daughter-15 years**

**Younger daughter-12 years**

**Place- Vattiyookavu, Trivandrum**

Mr A and Mrs A worked for corporates in India, after which they were in middle East for 10 years and then returned back to India in 2023. Both the children studied in Middle East and got admitted in a leading CBSE school in Trivandrum. They are an educated middle-class Hindu Family staying in Vattiyookavu.

When asked about who does the house hold chores, the husband replied that, mostly it was done by the wife but he will share the responsibility as and when needed. He also said that he had no hesitation in doing total household chores when his wife had some difficulty.

When enquired with the children if they liked their father preparing food for the family, it sounded strange for them because they never came across any situation where there was a demarcated or assigned job specifically to someone in the family. When they require any financial help, they would approach both their parents.

Wife also agreed to the above statements and emphasized that her responsibilities were stereotype women activities like cleaning the house, other chores and home making whereas her husband did jobs like cleaning the vehicle or going to shop for purchase.

When asked the question, who does the financial planning at home, the members replied that mostly it is done by the husband. The wife also shares some of the financial responsibilities.

The question of role reversal doesn't apply there as they haven't come across a particular job assigned to a particular person.

## **4.2 CASE 2**

**Name- Mr B, Age -51 years**

**Mrs B, Age-46 years**

**Elder daughter-22 years**

**Younger daughter-18 years**

**Place- Manacadu, Trivandrum**

Mr B works as a government clerical staff and Mrs B is a home maker. Their elder daughter is a final year B Tech student and younger daughter is a first year BHMS student. They belong to a lower Middle class Muslim family staying in Manacadu, Trivandrum.

When asked about who does the house hold chores mostly to which the husband replied that it was always done by the wife. He seldom gets engaged in household works.

When children were asked whether their father participated in house hold, it sounded strange and unusual for them and they were not able to recollect any such event in the near past.

When it comes to finance, they believe that father is the financial custodian of the family and their financial requirements were taken up solely by their father.

Since husband is the financial custodian of the family, all the major financial decisions are decided by the husband. The wife seldom engages in financial decisions.

Wife also agreed to the above statements and emphasized that her responsibilities were stereotype women activities like cleaning the house, other chores and home making whereas her husband did jobs like cleaning the vehicle or going to shop for purchase etc.

They are not aware about role reversals because they have never discussed such situations at home.

### **4.3 CASE 3**

**Name- Mr C, Age-49 years**

**Mrs C, Age-47 years**

**Elder son-20 years**

**Younger daughter-10 years**

**Place-Ambalathara, Trivandrum**

Mr. C, is a Management Graduate, and an entrepreneur. He had been working for many organizations till 2015 post which he started his business. Mrs C is a government school teacher. Their elder son is a final year Graduate student and their younger daughter is a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student. They belong to a Middle-class Hindu family staying in Ambalathara, Trivandrum.

When asked about who does the house hold chores mostly to which the husband replied that wherever possible they will try to share the responsibility though not as much as Case 1 and when his wife has some inconvenience, he is not reluctant to take up the entire responsibility of the household in his shoulder.

When children were asked whether their father engaged in house hold chores, they partially agreed to it indicating that it was not an everyday practice. Moreover, they are not happy with the recopies of their father and to a big extend feels that home making is not their fathers cup of tea.

The wife Mrs. C is also not very comfortable in assigning jobs to her husband and does it rarely and says 50% to my question, “How comfortable are you in assigning household chores to your Husband? And she says that Mr. C will not willingly come forward to share and do the basic house hold chores. But as a family they believe that sharing of jobs is important though they are not practicing it to full extend.

When it comes to finance children believe that father is the financial point inf the family and they approach their father for all their financial requirements. Wife also agreed to the above

statements and emphasized that her responsibilities were more of stereotype women responsibilities like cleaning the house, other chores and home making.

The daughter is more attached to her mother and if she needs any help, she would first approach the mother. In the case of the son, he is more attached to his father.

The son helps his mother in the kitchen and his father in various works in the home. He also helps his sister in her studies.

In this case, the birth order comes into play. Being elder, the son is given more responsibilities than daughter in the family.

#### **4.4 CASE 4**

**Name- Mr D, Age-40 years**

**Mrs D, Age-35 years**

**Elder son-14 years**

**Middle daughter-13 years**

**Younger son-4 years**

**Place- Neyyatinkara, Trivandrum**

Mr D works in a Christian religious institution and Mrs D is a government clerical staff. Their elder son is a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student and second daughter is an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student. Their youngest kid, son is doing his kindergarten. They belong to a lower middle-class Christian family.

When asked about who does the house hold chores mostly to which the husband replied that it was always done by the wife. If she has any inconvenience on a particular day, the husband would look after the household work.

When the children were asked whether they liked their father cooking for them they were surprised because they never had consumed anything really cooked by their father

When asked about the difference in fathers' and mothers cooking and whom do they prefer more they unanimously answered that their mother cooks really well. Father doesn't know how to cook, but will serve the already cooked food to kids when they return from school.

When they require any financial need, initially they would approach their mother who would discuss it with their father. Ultimately it will be the father who would give them money

The wife is not much comfortable in assigning household chores to her husband but she believes that both the partners have equal responsibility in the domestic work.

The husband expressed that he rarely gets engaged in household work

Since husband is the financial custodian of the family, all the major financial decisions are decided by the husband. The wife seldom engages in financial decisions.

Wife also agreed to the above statements and emphasized that her responsibilities were stereotype women activities like cleaning the house, other chores and home making whereas her husband did jobs like cleaning the vehicle or going to shop for purchase etc.

They are not aware about role reversals because they have never discussed such situations at home.

The elder children help their mother in household work. The daughter even cooks some easy dishes and feed the youngest 4-year-old brother during her school vacation. She is more like a parent to her younger brother, looking after a major share of household chores when the mother gets late to return home after work

## **4.5 CASE 5**

**Mr. E, Age- 52 years**

**Mrs E, Age- 47 years**

**Elder daughter-24 years**

**Younger Son -13 years**

**Place- Kudappanakkunnu, Trivandrum**

Mr E and Mrs E works as senior officials in Kerala Government They are an educated middle-class Christian family staying in Kudappanakunnu When enquired about who does the household chores, the husband replied that, mostly household chores are shared but cooking is fully done by Mrs E who is the wife.

He usually doesn't share the responsibility of cooking and prefer to buy from outside as and when needed. He also said that he had no hesitation in doing other household chores when his wife had some difficulty. And he would also express his willingness for the same.

When enquired with the children if they liked their father preparing food for the family they said No because their father never did cooking and they are not used to such life style it also sounded a bit unusual for them because they never came across any such situation When they require any financial help, they would approach both their parents. However, Mr E the husband was the sole financial planner of the family they said that their mother the wife, also wife also shares some of the financial responsibilities.

Wife also agreed to the above statements and emphasized that her responsibilities were more of women activities like cooking and cleaning the house which she disliked she also admitted that her husband did jobs like cleaning the vehicle or going to shop for purchase.

The question of role reversal doesn't apply there because they have very specified gender marked jobs and they wouldn't want to change it.

## **CHAPTER 5 MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Major Findings

5.3 Suggestions

5.4 Conclusion



## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the researcher will report the information gathered from the field. Here, the researcher finds answers to the questions posed during the initial phase of the research. The findings are without biased or interpreted. This section states the findings without bias or interpretation and is arranged in a logical sequence or under the questions asked in the methodology chapter.

## 5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS

From the five interviews I made for the qualitative analysis. I found out that stereotype gender roles are prevalent in our society. Even in the case of two families when they knew the importance of work sharing and the need to think differently, the stereotypical thought process still remains.

The aspects which make families think differently from the established gender roles are

1. Education
2. Employment status of the female member
3. Atmosphere in which children were brought up
4. Economic condition of the family
5. Religion and Culture

In all the families' interview, finance was the department of the male gender and basic Household chores remain to be the responsibility of the woman.

Children more or less think like their parents in families where they have specified and non-specified gender roles.

The birth order also comes into play in some of the cases.

From my interaction and interview with families, one major information that struck me is that cooking is never considered as a male gender role. Male make good chefs but at home majority think that its menial job. Cooking is not a task that should be attributed a particular gender. It can be performed by anyone irrespective of gender or even age. It is not right to make such generalizations. The sad part is that there is a wrong perception floating around that cooking is

a job for women. This has to change and the only way we can do that is by educating the people and changing such primitive mindsets and like all chores, this duty should also be divided between a husband and wife. This means that the burden of cooking shouldn't fall on a person by virtue of their gender

So finally, the researcher will get the real answers to this study by interacting with the respondents who were selected for the study. The research has enabled to widen her perspective on the issue, and pen down some suggestions

### **5.3 SUGGESTIONS**

Gender equality begins at home, and families are at the front lines of change. For the next generation, the examples set at home by parents, care-givers and extended family are shaping the way they think about gender and equality. Some of the ways in which we can improve gender equality among children at home are as follows

- The parents should talk to their children about equality between the sexes and what still needs to be done to create a gender equal world.
- The parents should equally divide all housework and childcare among their children.
- The parents should encourage their children to embrace diversity, show them role models from different genders, ethnicities and colour.
- The parents should remind their children that they can be anything they want to be, regardless of their gender.
- They should empower and educate their children about women's rights, thus ensuring a better future for them.
- They should let their children know that their family is a safe space for them to express themselves as they are, by affirming their choices, by reassuring them that it's ok to be different, and by encouraging a culture of acceptance.
- Foster a body-positive lifestyle at home by showing your children that they are not defined by how they look, but by how they act.
- The government should introduce policies for the betterment of the female child.

- The government should give preference for the families belonging to marginalised communities.
- The government should help students identify instances of gender bias, through awareness activities or historical events, laws and cultural changes.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

Dramatic transformations in women's and men's roles inside and outside of the family have occurred during the last half century in most of the industrialized world. The traditional image of the two-parent heterosexual family with the father serving as the provider and the mother as the homemaker is no longer the norm in many industrialized countries. Instead, most mothers pursue jobs outside of the home and many fathers are involved in childcare. In addition, many children are raised by single parents and by lesbian/gay parents. Despite these role changes, there remain relatively few truly egalitarian parenting arrangements. Also, studies suggest that parents with gender-egalitarian attitudes may nonetheless act differently with daughters and sons. Longitudinal studies suggest that parents' treatment of sons and daughters may have an influence on some aspects of their gender development.

Parents, service providers, and policy makers may wish to foster more flexible gender roles in children to help them develop a broader repertoire of socioemotional and cognitive skills. Although parents can have an influence on children's gender development, their impact can sometimes be overestimated. Because gender is a social category that organizes virtually every segment of society, there are multiple sources of socialization in children's gender development. Besides parents, these potentially include other family members, peer groups, friends, the media, and teachers. As children get older and become more autonomous, the influences of peers and the media often become especially powerful.

Parents can try to encourage their children to play with a combination of feminine- and masculine-stereotyped toys and play activities during early childhood; however, they may find their efforts run counter to children's attitudes once they are exposed to peers and the media. In addition, parents can be mindful of the kinds of peers with whom their children affiliate. They may be able to foster greater gender-role flexibility through encouragement of organized mixed-gender activities in which girls and boys learn to work together as equals. Finally,

parents can make a concerted effort to discuss and challenge gender stereotypes with their children.

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## Interview guide

### **Impact of gender roles on middle class children a sociological analysis of middle-class families in Trivandrum**

To understand the gender roles on middle class children a sociological analysis of middle-class families, relatively easy questions were framed for interview which when answered enabled the purpose of the study.

#### **Who does house hold chores mostly**

This was asked to know the general behavioral pattern of the husband and wife.

#### **If the mother has some inconvenience on a particular day, who manages the cooking and house hold chores, both enquired separately**

This was asked to know the gender roles in a family and the children's perspective.

#### **What is the difference in your fathers and mothers cooking and whom do you prefer, why? with specific reasons and do you like your father cooking for you?**

This question was asked to understand whether the stereotypical job has conditioned the children's mind.

#### **How comfortable are you in assigning basic household chores to your male partner**

This question was to understand the mind set they acquired along with their culture defining gender roles.

#### **Do you think that both male and female has equal responsibility in household chores**

This question was put to the entire family including children to understand whether they have understood the importance of gender equality and why it is important to think different from the conventional norms attached to stereotypical jobs in the modern world which demands equal responsibilities irrespective of the gender.

#### **Do you voluntarily express your willingness to household chores**

This was to find out the basic intention of the male member related to gender equality

**Who does financial planning in house and whom does children approach when they need money?**

This question was aimed to understand whether money is the portfolio of the male member and hence money is rated as powerful and it indirectly makes us understand the power center in the family.