



The influence of the childhood experiences of women in Bangalore, India, upon their aspirations for their children: socio-cultural and academic perspectives. A community-based study

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

At the University of Northampton

2020

Pooja Haridarshan

© [Pooja Haridarshan] [September 2020].

This thesis is copyright material and no quotation from it may be published without proper acknowledgement

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank all the participants who participated and made this research a success. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all those families who were not able to participate but gave me access to other potential participants and families. I sincerely hope that this study will have the desired impact on the lives of the women researched and their stories will inspire others in the way it inspired me.

My deep gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Richard Rose and Dr. Johnson Jament for being a constant inspiration and a huge support from the word "GO". Pursuing a doctoral degree was never on the cards for me, but Prof. Richard Rose's constant encouragement and belief in me ensured the successful completion of this study. I hope I can live up to their expectations and the faith they have shown in me. Being an off-site research student has been difficult but having Prof. Richard Rose's support throughout ensured that this process went on without any glitches. My fellow PhD students have been a constant source of support, motivation, encouragement and guidance in the last five years. Knowing very well that I had a shoulder to cry on when in despair was a comforting thought and made this journey a thoroughly enriching and enjoyable one throughout.

Last but not the least, a special thanks to my husband, daughter, in laws and parents who put up with my tantrums (silent and loud ones) over the last five years. Times have been challenging but knowing they were all there as my "shock absorbers" gave me the confidence I could pull through even in times of extreme emotional turmoil and self-doubt. I began this journey when my daughter was just beginning formal schooling and today when I look at my 10-year-old, I feel extremely proud that both of us have grown as students and understood each other's working space. My husband, Darshan who has always supported me in my studies and at the same time ensured I get sufficient breaks in between but also get back to working after a couple of days' break. My father and brother deserve a special thanks for reading parts of my work every now and then to give me feedback on my writing and my mother who would listen to endless hours of a worried me on the phone.

Above all this, my husband's parents who gave me this topic for research as nobody had conducted research in this area and was in some sorts of a "taboo". Right from the subject to gaining access to the sample to thinking of disseminating my work, they have been there constantly with just one thing to say: "Don't hesitate to state the facts, people need to know the truth because things need to change."

I found a poem written by a young girl titled "GIRL POWER" which resonated the main idea behind this thesis and so I would like to thank her as well for giving me her consent to include that here.

Why is a girl only appreciated for doing well in studies and for getting more grades than her buddies?

*But not that much for getting gold medals, or for going fast on the pedals?
She is depicted as being childish and incapable, and without a male, someone UNSTABLE!*

Apparently cricket and football are not her forte, only being pretty and servile is what she can display!

Don't you think it's time for us to change? And just let her burn like a FLAME?

All these people have kept me going all these years and this thesis would not have been possible without them.

Abstract

Over the past few years there have been significant advances in the participation of women in the economic and public domain, closing of gender gaps in primary and secondary education and in many countries, lower incidences of violence against women (Segran,2010). However, these achievements have not decreased gender discrimination or patriarchy in Indian society. It may in fact, have become worse in some societies and communities within India, such as the Devanga community which is the focus of this research. A small weaving community that has its roots spread across several states in India, the Devanga community practices stereotypes and patriarchal rules that have ensured male dominance in all aspects of decision making. Despite advances being made in social legislations enabling women to be more empowered, the position of women within this community is still reported to be under debate and discussion, though no prior research has been conducted on this issue in respect of the Devanga community.

This thesis reports research that investigated how the childhood experiences of women in the Devanga community have impacted or continue to impact their aspirations for their children and whether they have made any different provisions for the educational opportunities of their sons when compared to their daughters. The thesis also identifies and discusses what these women perceive their roles in society to be. The objective of this research was to be able to generate data that can be used to support women within this community in their continued efforts to gain access to better educational opportunities and be aware of their rights as individuals.

The research was conducted with a purposive sample of 120 women of the Devanga community from whom data was originally obtained using questionnaires. Since this research aimed at understanding the lives of women in a specific community, an ethnographic feminist perspective was adopted along with a mixed methods approach of following questionnaires with interviews and observations to obtain rich data through in-depth study.

Of the 120 women to whom questionnaires were sent, 96 made returns with 75 consenting to being interviewed.

Data analysis indicated that poverty, early marriage and domestic responsibilities have each been an inhibitory factor in determining the educational paths for children in this community. Women who experienced gender bias in their childhood chose to be more egalitarian towards their children but with little or no support from their families. Some women also have lower aspirations for their daughters than for their sons thus perpetuating their low self-esteem and feeling of worthiness.

From the analysis of data, I conclude that though the women of the Devanga community are bound by strict traditional and stereotyped norms, there is a step towards improvement though this is rather slow in making progress. The findings suggest that despite the progress made by Indian women, they are still considered to be the country's "single largest group of backward citizens." (Bumiller,1990, p.10). The evidence collected in this research is a strong validation for this statement.

Key Words: Gender discrimination, Education of Girls, Stereotyping, India

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Aim of Study	2
1.2 Objective of the Study:	4
2. Devanga Community: The Core of this Research	9
2.1 Brief Introduction.....	9
2.2 Origin of Devangas: Myth or Fact?	10
2.3 The Caste System in India.....	11
2.4 The Myth of The Origin of Gayatri Peetha:	13
2.5 Geographical Distribution:	13
2.6 Special features:.....	14
3. Literature Review: Part One: Understanding the Role of Women in Indian Society	15
3.1 The Indian Woman: A Boon or a Curse?.....	16
3.2 Gender discrimination:.....	18
3.3 Untangling the maze: "Stereotypes"	23
4. Literature Review: Part Two: Issues Directly Influencing the Research Reported in this Thesis	27
4.1 The Role of Parents in Inculcating Gender Stereotypes.....	27
4.2 Education of Girls:	40
4.3 Is the Situation in this Indian Community like that seen elsewhere?	45
4.4 The Role of Families:	51
4.5 Fulfilling unfulfilled aspirations through children	54
4.6 Social change in India:	58
5. Methodology: Part One: Identifying the Issue and defining my approach... 63	
5.1 Research Questions:.....	65
5.2 Theory underpinning the research	65
5.3 Libertarian Feminism (sometimes referred to as Individualist Feminism):.. 70	
5.4 The influence of feminist theory on the methods deployed in this research 71	
5.5 My role as a researcher - part insider and part outsider.....	74
6. Methodology: Part Two: Methodological Approach and Data Collection Instruments	77
6.1 Mixed Methods Approach.....	77
6.2 Selecting the Sample:.....	80
6.3 Why questionnaires?	82

6.4 Distribution of Questionnaires:	84
6.5 Piloting the Questionnaire:	86
6.6 Why Interviews?	90
6.7 The process of Interviewing:	92
6.8 Location of the research:	97
6.9 Response rate of Interviews:	97
6.10 Obstacles faced during Phase II:	99
6.11 Segmentation and Coding of Data	101
6.12 Personal Reflections	105
6.13 Ethical Concerns:	106
6.14 Informed Consent	107
6.15 Anonymity and Confidentiality	108
6.16 Security and Ownership of data	109
6.17 Lessons Learned During the Pilot Study	109
6.18 Ethical challenges in Phase I	109
6.19 Ethical Challenges in Phase II:	110
7. Findings: Part One	113
7.1 The impact of poverty	113
7.2: Born as a girl: A diagnosis or a problem?	118
7.3: Parents aspiring to see unfulfilled ambitions fulfilled	120
7.4 Distinction between participants and their male siblings during their childhood	124
7.5 Stereotyping:	128
7.6 Encouragement to pursue their academic/non-academic ambitions and its impact on women's aspirations for their children	134
7.7: Impact of having received no encouraged to pursue their academic/non- academic ambitions on their aspirations for their children	139
8. Findings: Part Two	149
8.1: Mothers Aspiring more for Sons than Daughters	149
8.2 Equal importance on educating sons and daughters	152
8.3 Independent decision making	156
8.4 Aspiring more for daughters	158
9. Findings: Part Three	162
9.1 Fighting against odds thus becoming independent and self-reliant	162
9.2 Desire to be treated with respect and dignity and be given equal opportunities as men	164
9.3 Lack of freedom to express or take independent decisions	168

9.4: Lack of support from spouse and ill treatment of women	173
9.5: Encouragement from Spouse	174
10. Discussion:	177
10.1 Childhood Experiences:	178
10.1.1 Being born as a girl:	181
10.1.2 Marriage and education:	182
10.1.3 Fulfilment of ambitions:	184
10.1.4 Experiencing gender bias during childhood:	186
10.1.5 Encouragement to pursue ambitions:	187
10.1.6 Lack of encouragement to pursue ambitions:	189
10.1.7 Over-protective parenting:	193
10.2 Expectations from children:	195
10.2.1 Higher aspirations for sons:	195
10.2.2 Equal aspirations for sons and daughters:	198
10.2.3 Higher aspirations for daughters:	200
10.2.4 Independent decision making:	202
10.3 Role of Women:	203
10.3.1 Resilience leading to independence:	204
10.3.2 Equal rights as men:	205
10.3.3 Marriage and Power:	206
11. Further Thoughts	209
12. Conclusions	212
12.1 Limitations of the study	216
12.2 Recommendations	217
12.3 Final Thoughts	218
References	220
Appendix I - Covering Letter	251
Appendix II - Information Sheet	252
Appendix III - Informed Consent	255
Appendix IV - Questionnaire	257
Appendix V - Interview Questions	261
Appendix VI - Field Notes	262
Appendix VII - List of Codes	264

List of Tables

Table	Page No
Table indicating research data collection methods and sample size	99
Data indicating participants' schooling	115, 126, 131, 136, 142
Data indicating kind of school participants attended	115, 126, 131, 136, 142
Data indicating participants' brothers' schooling	116, 126
Data indicating kind of school participants' brothers attended	116, 127, 131
Data indicating participants' sisters' schooling	116
Data indicating kind of school participants' sisters attended	116
Data indicating number of years participants attended school	117, 127, 132, 137, 142
Data indicating participants' level of education	117, 122, 132, 137, 143
Data indicating participant's' brothers' level of education	117, 128, 132
Data indicating participant's' sisters' level of education	118
Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve their academic ambitions	118, 123, 128, 133, 137, 143, 147
Data indicating participants' extra-curricular ambitions	123, 128, 133, 137, 143, 147
Data indicating importance of education in achieving ambitions	123, 133, 138, 143, 147
Data indicating encouragement to participate in other activities at school	124, 133, 138, 144, 148
Data indicating age of marriage	120
Data indicating number of years	120

of married life

Data indicating participants' children's' schooling	152, 156
Data indicating importance for participants' sons to perform academically	138, 144, 152, 156,160
Data indicating importance for participants' daughters to perform academically	138, 144, 152, 156, 160
Data indicating decisions surrounding participants' sons' education	160, 167, 172, 174, 176
Data indicating decisions surrounding participants' daughter's education	161, 167, 172, 174, 176

1. Introduction

As a researcher I am committed to working in a manner that promotes equity and social justice and more specifically as a female researcher and a teacher living in India my interest is focused largely upon the educational opportunities that are either provided or denied to girls and young women. While trying to understand the situation of women in what are often referred to as developing nations such as India and other Asian countries, my attention became focused upon the role and status of women within a small community in India which I am familiar with called the Devanga community. Details related to this community are provided in the subsequent chapter. The World Bank (2019) categorizes national economies into four income groups- high, upper-middle, lower-middle, and low, calculated using the Atlas method (1993). Those countries in which the majority of the population can be identified as being within the lowest income bracket and therefore unlikely to be able to provide for more than their most basic survival needs can be assigned to the low-income category and are often referred to as “developing” countries. Under the terms of the World Bank, whilst the economy of India has strengthened significantly in recent years, a significant proportion of the population has not benefited from this development, and therefore India can be seen to fit the description of a developing nation. Whilst the Atlas method has limitations, it has been suggested that of all the approaches to determining the Gross National Income levels of countries, the World Bank approach has been the most consistently managed means of recording fluctuations in the economic conditions pertaining in developing countries (Fantom and Serajuddin, 2016). Education is viewed as a critical factor in enabling countries to address issues of poverty (Tilak 2002; Tarabini 2010) and the education of women has been specifically highlighted as making an important contribution to improvements in the socio-economic wellbeing of nations (Herz.,Knapp Herz, and Sperling 2004; Jayachandran 2015).

Education of women is a topic which continues to be debated and though it is recognised as an important subject, remains an area of some contention (Dean, 2017). It has been reported by Madigan (2009, p.13) that though girls in many communities have been raised to assume certain limited roles in society, due to the “enforcement of equal access legislation, options for them have increased

tremendously.” In many parts of the world, there are gaps between where women’s education is and where it should be (Tembon and Fort 2008). The community investigated for the research reported in this thesis is based on this premise and upon my experience as someone who is a member of this community and a teacher working in direct contact with young people brought up within it. The importance of girls’ education is understood and interpreted in several different ways and in this research, I embarked upon a project to investigate and understand the barriers to girls’ education within this small community in India.

There has been no previous research or any documented evidence about how this specific community functions and the origin of its practices. Furthermore, understanding the impact of women’s childhood experiences on their aspirations for their children is a topic never studied before within this context and laid the foundation for my motivation to conduct the research reported in this thesis. In other words, the focus of this research is to understand how the childhood experiences of women in the Devanga community influence their aspirations for their children. In addition to this, this research also aimed at understanding the various socio-cultural barriers to educational opportunities that the girls of the Devanga community face.

1.1 Aim of Study

As a member of this community, I aimed at understanding the lives and roles played by the women in the Devanga community and to provide them with an opportunity to voice their experiences and stories. In doing so I maintained a specific focus upon educational opportunities afforded to females in this population. I believed that it would prove helpful if I could understand the lives of the Devanga women better before foraying into this research.

It was my belief at the outset of the research that these women are conditioned into being submissive and following rules of patriarchy before and after marriage. There is evidence of practicing restrictive norms against women in the Islamic community which are suggestive of patriarchal rule, and similar to that, there is evidence of son preference in Hinduism (Mukherjee,2013). Sons have always been viewed as a way of continuing the parental lineage and performing ancestral rites and this practice continues to be followed within the Devanga

community as well. According to the study conducted by Mukherjee (2013), women's literacy and employment rates are better in South India compared to North India, however there are significant differences seen within the Devanga community.

Bhat and Zavier (2003) used data from two National Family Health Surveys (NFHS-I and NFHS-II) to determine the regional wise preference of sons over daughters. They asked married women to state how many children they would like to have if they were given an option to start afresh. The aim was to identify women's' preference regarding ideal family size and not the desired family size keeping in mind the socio-economic constraints related to fertility. It was observed from the data that the preference for sons was the highest in the northern plains and central uplands of India. These comprised the states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Gujarat. In these states the percentage of women who preferred sons over daughters ranged from 50% to 64%. As they progressed towards South India, this trend began diminishing and the proportion of women who wanted sons fell below 20% over the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. As a researcher, looking at this data would have led me to believe that gender discrimination and preference for sons is a vanishing aspect in Bangalore Urban as well as within the Devanga community. However, my research and data obtained evidenced otherwise (as will be detailed in various chapters in this thesis).

Nevertheless, the situation does seem to be changing rather slowly. In the area I was researching, some women were experiencing difficulties with respect to their daughters' education and expressed frustration with not being able to provide them with ample and equal opportunities to those provided to their male siblings. Hence, I wanted to ensure that by asking them to participate in this study, they might have an opportunity to realize the potential to improve their situation as well as share their experiences, both positive and negative. This focus of research therefore stemmed from two influences. Firstly, as no previous research has been undertaken in the area of maternal expectations and aspirations from children within the Devanga community with which I am familiar, there was an opportunity to undertake a unique study in this area. Secondly, I derived inspiration from a personal commitment to try to help women within this community and within a wider Indian context realize the

importance and value of education for girls. This second motivation may be seen as creating potential tension between my roles as a researcher and an activist, an issue that is discussed later in this thesis. John Dreze (2017, p.12) discusses the aspect of experience being considered a form of evidence. Personal experience can be as misleading as statistical analysis. Trusting someone would mean that I as a researcher would benefit from that experience and it would be a form of communicable evidence. But to be able to convey that to a wider audience may be difficult as the readers may not consider that evidence trustworthy. This tends to cause a bias in my mind and hence does not go too far in treating experience as a form of evidence. Being a member of the Devanga community and a woman placed me at an advantageous position to conduct this research because the research participants who were all women felt at ease discussing their issues with another woman without the fear of being judged or stereotyped.

When seeking answers to questions which I posed about the practices followed by the Devanga community, I came across several instances of gender bias and inequality suffered by women within this community. At the beginning of my research, I came with preconceived ideas that the suppression and submissive nature of women is an oppressive phenomenon of the past. In acknowledging this I recognised the need to consider the ways in which my own views and experiences inevitably influenced my approach to the research and interpretation of data. This is a common dilemma for researchers working within an emancipatory or feminist framework and one which I discuss later in the Methodology Chapter (Chapter 3) of this thesis. However, as I progressed with collecting data the situation became clearer and I began to realise that challenges in respect of the education of girls continues to be an issue in the Devanga community just as it is in some tribal communities and other communities in India. (Kotwal., Kotwal and Rani 2007; Malkani 2017; Bhat and Sharma,2006 and Chanana,2006).

1.2 Objective of the Study:

An appreciation of the above-mentioned aspect demands an understanding of how gender bias is experienced and maintained within the families of the Devanga community which is further reinforced through social, economic and

traditional contexts thus undermining the educational opportunities given to girls and hence becomes the objective of this study.

Anand (2009) suggests that contemporary India with all its unique heritage and cultural history continues to remain a patriarchal society where predominantly women carry the burden of family heritage. The Devanga community is no different from most Indian communities which follow a patriarchal system (as discussed in the following chapter). The reality of gender inequality is extremely complex in India as well as within the Devanga community and hence through this study I have attempted to understand those factors which contribute to this situation. Several debates are ongoing about the situation of women in India and because of this, gender inequality has now become one of the most widely discussed subjects in Government and Non-Government organisations with an immediate need identified to eliminate all forms of inequality against women (Nagar and Jha, 2015). Gender can be defined as a common term that refers to "the socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women." (Shastri, 2014, p.27). According to Nagar and Jha (2015, p.46), Gender Inequality means "*disparity between men and women in different social, economic and political, cultural and legal aspects.*" Several recent commentators on the situation for women in India have suggested that far from improving, the lives of some women have become increasingly difficult, with instances of abuse and violence towards them increasing in the past ten years (Najar, Sofi, Dar and Yousuf 2017; Baxi 2019; Dung 2019).

The Indian Nobel laureate economist Amartya Sen (2001, cited in Nagar & Jha,2015) draws attention to the different types of gender Inequality that exist in Indian society today, namely:

- a) Mortality Inequality: This directly involves matters of life and death of men and women in aspects of gender inequality.
- b) Natality inequality: Preference is given to the birth of boys rather than that of girls. This is seen predominantly in most of the Indian societies as well as within the community under question also.

- c) **Employment Inequality:** In terms of employment, men have better benefits as compared to women in terms of getting better employment opportunities as well as remuneration.
- d) **Ownership Inequality:** The ownership of property can also be unequal, and this is a practise followed from hundreds of years. Not only do men inherit the property but women also find it difficult to enter and flourish in economic and social activities.
- e) **Special Opportunity Inequality:** Opportunities for higher education are given more to men than to women. Hence, it can be concluded that gender bias is more significant in higher education and professional opportunities in India.
- f) **Basic facility inequality:** Even in the absence of gender inequality, there are other ways in which women are inhibited from having an equal share.
- g) **Household inequality:** It has been observed that there are inequalities seen within the household itself which can manifest in several different ways. It is usually seen as son-preference, unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities or simple family arrangements.

Of all the above stated inequalities, the purpose of this research closely resonates with the concept of Household Inequality and Special Opportunity Inequality and is discussed through the presentation of evidence from the collected data. Natality inequality is also closely observed within the Devanga community but there are no deaths reported as a cause of female foeticide (Aravamudan,2007). Women are expected to have further pregnancies in order to have a son rather than terminating a female foetus. Theoretically speaking, with an increase in educational status and opportunities and family income of women, the status given to women should also move upwards which would in turn improve the sex ratio. Unfortunately, the reality is quite contrary to this and can be evidenced when one looks at some Indian States such as Punjab and Haryana (Bhat and Sharma,2006).

It is also imperative to understand the origin of gender inequality to facilitate a better understanding of why this research has been undertaken. According to Nagar and Jha (2015), male dominance has been found to be one of the leading causes of gender inequality and as I elaborate in the literature review (Chapter 2) for this thesis, women are still perceived as requiring men as an anchor as

well as for providing them with social acceptance within the society. Therefore, continuous physical and financial support to a girl child, poverty and preference for a male heir have all been identified as causes of gender inequality. Razvi and Roth (2004) stated that India is a collectivist society where a person's needs are almost always sacrificed for the benefit of a group and this sacrifice is always made by the Indian women because she is not viewed as an individual with her own identity.

With these objectives, I then proceeded to devise my research questions which were:

- 1) How have the childhood experiences of a sample of women in Bangalore impacted upon their aspirations for their children?
- 2) Do mothers in this Bangalore sample have differing expectations with respect to the educational outcomes for their sons and daughters?
- 3) How have the life experiences of women in the sample influenced their views on the role of women in the Indian society?

The first question aimed at generating data which would enable me to understand the childhood experiences of the women of the Devanga community, their relationship with their siblings, their educational opportunities as well as any kind of discrimination they were subjected to during their childhood. It also enabled me to gain insights into the socio-cultural aspects prevailing within the Devanga community which contributed to these experiences.

The second research question aimed at investigating and understanding if women of the Devanga community have any significantly differing expectations for their sons and daughters and if they have made any special provisions for them. This question aimed to identify the prevalent aspects of gender bias and preferential parenting styles towards their children.

The last research question looked at understanding in entirety how all these experiences described above, contribute towards women's opinion of their role in the Devanga community and society.

The responses to all these questions were sought by distributing survey questionnaires in the first phase to obtain the basic personal and demographic information of the potential participants. In phase 2 participants were

interviewed to gain in depth understanding of the prevailing aspects of education and gender within the Devanga community. This process is described in detail throughout this thesis.

In this chapter I have drawn an outline of the focus of this research and its importance to me as a researcher along with the research questions. This research is of utmost importance to me because of the desire to understand the underlying causes of gender inequality and prevalence of stereotypes within the Devanga community in Urban Bangalore, India. Several studies have been conducted in similar aspects in rural India as well as the Northern part of India, but no study has been done so far within the Devanga community in South India within an urban population. Hence, I considered myself fortunate that I was able to devise this study and gain access to the sample population (with several challenges which have been discussed in detail in the Methodology Chapter of this thesis). Being a woman belonging to the Devanga community came with its own set of challenges but also had its advantages with respect to gaining access to and obtaining the trust of the participants. It draws attention to the three research questions which were devised keeping the most prevalent issues in mind along with a detailed understanding of the existing literature.

The following chapters in this thesis will include a brief introduction about the community under question, a detailed review of literature followed by the underlying theory and the research design methods: their design, execution and limitations followed by a detailed analysis and interpretation of the findings of this research.

2. Devanga Community: The Core of this Research

As a researcher concerned with understanding the situation and providing women with an opportunity to have their voices and experiences heard as well as being a member of the Devanga community, it was a personal motivation for me to challenge these notions of gender stereotyping and inequality that existed within the Devanga community in Bangalore, though I also recognised the need to maintain a level of objectivity as is discussed in the chapter. Being a woman researcher and a member of this community placed me in an advantageous position to collect data from the Devanga women in my sample because anyone else in my position may not have had the ease of access to the sample. According to Bridges (2001, p.371), "disempowered" groups resist the intrusion of researchers from outside and may not provide reliable data. And hence it is argued that such research must be conducted by people from within the community. I support the statement made by Bridges (2001,p.372) "you need to be a woman to understand what it is like to live as a woman," however since I come from a more liberal and supportive family when compared to the majority of the Devanga community, at times I failed to understand what these women were experiencing on a day-to-day basis. Though my understanding of the lives of the Devanga women is in some ways limited, this does not mean that I cannot develop and present an interpretation of such a situation. I have made an honest and sincere approach towards understanding and interpreting the information provided by the participants by immersing myself in their world for a short period of time.

2.1 Brief Introduction

This research was conducted in Bangalore, a cosmopolitan city in the South of India with a focus on the Devanga community members residing within the city boundaries. A small percentage of my participants came from a small township on the outskirts of Bangalore. The focus of this research was an urban population and hence I have restricted myself to Urban Bangalore. The prevailing literacy rate in Urban Bangalore led me to believe that gender bias and discrimination exist strongly in rural communities of India and not so much within the urban population (Kuruvilla, 2007). However, when I set about collecting data as well as having informal conversations with the women of the

Devanga community, I began to realise that orthodox ideas and prejudiced notions about stereotypes and male superiority were still strongly existent across the Devanga community and members had no qualms admitting this. This further motivated me to study this aspect within an Urban population rather than seeking a rural population on which there already are several studies conducted in India (Dreze and Kingdon, 2001). Another thought-provoking aspect that emerged during this time was the economic independence women have begun to experience owing to their high educational levels, outside of the Devanga community. Women have achieved significantly in various fields as demonstrated by various literature in this thesis and that may be a cause of rising concern with regards to disharmony in families. This may sound repetitive but India being a strongly patriarchal society believes in women restricting themselves to domestic chores rather than becoming decision makers in the family. However orthodox and prejudiced this may sound with regards to this research, it is a prevalent issue and has caused alarmingly high number of cases of divorces and marital disharmony.

Having a well-defined understanding of my intentions and the premise of my research I then had to have a clear outline of the objectives and what this research aimed at achieving. The first and foremost objective was to gain insight and new knowledge on socio cultural and academic aspirations for sons compared to daughters by generating data that would enable me to support and empower the women of the Devanga community to gain better access to education as well as develop more awareness of their basic rights. The process was expected to be an arduous one because breaking stereotypes and notions of female subordination and male superiority cannot be achieved easily.

Before moving forward, it is essential to understand the origin and geographical distribution of the community that provides the focus of this research.

2.2 Origin of Devangas: Myth or Fact?

According to the puranas, a sage named Devala Maharishi was the main promoter of the Devanga culture. The history of Devala Maharishi and the Devanga community with regards to origin, culture, evolution, and occupation have been described in detail in two main scriptures namely *Devanga MoolaStambha* and *Devanga Purana*. All the details originated are made in

Sanskrit which is one of the most ancient languages in the world. The origin of these scriptures cannot be traced back with any certainty.

Devangas originated from a saint "Devala Maharishi" or "man with divine grace" (as mentioned above) whose main duty was to weave clothes for Lord Shiva and other celestial bodies. Due to this history, Devangas became one of the weaving castes of India and are a sub-caste in Hinduism. Typically, because of the prevalent caste system and social conditions in India, Devangas became an endogamous unit of weavers in India.

According to Hindu mythology, the origin of the Devangas was written in the Brahmanda Purana (a Sanskrit text and one of the eighteen major Hindu texts), thousands of years ago. This was interpreted in various languages with the passage of time and the migration of the Devangas across India. The central theme remains unchanged, but the story underwent several changes, having been told and re-written many times. One of the versions was that Devangas emerged from the body cells of a sage called *Devala Maharishi* who was an ardent devotee of *Lord Shiva* (one of the principal deities of Hinduism considered as the Supreme Being who creates, protects and transforms the Universe).

According to another version, Devangas emerged from the organs of celestial beings (*Devas*) and hence obtained the name Devanga (anga means part)

Long before the emergence of Devangas, the celestials moved around naked and were made fun of by the Asuras (a member of a class of divine beings in the Vedic period which according to Indian mythology were evil). Their life became miserable and they approached *Lord Shiva* to bring them relief. Lord Shiva in turn summoned Devala Maharishi to create robes for the *Devas*.

2.3 The Caste System in India

The Caste system is a crucial aspect of the Hindu tradition and finds its origin somewhere in 1200 B.C. There are approximately 3000 castes and 25000 sub castes in India, wherein each caste is related to a specific occupation. But for the sake of understanding, the Hindu society has been divided into four hierarchical groups, also known as varnas. The topmost in the hierarchy are the Brahmins (scholars and leaders), followed by kshatriyas (rulers or warriors), Vaishyas (merchants or traders) and lastly the Shudras (artisans and labourers) (Rao and

Ban,2007). There are also several religious beliefs about the classification of these groups. According to one theory, the primal man destroyed himself to build the human society and the various religious groups originated from each of his body parts. The Brahmins are said to emerge from his head, the Kshatriyas from his hands, the Vaishyas from his thigh and the Shudras from his feet. Another theory claims that the Varnas or the religious groups originated from the body parts of *Brahma*, who is believed to be the creator of the Universe. The Devanga community, being weavers primarily fall into the Vaishya bracket of the caste system due to their profession, which is more labour-oriented. However, as mentioned earlier, Devanga community continues to be known as Prakrit Brahmins or Brahmins by birth and according to several ancient texts, Devanga community members hold significant authority over several religious practices and traditions. According to the Classification of castes done by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 1993 and 2007, this in turn comes under Section 2a of the Gazette of India (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (2007). The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was constituted under the Central Government of India by the NCBC Act in 1993 under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. The present amendment which is the 102nd amendment done in 2018 has Article 338B inserted under which socially and economically backward classes of India have been classified as NCBC. Castes in India are divided into Majority and Minority System. The Minority System is further subdivided into Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes based on economic backgrounds. In the state of Karnataka, the Other Backward Class (OBC) is classified as 1, 2a,2b,3a and 3b. Under this classification Devanga community have been categorised under the Backward Communities category 2a because of their low-income status. These categories were made to facilitate better employment and educational opportunities. There is no literature available that explains the reasons for the Devanga community to be following strict gender norms and stereotyped rules and hence the reason for me to investigate this topic continues to remain one of great interest and curiosity.

2.4 The Myth of The Origin of Gayatri Peetha:

To trace the origin of the Devangas, the history of Gayatri Peetha at Hampi which is located in the State of Karnataka needs to be explored. Gayatri Peetha (a holy shrine that signifies Mother Earth) is in a place called Hemakuta, Hampi along the banks of the River Tungabhadra. The significance of this place is attributed to the Goddess Gayatri who is a symbol of power to the Devanga community, hence Gayatri Peetha literally means the *Seat of Power*. It is believed that Devaradasimayya, considered to be an incarnation of the seven divine beings of the original Devanga soul, was the messiah of the Devanga community. He played a major role in the spread of knowledge of Gayatri Mantra (hymns that inspire righteous wisdom in Hinduism) and hence, people offer their prayers at Gayatri Peetha and this is considered by devotees to be the world's greatest seat of Religious Power (Somashekhar, 1992). The Gayatri Peetha was a witness to the rise and fall of the Vijayanagar Empire. The empire existed from 1336-1646, though its authority diminished following defeat at the hands of the Western Sultanates in 1565. With the fall of the empire Gayatri Peetha lost its glory. Efforts are now being made to collect historical records to trace its definitive history.

2.5 Geographical Distribution:

The earliest history of the Devanga community can be dated back to as early as the existence of the Vijayanagar empire in Hampi (1336-1565 A.D). The Devanga community, however moved out of the Vijayanagar empire as the rulers levied excess taxes on the weavers. As they migrated to different parts of India, they imbibed different cultures and languages and adopted the lifestyle of the regions in which they settled. However, they continued to practise their traditions, culture and occupation of weaving, thus remaining closely associated to their roots (Somashekhar, 1992). Hence, Devangas are found across India and accordingly their communities have different names. The migration was said to be due to an incompatible Sultanate culture and bitter experiences that the community faced in the Vijayanagar empire. These migrations took place in batches, some towards the North and some towards the South, and others in the direction of the Western coast, looking for culturally safe and protective settlement.

They are found in the states of Orissa, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala and accordingly call themselves either Kannada speaking Devangas (those residing in Karnataka) or Tamil speaking Devangas (those residing in Tamil Nadu).

In Karnataka, the state in which the research reported in this thesis was conducted they are predominantly present in Kollegal, Doddaballapur, Bangalore, Mangalore, Mysore, Davangere, Chitradurga, Shimoga, Hubli, Dharwad, Bellary and Belgaum.

2.6 Special features:

Devangas are ardent worshippers of 3 types of deities: Deities common to the entire community, deities based on their individual preferences and finally, the deities which were either prayed to by their ancestors or the family to which the girl goes to after marriage. This could be indicative of the God-fearing nature of the members of the Devanga community and also the reasons for them following innumerable traditional customs and practices.

Like any other caste system that depends on a vocation, Devangas have also embraced poverty wherein they do back breaking work in looms to weave cotton and silk.

Having understood that the Devanga community follows the patriarchal rule so strictly, my research objectives were also directed towards understanding the reasons for not encouraging girls to complete their education or being allowed to pursue their academic and non-academic dreams. The objective of this research is to generate data that can be used to support women within this community in their efforts to gain access to better education and be aware of their basic rights. These objectives were decided upon after having had informal discussions with some women of the Devanga community about their roles within their families and society and possible reasons for their current situation. I came with the assumption that if I am able to interpret and understand these women's lives and culture and generate data which will be accessible to everyone within and outside of the community, it might serve as an eye opener to those following such prejudiced norms and thus may help the women lead better lives in the future.

3. Literature Review: Part One: Understanding the Role of Women in Indian Society

An essential part of understanding the research process and gaining insights into previous work in the area of study involves conducting a detailed literature review to establish a clear understanding of my subject. Hart (2018) proposed that a literature review is important because it not only demonstrates the efforts of the researcher to gain a good understanding of the research subject but also throws light on the main theories used, their development and application as well as a critical appreciation of previous work undertaken in this field. Conducting a literature review requires a distinct inclusion of all aspects of the research, including methodological approaches and cultural nuances to ensure appropriate identification and selection of literature (Gallagher and Savage, 2013).

In this chapter I present a detailed literature review of those aspects of gender and role of the women in India which are pertinent to my research, along with a discussion of the impact of maternal expectations on the academic achievements of children. At the outset of this process with a broad perspective of what I should consider, I felt that I had a vast amount of literature to review, but when the process commenced, I realized that much of this was broadly focused and that there was a lack of availability of literature which was specifically related to my research questions. I needed a "beginning" and after doing some basic reading I chose to start the search by using key words and expressions such as "gender discrimination"," role of women in India", "educational opportunities provided to girls" on Google Scholar as well as on NELSON, the University of Northampton's library and media facility. Simultaneously I also decided to include relevant research from other Asian countries as it would give me a fair comparison about the prevailing situation and practices in other cultural setups as well. Till this stage, I was still unclear which discipline my research would fall under as it encompassed aspects of education and sociology. But with my own background as a teacher, and with the advice of my supervisors I felt it was appropriate to locate this research into educational research. It was also decided early on that this study would be a qualitative approach and hence, "qualitative studies" was also included as an important key word to help in searching for literature. Discussions with students who had completed their thesis prompted

me to set reminder alerts on Search Engines like Google Scholar for alerting me with latest published updates. All such updates were regularly archived and extracted when I had to read for and write the Literature Review chapter.

A couple of challenges with this process were the result of key words like "Women in India" through which several papers that highlighted other aspects of femininity were coming up more frequently and were considered "unnecessary" at the initial phase of this research. But as I progressed with collecting data and analysing them, I began to realise that every aspect was so intricately interspersed into each other that it became quite hard to disentangle one from the other. In my opinion, this made the process even more interesting and gave me pointers on shaping my interpretation of the obtained data as well as opened my eyes to different positive and negative aspects of womanhood which can be easily neglected.

3.1 The Indian Woman: A Boon or a Curse?

Indian women's gender roles have specifically been studied under two headings: marriage and motherhood (Lau,2010), and these have defined women's role and identities. When viewed from a cultural perspective, motherhood is seen as an essence of womanhood and though these are considered normal and important aspects, in some ways they tend to restrict and regulate a woman's life (Puri, 1999). In simple terms, I, as a researcher would put this across as: it gives a "good girl" status in society and any deviation from this is considered inappropriate. I believe it also puts additional burden on a woman's shoulders: of following the "should" in everything she does. Traditionally, menarche, marriage and motherhood, define the different stages in a woman's life, particularly a middle-class woman in India (Puri,1999, p.137). The research reported in this thesis, although indirectly, also traces this route map of Devanga women's lives. The participant women have all mentioned in their responses about the various stages of womanhood in their lives and how that was a barrier to them achieving their ambitions.

Armstrong (2003) describes what is sometime referred to as an unspoken and unheard voice especially of those people whose lives have been affected the most in situations of marginalisation. Though Armstrong makes this reference to the field of special education, I can contextualise this to my study where the

unspoken and unheard voices are those of the women in the community under investigation. These voices are categorized as "being in need". And it is the voice of these participants which invited new perspectives in this research. As discussed in the Introduction chapter of this thesis, the women of the Devanga community have been known to be extremely submissive in nature, complying to the rules laid down by the elders of the family as well as by the male members of the community. There is not too much evidence in this research on what the consequences of "not abiding" to these rules are. It seems to be a norm to simply accept and comply to what is "expected" out of young girls and women.

The Indian concept of "woman" is different across regions, religions, class and ethnic groups and has developed over a long history. In Indian society, the first and foremost unified identity of a woman is that of a wife and a mother and in relation to a man she is defined as the one with the capacity to reproduce (Bedi and Bedi 2017). Traditional ideas about stereotyped roles of women, makes people believe that female roles only revolved around being devoted daughters, nurturing wives and sacrificing mothers.

British rule in India brought about significant changes to the condition of Hindu women. According to Roy (2010), there was a constant debate amongst men of various classes and sects in Indian society about the various issues related to women's reform such as the education of girls, dowry and widow remarriage. The toughest task during the time of British imperial rule was the achievement of education of women as it was restricted only to the women belonging to the families of zamindars, traditionally recognized as landowners (Thakur,2017). Hence, in order to address the reforms that were being demanded, educating women became a priority for social workers and teachers who started many educational institutions. By 1907, British women doctors formed the Association of Medical Women in India. This served as the required impetus for women to organise themselves to fight for social emancipation.

In modern India, the Hindu woman is aware of her marginalised role in conventional social structures and realises that she cannot recuperate from this deprived state until she achieves social acceptance as an individual (Thakur, 2017). Though India is emerging as a global power in the 21st century, half of its

female population is still struggling to live life with dignity (Bedi and Bedi, 2017). It is legitimate to ask the question what role does education play if women are continually stifled in social practices and find their lives torn between traditionalism and modernity? They are unable to liberate themselves from the practices that are embedded as an inseparable entity in the social system. Not adhering to the expectations of the families and society, often renders women as those who bring dishonour to the Indian community and their family.

3.2 Gender discrimination:

Gender inequality or discrimination is a persistent and unpleasant phenomenon especially in developing countries such as India. According to a report generated by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation of the Government of India, in 2011 Census, there were 949 females to 1000 males in rural India whereas there were 929 females to 1000 males in urban India (Government of India,2018).

The above-mentioned statistics are a clear indication of how much the birth of a son is preferred in India over the birth of daughters. It has become a topic of much debate and discussion because women are forced into bearing children until the desired number of sons take birth. This has been evidenced in the data collected for this thesis as well. Reasons for celebrating the birth of a son range from being the carrier of the family's lineage to performing the parents' last rites at the time of death. This is perceived as giving him a far closer link to the parents than that of a daughter. Another reason could be the economic drain on the family attributed to the wedding costs because of the dowry system. "Dowries entail a transfer from the bride's family to the groom and his family at the time of marriage." (Tipandjan and Klaus, 2015, p.82). The system of dowry has been prevalent since the Vedic Period and has now become a socio-legal problem that cannot be solved unless all members of the society actively cooperate with law enforcement agencies (Reshma and Ramegowda, 2012). Harassment of women for dowry can be seen in various forms such female infanticide and foeticide, sex-selective abortions, neglecting the girl child, abuse (physical and/or psychological) as well as domestic violence. Considering this to be a social evil, the Dowry Prohibitions Act was passed in 1961 to bring perpetrators under scrutiny. However, it still tends to persist in some form or the

other which in turn raises the marriage cost for girls thus making them an economic and financial burden on their families. From the data reported in this thesis, some women have reported abuse as well as being forced to have a male child after having successively borne girls. The above review of literature and discussion draws attention to the attitudes towards the birth of the girl child, thus giving rise to "sex selective abortions". At the family level, there is a lot of pressure on the woman to bear a male child (Barot,2012). This was also a deep-rooted complex manifestation of gender inequality and bias which I wished to understand within the Devanga community. While addressing this phenomenon, I came across the existence of first order births and second order births and so on. As per Barot (2012), first order births are the children born first and if this is a female, she is usually accepted in the family. But families in India as well as China would take steps to ensure the second order and third order births are not girls. The law in India and China has strictly restricted the practice of sex determination in order to ensure good survival chances of girls, however the enforcement of this law is extremely difficult. Though there is absolutely no evidence of this within the Devanga community, there is evidence that the birth of girls is not a celebration as opposed to the birth of a boy.

Thapar (2014), emphasises that a lack of inclusivity is not only a challenge in India or indeed in an Asian context. She states that "*Inclusiveness is problematic since every society since early times has overlooked the need for equality and has registered the dominance of some and the subordination of others*" (Thapar, 2014 p.43). However, she emphasizes that as a means of control, discrimination against sections of society was perpetuated during colonial rule and continues to be used to the advantage of those who have gained authority in current society. Continuing this historical perspective, the classicist and historian Beard (2017) considers why the voices of women who wish to assert their rights has been perceived as "problematic" by those predominantly male members of a powerful elite. She states that "classical writers insisted that the tone and timbre of women's speech always threatened to subvert not just the voice of the male orator but also the social and political stability, the health, of the whole state." Contemporary feminist writers (Dworkin 2007; Noddings 2010) have continued to highlight the inequalities that exist in modern society and the need to challenge the notions of male superiority and the traditional interpretation of the

roles of women. These writers suggest that a continuing analysis of the situation for women in all societies is important in order to gain insights into their lives and to challenge current orthodoxies and prejudices. Also, various governments at national and state levels have tried their best at implementing strategies for the empowerment and upliftment of women. Unfortunately, these problems originate at the familial level and hence it is important to initiate gender equality and justice at the household level (Velan, Tripathy, Bhaskaran,2012).

In India, debates about women's rights have been required to confront long established traditions based upon religious orthodoxies and the caste system (Nanda and Ray 2018; Hasan 2019). Ramachandran (2019) has considered the intentions of the National Policy on Education of (Government of India 1986) that emphasized the transformative potential of education and its ability to raise the status of women but suggests that progress has been hindered by continuing discrimination against those from traditionally disadvantaged groups. She believes that women from scheduled tribes and Dalit communities and others from the Muslim sectors of Indian society continue to struggle to attain their most basic rights to good quality education. Section 3.6 of the National Policy stated the opinion that to promote equality, it will be necessary to provide equal opportunity to all not only in access, but also in the conditions for success. Besides, awareness of the inherent equality of all will be created through the core curriculum. In the view of Ramachandran, despite more than thirty years of debates around this legislation, many women remain marginalised in education by their communities.

Having spoken about the existing aspects of gender bias and discrimination, India has also had several opportunities to rejoice in terms of positive development of women such as closing of gender gaps in primary and secondary schooling, presence of women in the labour force, violence against women and voices have also been raised on issues such as the sexual and reproductive health of women. But despite all these developments, gender discrimination and patriarchy has not decreased (Segran, INSEAD,2010). Advances have been made in various fields, but the position of women has worsened considerably in every domain and women are continuing to face constraints. Looking at the work participation rate, female participation is at 25.7% while male participation is almost double at 51.9%. This also indicates that women undertake jobs only

when they are faced with an economic crisis and hence their participation is high in lower communities. I choose to differ in this because in the data obtained in this thesis, women have mentioned that even though their family is in the midst of an economic crisis, the men of the Devanga community are not very encouraging of the women stepping out of the house to contribute to the family's income. So, although women are supposed to be humble and modest, because of their inability to take a decision they are viewed as weak and emotional beings (Segran, INSEAD,2010). Why is it that in India, single women are denied and marginalised? Women are not considered successful in their careers if they fail to manage their domestic front effectively. Women face more scrutiny than men, their mistakes are viewed with a magnifying lens in comparison to their male counterparts. In my opinion, a more holistic approach is required for women to overcome these daily struggles and walk with their head held high.

Gender discrimination takes on various forms, majorly seen from the traditional or cultural aspect which excludes women out of the economic stream, not just in India but in almost every country (Balatchandirane, 2003). Girls in Indian society have been subjected to such a strong system of social conditioning that it inculcates a code of conduct among them (Thakur, 2017). Because of these social norms, women have generally been unable to liberate themselves from the numerous individual roles assigned to them. The question mark always hangs large over our heads giving rise to the possibility that women are destined to never be able to achieve what men can, simply because they are not capable of it. Gender discrimination is the culmination of myths, religious practices and ceremonies that abet the traditional mindset of our Indian society, in turn proclaiming men to be far more superior to women. However far the Indian society progresses (if we do), as a society we still like dressing up girls in pink and boys in blue and condition ourselves in believing that there are biological differences between boys and girls which sets them for different roles in society (Frassanito and Pettorini,2008). A woman who bears a son experiences a sense of achievement in having done so. According to Nabar (1995), if other aspects of bearing a girl are visualised, it is at a later stage and is an unavoidable situation and hence the whole boy-girl syndrome can be rationalised.

Having spoken of the theories and controversies surrounding women in Indian society, it is necessary to understand where these ideas originated from. Social

and religious doctrines play a dominant role in interpreting this situation, and these often give men the absolute authority. Goel (2005), suggests that Indian cultural stereotypes are reinforced particularly in the Hindu epic, Ramayana where the main characters, Ram and Sita represent the ideal man and wife. Indian women are thus expected to abide by the expectations and traditions of the marital house, avoiding any practices or behaviours that might bring shame to the family. Adding to this are our myths and traditions which condition human ideas so strongly and powerfully that it is often very difficult to disentangle reality from perception and what we learn about ourselves from them (Thakur, 2017). As will be discussed later in this chapter, our epics and puranas (historical texts) are internalised to an extent that they become an integral part of our personal and psychological beings.

As we speak about the role and status of the woman in Indian society, it becomes necessary to mention at this stage that the research reported in this thesis was conceptualised within a small community in India called the Devanga community. The Devanga community is a sub caste in Hinduism, who were traditionally considered as the weaving castes of India (as described earlier in this chapter). Majority of them are weavers of silk and cotton clothes. As is typical with other castes, Devangas became an endogamous unit of weavers either due to caste rules or the typical social conditions of India.

Being a part of this community, I must emphasize that women within this small community are treated in complete accordance to the "stereotyped" roles laid down in our ancient texts in the belief that the woman's duty is in the house and men are required to be the bread winners in the family. Some of the women in this community still believe that they are accepted in society only when they are defined by the husband and live within the parameters drawn up and demanded by the social order. A small section of these women would like to stand up for their rights but lack the required emotional support and have a fear of being discarded or abused by the male members of the family. Their intellect identifies the problem, but they have no solution because of the fear of being objectified and being portrayed as the "uneducated, weaker sex". Attempting to summarise the various reasons for gender discrimination, lack of educational opportunities, poverty, caste, customs and beliefs, religious practices, personal and societal

attitudes have been found to be contributory to this phenomenon in India as well as within the Devanga community (Sivakumar, 2008)

3.3 Untangling the maze: "Stereotypes"

Having highlighted the aims and objectives of the study as well as provided an overview of context, and the rationale behind conducting the research, it is important to understand the meaning of the term stereotypes as it forms the backbone of this research. As suggested by Kruger (1997, p.1), "gender relates to a set of cultural expectations according to which men and women behave."

Stereotypes can be defined as "the unconscious or conscious application of (accurate or inaccurate) knowledge of a group in judging a member of that group" as described by Banaji and Greenwald (2013, p.55). There are several complexities which arise while considering the relationship between attitudes and stereotypes and to understand it better, I have distinguished them as individual stereotypes and cultural stereotypes after drawing references from Eagly and Mladinic (1989). They indicate that individual stereotypes are the beliefs held by an individual whereas those beliefs that are shared with other members of a group are known as "social" or "cultural" stereotypes. Working closely with the members of the Devanga community, I believe that the concept of cultural stereotypes can be meaningfully related to this group because this represents a social agreement rather than individual beliefs. In fact, stereotypes are often not imposed consciously, and research has indicated that the application of stereotypes is generally not intentional. Within the community in question here, women are found to abide by the stereotyped roles laid down by their ancestors and male members of the community which indicates that it is associated with detrimental judgement characterized by irrational and stiff generalizations about a community (Hussain *et al.*, 2015).

As evidenced earlier, stereotypes begin within families where roles are assigned specifically based on gender and these messages are transmitted quite strongly. Several societies in India and most other Asian countries, relate masculinity with being aggressive, and with independence and competitiveness whereas feminine stereotypes are perceived to be child friendly, emotionally expressive, sensitive and above all, submissive (Hussain *et al.*, 2015).

While looking at literature from other Asian countries, I came across a concept called the "Cinderella Complex" which has been used by Xu, Zhang, Wu and Wang (2019). They analysed thousands of movies and books to see how gender stereotypes are woven into tales of morality and conveyed to the public. Delving a bit deeper, it is a common belief that stories have been known to instruct and give a public message rather than just entertain. Several previous literatures have also indicated that men and women have different social expectations based on their images. For instance, men are considered to give in a relationship while women are supposed to only receive, women are fragile and sensitive while men are more competent and are expected to protect women (Xu, Zhang, Wu and Wang,2019). This was demonstrated in their study as well: stories that highlighted women's vulnerability and emotional dependence had a greater acceptance in the society when compared to stories that depicted men's vulnerability. When gender stereotypes are weaved into a moral tale in the form of stories, movies and books, gender inequality is maintained and conveyed as a social fact. When children are exposed to such tales, they fill themselves into these stereotyped roles and begin applying this in real lives. Hence these researchers gave this phenomenon the term "Cinderella complex" which means that women rely on men in the pursuit of a happy, content and complete life.

After several attempts at searching for literature within the Indian context, using various search engines, I was unable to find relevant and suitable literature in the recent past. Most of the studies have been conducted and published almost 20 years ago, which I understand, cannot be used in the current study. Hence, due to the shortage of Indian literature, I have attempted to correlate my findings as well as establish connections with literature from other countries that follow similar practices as those seen in India. In a traditional Pakhtun society in Pakistan, a patriarchal system is followed with all the traditions and customs of giving more space to men. Naz and Rehman(2012) indicated the symbolic celebrations at the birth of a male child which is indicative of increased power and prestige, very similar to the Devanga community (the community under study in this research) whereas the birth of a female does not invite such celebrations. A patriarchal society safeguards male ideologies and promotes negative gender values which further restricts women from participating in important family decisions related to marriage and other issues. During this

study as well, I also identified findings which relate to this suggestion, I have enough evidence to highlight these issues practiced within the Devanga community, very similar to the Pakhtun society in Pakistan as well as some parts of China. To cite a few similarities between the Devanga community and Pakhtun society in Pakistan, division of labour within the household is a good example. Among Pakhtuns, the division is very strict where both genders are expected to follow the expected behaviour pattern in order to comply with societal expectations. This means that the domestic domain is entirely dominated by the females and they are discouraged from participating in any outdoor activities. The male members are forbidden from indulging in any feminine activities such as cleaning or taking care of the children. This is also seen within the Devanga community members and has also been adequately supported in the obtained data. Such dichotomy is observed by the children and they grow up believing that stereotypic gender roles are to be followed in the future. Domestic environment plays a pivotal role in shaping attitudes and personalities and teaches the children gender appropriate behaviour (Hussain *et al.*,2015). In other words, this biased family relationship is internalised as an institutionalised mechanism by the children and most of the decisions are continued to be taken by the male members of the family. Hence it can be concluded that gender stereotypes are not a biological phenomenon, rather are inculcated by sociocultural prejudices wherein these individuals are an outcome of parents' differential treatment of children, gender socialization and traditional and stereotypic division of labour.

Though most societies follow a patriarchal system, there are also exceptions to this norm such as the Khasi tribes of Meghalaya who follow a matriarchal system. Several scholars believe that primitive societies assign a high status to women whereas in lower communities and groups women are subjected to submission, oppression and male dominance (Lodha,2003).Within the Indian context, Nairs and Mappilles in Kerala as well as The Khasi and Garo tribes of Meghalaya are one of the very few groups to follow a matrilineal system of succession, inheritance and descent. (Das,2001). This means that a woman carries the family's lineage forward as well as inheriting the ancestral property via the youngest daughter. Another remarkable feature of these communities is that the Khasis follow the matrilocal form of residence which means that after

marriage the groom resides at his wife's residence. In some sense, this system provides women a higher degree of freedom in comparison to that enjoyed by women in other parts of India. This has also given rise to a feeling of discrimination against men because the rules are biased towards women and are restrictive in nature. However, the concept of matrilineal society is slowly changing even within the Khasi and Garo tribes particularly due to intermingling of different communities, urbanization and modernization.

This chapter has briefly dealt with aspects of Gender discrimination, Stereotyping and the Role and Status of Women in India to give a bird's eye view of how this research was conceptualised and what formed its backbone. The following chapter deals with deeper aspects of gender inequality, role of parents in inculcating stereotypes as well as the education of girls in India as these formed the core of this research. These two chapters on literature have closely looked at the aspects of gender that have emerged in the data reported along with a critical analysis and understanding of similar aspects in other Asian countries such as China and Pakistan.

4. Literature Review: Part Two: Issues Directly Influencing the Research Reported in this Thesis

During the process of data collection for the research reported in this thesis, I came across several discussions on Socialization. This can be interpreted as a process through which a child becomes aware of his or her environment, norms and customs. I realized later that it was not something as simplistic as just becoming aware, in fact it was a more focused form of socialization where children were moulded into gender specific roles and were made to understand what it meant to be a boy or a girl and what each person's role in the society is.

Girls adhering to stereotyped roles is what the community believes makes them good daughters and wives and to sustain this perception of being good they need their husbands' and society's approval all the while. Every society presents a prescription involving the roles that men and women need to conform to and in conforming to this, socialization inducts individuals to learn a gender appropriate role. Hussain et al. (2015) also illustrated that gender stereotypes mainly assert themselves at early puberty or adolescence. The Devanga community is no different. Girls are restricted from attending school or going for extracurricular activities once they attain puberty because at this stage boys and girls must avoid encountering each other.

Resultantly, the discussion so far is reflective of the fact that stereotyping and gender socialization is cultural in nature which is an ancestral process reinforced by parents and grandparents.

4.1 The Role of Parents in Inculcating Gender Stereotypes

According to the Oxford dictionary, Stereotypes may be defined as: "*a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is not often true in reality.*" There definitely are differences between men and women but stereotyped expectations reflect the existing differences which in turn impacts the way men and women define themselves and treat each other (Ellemers, 2018).

Gender socialisation commences at birth from the question "is it a boy or a girl?". Research studies have indicated that gender stereotyped behaviour is inculcated in children primarily by their agencies of socialisation such as parents,

peer groups and families (Crespi, 2004). Children observe the sex-typed behaviours at home between the mother and father and generally apply that behaviour to other relationships as well (Whitemen, McHale and Crouter,2003). There could also be sex-based division of labour within families which conveys rather stereotyped messages. Having observed these behaviours, children use this to construct their own perceptions about gender development. Gender identities and development of expectations towards boys and girls begins within the parent-child relationship and these expectations may vary when compared to the past. My understanding of the data obtained in this thesis as well as from various literature reviewed indicates that parents teach stereotypes through the way they dress up their children, introduce them to the world as well as the roles they assign to them and their own attitudes and behaviour. Whiteman, McHale and Crouter (2003) through their work suggest that fathers are more focused on gender socialization and tend to treat their daughters differently when compared to their sons. It would also be interesting to understand power issues as well as allocation of funds between husbands and wives and between brothers and sisters. Do the interests of the man take over the woman's interests and are more funds allocated to him In my opinion, if women are also permitted to earn a living it may push them to develop more egalitarian views of themselves and their daughters. However, the same could be a disadvantage because the male members of the Devanga community are fearful of giving equal status to women.

Hussain *et. al.*, (2015) conducted a study in a province in Pakistan to understand gender stereotyping in families and one of the conclusions to the study was that children face social stigma when indulging in tasks of the opposite gender. This sort of compulsion creates an identity of their gender where it is inculcated in the boys not to do tasks related to females and girls should avoid masculine activities. Inculcation and cultural transmission are an age-old tradition which is reinforced through modelling by parents and other family members (Hussain *et al.*,2015). On similar lines as the research conducted on the Devanga community is evidence of research conducted by Crespi(2004) where her data revealed that the more traditional the parents are in their attitudes and behaviour, the children would replicate the same behaviour and this strengthens through childhood and adolescence. She also reported that age and self-esteem

play an important role in determining the attitude of women. This means that when girls are older in age and are more self-confident, they have lesser stereotyped behaviour.

Will it be right to assume that gender stereotypes favour men over women? Research on the Devanga community is based on this premise that society favours men over women but in order to produce a valid study it was important that I explored the literature in this area. Thakur (2017) discusses how social and religious doctrines condition our ideas so strongly that it often becomes impossible to disentangle ourselves from what we perceive as reality and what we learn from them. Contemporary Hindu women are raising their voice against oppressive rules of society and are looking out for their identity. This is usually done by rationalizing their emotional reactions of the past and the present. In my opinion, which is also supported by Thakur (2017), true feminism is when women decide to break out of their cocoons and assert themselves. Various factors such as education and economic independence have given women the right to raise their voice against oppression. Unfortunately, within the Devanga community this is still in its infancy, wherein women are not given the freedom or the independence to live life on their terms. As will be highlighted in the Findings and Discussions chapters of this thesis, a tiny percentage of women within the Devanga community have had the courage to stand up for their rights and are no longer treated at par with the other members of the community, primarily because of their disobedience and resistance to the cultural and traditional norms of the community.

In congruence with the family structures and role of parents in inculcating the idea of stereotypes in children comes an interesting aspect of how this is done. Parents generally consider the emotional aspects while conversing with their children and might even discuss different aspects with their sons and daughters (Dunn, Bretherton and Munn, 1987). Parents also share their thoughts and experiences with their children thus contributing to the understanding of gender attitudes. I believe that this could develop either way depending on the exposure that children have within their families. For instance, if a child is exposed to perpetual occasions of domestic violence being perpetrated on the mother, the child would grow up to believe that a woman is submissive and is meant to be treated that way.

Furthermore, it has been identified that men and women have different levels of emotionality where women are regarded as being emotionally passive while men are more aggressive. This creates an internalized stereotyped pattern within families, thus inculcating in boys a sense of strength, independence, dominance and power while girls imbibe passivity, sensitivity and dependence. It seems to me that the Devanga community and the Pakhtun society in Pakistan(as explained earlier in this chapter) follow similar traditions and customs because in both the cultures, men are the decision makers whereas women cannot even make personal choices. Children are even rewarded if they behave in accordance with these rules and if they disobey, they are strongly discouraged. This is enough for the children to notice differences between the sexes and behave accordingly.

The above discussion highlights an important issue: gender differences are not biological but rather socio-cultural and societal, where these differences are inculcated within the family itself. In addition, gender stereotypes are usually helpful when trying to make a judgement on how an unknown individual is likely to behave or to see how large groups of people are different from other groups (Ellemers, 2018). However, they can also exaggerate the perceived implications of categorizing people on their gender. People who depend on gender stereotypes are heavily influenced by it and tend to judge abilities based on it too. Leslie *etal.* (2015) evidenced that within educational contexts under the aegis of stereotypes, girls are seen to be lesser talented than boys in areas of science. As a result of this, in our daily interactions, gender stereotypes influence our judgements strongly enough to treat men and women differently (Agars, 2004). Indirect effects are seen in career progression where women are less likely to be selected for higher job openings or promotions when compared to men because their work performance is evaluated on a lower scale when compared to men, directly owing to stereotyping (Ellemers,2018). Having discussed about the professional domain, things seem quite opposite when stereotypes are viewed from the domestic front. Women are evaluated positively on aspects of warmth and caregiving than men who are rated higher on aspects of task performance domains. Whether this is entirely true or not continues to be a topic of debate and discussion.

It becomes very easy to make such explicit claims that women are the weaker sex and men are more capable of robust tasks, but personal convictions and beliefs do play a role in this. Across various cultures and contexts, though men claim that women are not capable of doing much and are only suited for indoor jobs, they may still continue to believe that women are sensitive and need to be protected by men, a term known as "Benevolent Sexism" (Glick *et al.*, 2000). According to them, benevolent sexism is a "*positive orientation of protection, idealization, and affection directed towards women that, like hostile sexism serves to justify women's subordinate status to men.*" (Glick *et al.*, 2000, pg.763). It works almost invisibly to promote gender inequality. There is subtle evidence of this in the data reported in this thesis as well. In my opinion, this is quite sexist because it reinforces patriarchy by portraying women as entities who need protection and safeguarding wherein that is not entirely true. If women can be empowered enough to be independent individuals, this kind of "protection" and "perceived subordination" can be a thing of the past. Benevolent sexism is a subtle form of prejudice which is rooted within the personal relationship of a man and a woman (Glick *et al.*, 2000). Though men dominate across all cultures, they are dependent on women to reproduce and nurture, thus creating an interdependence. Benevolent sexism presumes that women are the weaker sex and need protection, but it is a more subjectively positive form of sexism because it characterizes women as wonderful creatures whose love is required to make a man feel complete. Presumably, because of this positive tinge, it has not been questioned and challenged by egalitarians as strongly as other forms of sexism (Glick *et al.*, 2000).

It is important to note that in India, though gender bias has been debated and understood in some contexts, there is a lack of literature or empirical evidence in respect of the impact of parental expectations in relation to education. Research has been conducted on various aspects surrounding gender discrimination such as parental investments and differential treatment of boys and girls, but there is not much on parental aspirations and expectations. This is an issue that affects a significantly large portion of the Indian population. Research studies in India have not investigated the extent and prevalence of this problem and this suggested to me, that this matter needs urgent and serious investigation. To understand why this gender bias persists in certain communities and regions, I

felt it necessary to investigate this aspect in depth and gain a better understanding of the socio-cultural norms and practices followed by this community in Urban and some parts of Rural Bangalore.

The Indian economy has grown significantly over the last few years and is today amongst one of the stronger economies in the world. However, India also remains among the top few countries practising child marriage or early marriage in the world (Salvi,2009). Early marriage has been a significant contributor towards the low educational attainment faced by girls in India because of the socio-cultural importance attached to getting girls married at a young age. Family composition, demographic pressures as well as having a younger female sibling have all been found to determine a girl's age of marriage (Maertens, 2013). She conducted a study across 3 villages in rural India to analyse the role of perceived returns to social norms and education concerned with the ideal age for marriage. Her study concluded that parents have lower educational aspirations for girls when compared to boys, presumably because of the social norms that need to be followed with regards to getting girls married early. Her results indicate that while 39% of girls could complete higher education, 71% boys were given the opportunity to do so. Though this study was conducted in rural India, in my opinion, I can extrapolate it to the research community under question as well because the Devanga community has followed the tradition of getting their girls married quite young, so they are able to embrace motherhood at a young age as well. The data reported in this thesis has evidenced that the members of the community believe in orthodox ideas and hence get their girls married very early.

Young Lives is an international study funded by the UK to understand childhood poverty by following the lives of 12,000 children in over 4 countries: India, Peru, Ethiopia and Vietnam over 15 years. Himaz (2009) analysed data from the second round of a survey conducted by Young Lives in Andhra Pradesh which revealed parents' preference for providing better quality education for the boys rather than the girls, in turn leading to gender disparity in allocation of finances for their children. Her study revealed that in households with children around the age group of 12-13 years, more money is spent on boys rather than on girls owing to higher academic fees. A significant bias was seen against girls' education in the age group of 15-18 years.

The study conducted by Himaz (2009) has also indicated that the differential expenditure could be related to the expectations from the children as well as the children's own expectations. When caregivers of the boys were questioned, most of them said they would like the boys to take up professions related to engineering (15%) or teaching (33%). Whereas the caregivers of girls said they wanted the girls to either become full time homemakers (26%) or teachers (39%). Similarly, when caregivers were asked about the expectations they had from their children, they said they wanted the girls to get married soon and have children at the earliest. These caregivers also had no expectations of the girls being financially independent. All these findings of this study indicate that there is a significant difference in caregivers' attitudes about their expectations from their children.

Having investigated the historical and religious influences which impact upon my research, it is important that I now consider that literature which has influenced my own approach to conducting the investigation reported in this thesis, and my reasons for embarking upon this study.

One of my motivations for doing this research was to analyse a widely debated topic of women's education and gender discrimination in a smaller section of the Indian population, the Devanga community described above. I, as a researcher, who also belongs to this community, came with a preconceived notion and belief that this level of discrimination is of lesser significance now than it may have been in previous years. However, my initial observations suggest that this situation still prevails across the length and breadth of the community. People of various age groups belonging to this weavers' community fail to see the advantage or purpose of educating women.

Though several members of this community agree that women's education is important, as is apparent from the data which I will present, there are various ways in which this is interpreted. As will be evidenced by the data gathered through this research and reported later in this thesis, several women stressed that women must be independent and bread winners of the family. However, they also lack the courage to send their daughters for higher education with the fear of not finding suitable educated grooms for the girls if they do so. These

differences have created a rift when it comes to considering how to educate girls in this community and enable them to become strong independent women.

Having stated the above, it would be wrong to deny the fact that women have achieved significantly in the field of education in India and have performed especially well both academically and socially in primary and secondary education (Deolalikar 1993; Hossain and Tisdell 2005; Obasi 1997; Worku 2001). However even today, after more than 70 years of independence and with such a rapid growth in India's economy, educational attainment and completion of formal schooling for women remains an area of great concern. Whilst the Government of India has made the Right to Education a fundamental priority for every citizen, its focus has remained only at the primary level (Husain, 2010). The literacy problem in India is one which majorly impacts girls and women, as is evidenced by the fact that the male literacy rate is 75.3% whereas the female literacy rate is 53.7%. This shows a gap of 21.6% between the sexes (Ministry of Home Affairs, 2001). In order to address the declining sex ratio as well the discrimination and disempowerment of the girl child, the Government of India launched a scheme known as "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" in 2015 under the ministries of Women and Child Development, Human Resource Development and Health and Family Welfare (Government of India, 2019). The overall goal of this scheme is to ensure the survival of the girl child along with ensuring her education as well as preventing sex-based elimination. It consists of two components which are:

- A) Mass Communication Campaign: Aims to ensure girls are born and taken care of and educated without any gender discrimination.
- B) Multi-sectorial action in 100 selected districts: Works in coordination with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Human Resource Department to ensure the protection and survival of the girl child. The role of the Ministry of the Health and Family Welfare is to ensure the implementation of Pre Natal Diagnostic Tests, register all the births and set up monitoring committees, whereas the role of the Ministry of Human Resource Department is to ensure enrolment of girls in schools, make the schools girl-friendly and ensure strict implementation of the Right to Education Act.

This scheme was launched across the nation to celebrate the Girl Child and her empowerment by ensuring her education.

Attesting the above statement, there is evidence to suggest that in some Indian communities' women are discouraged from completing their education and pursuing professions, and that they face specific barriers to access and achievement in education when compared to men from similar Indian communities. The main reason for educational development in a society is to reduce inequality among individuals and so the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by 58 member states of the United Nations General Assembly included education as the basic right of every human being (Willmore, 2004). More importantly, perhaps, education makes women more aware of their basic rights as individuals. But whether to send a girl to school or not is dependent on parental and societal decisions which are in turn influenced by several factors such as direct and indirect costs, perceived benefits and losses (Patkar,1995). Abundant evidence shows that attaining education empowers people to develop values regardless of their sex. People with no education would typically accept their parents' preferences whereas the educated ones would question and reassess their parents' preferences and re-evaluate their values (Ezcurra and Echavarri, 2010).

The significance of providing equitable education was also substantiated by a research review undertaken by Osadan (2014) in the Sub-Saharan Africa region on the enrolment of boys as opposed to girls. He found that male students have a higher school enrolment and completion rate when compared to girls and for every 3 students who were denied full primary education, two were females. As in India, this was mainly because girls had to adhere to their traditional roles of doing domestic chores. A further study from Turkey on educating women illustrated that this not only gives them access to knowledge but it also enables them to become independently functioning individuals in society (Demiray,2014). This study considered 600 women living in Eskisahir, Turkey, who are 18 years and above and were given a 34-item questionnaire in face-to-face interviews to investigate women's awareness about governmental and non-governmental organizations and laws and if they would like to receive education on this and to determine their expectations from distance education. Demiray (2014) also states that often women benefit more from education than men and

investments in women's education has produced more efficient output than investing in men's education.

Croll (2006, p.1286) illustrated that according to reports and pamphlets published by UNICEF, girlhood was *'a perilous path' beset by a wide range of discriminatory and violent practices and described girlhood as a time of 'harsh lessons' when 'girls begin to deny themselves' and 'to expect little and to think less of themselves than of their brothers'*—a lesson which they too will pass on to their own daughters unless 'this vicious circle' is broken. There is still a huge gap between where women's education needs to be and where it actually is (Dean,2017). According to Rankin and Aytac (2006), it is usually the state or the government that decides the allocation of funds thus shaping the educational attainment of children. Hence, if the government decides that female education is more important than male education then there is more prevalence given to that. While conducting similar research in Turkey, Rankin and Aytac (2006) found that the educational attainment of women was lower than men because of restricted employment opportunities for women in developing countries which would in turn lead to parents investing minimally in their daughters' education. Another significant finding was the socio- economic status of the family, wherein if the family was of a low socio- economic status then they followed a process of selective education. This is a system where some children in the family go to school, while others stay at home to assist with the domestic chores. Because of the existence of cultural attitudes which favour the education of boys over girls, wide gender disparity is seen in educational attainment (Rankin and Aytac,2006).It can be concluded from the international literature, that in common with India, several other countries also follow practices which stagnates the progression of women's education.

Wollstonecraft, (1972, cited in Poonacha 2016) stated that women also need to develop the capacity to take decisions and accept responsibility for their actions. According to this, a difference in education for boys and girls was needed only as a justification for male tyranny and to reinforce the opposition of women as dependent beings. Prevailing gender relationships built on the political and socio-economic powerlessness of women further results in the development of passivity and dependency in women. This in turn is used as an excuse by men to deprive women of their rights and keep them as domestic servants. In a country

like India, social disadvantage naturally outweighs the natural biological advantage of a girl child. Our society has granted the girl child a very rough hand wrought with discrimination, prejudiced ideas, ritualistic prejudices, son idolization and early marriage. This begins even before a girl child is born and lasts till her last breath. An interesting finding made by Wollstonecroft (1972) was that socialization plays a significant role in developing identity for women. Unfortunately for most of the female population in India, marriage is the only vocation and that too depends on male approval. A significant amount of time and resources are spent on conforming to male ideas of emotions and beauty rather than developing themselves intellectually.

This researcher believes that in much of Indian society, women continue to be perceived to be inferior and she hence agrees with Wollstonecroft that this perception is because of the few entitlements they enjoy in the society which are again dependent on male counterparts.

It has also been observed within patriarchal societies that women have to balance their jobs along with a hostile domestic environment because failure on a woman's part to perform her domestic duties is almost regarded a punishable offence (Biswas, 2017). These could also be used as an excuse to engage in domestic violence by the male counterparts. The point being conveyed here is that though there are ample employment opportunities being created for men and women, such restrictive ideas hamper the chances of a woman's progression.

Gender discrimination in education impacts not just the women who have been denied education but also on the future generations of their daughters (Bose,2012). The education of girls lags behind that of boys in India and this phenomenon is quite bad in some communities when compared to others (Haridarshan,2015). India being a male dominated society, women are often not encouraged to study. Quisumbing and Maluccio (2003) stated that whether it is boys or girls whose education receives preference is solely dependent on the culture and customs of the country they live in. Sadly, because daughters are considered to be a temporary member of her parents' family, it is often regarded as reasonable to assume and perpetuate the disproportionate allocation of funds to sons rather than to daughters in respect of education (Bose,2012). The

reason for girls facing inferior educational opportunities could either be gender bias in schooling or pro male bias in society in general which manifests in lower intra household educational expenditures on girls than is invested in their brothers. Kingdon (2005), further argues that gender bias in education within the household occurs in relation to 2 decisions: a) to enrol/retain sons and daughters in school and b) if enrolled in school, how much to spend on their schooling.

According to a study conducted by Saha (2013) across 16 states in India to understand gender discrimination in household expenditure on education in India, there is significant variation across states. Data was collected from 63,318 rural and 37,263 urban households which covered 7,953 villages and 4,682 urban blocks across India, excluding unfavourable and difficult terrain such as Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, interior villages of Nagaland and villages in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Socio-demographic data which included the religion, household size, age, sex and marital status of each member of the family and the total monthly consumption expenditure of the household. In addition to this, structured questionnaires were used to gather information on private expenditure incurred on the education of each member in the family, persons aged between 5 and 29 years attending an educational institution at primary level and above and reasons for dropout and discontinuance from education were also collected. There was no major difference found between urban and rural India, except that inequality among discriminated female students is lower in urban India. In other words, it indicates that households in rural and urban sectors prefer spending more on the boys rather than on girls. Lancaster, Maitra and Ray (2008) indicated the same finding of gender bias in education spending in a few areas in India, especially the backward ones. But they also said that results vary sharply from one household to another depending on the levels of adult literacy. The gender bias tends to prevail in households with low levels of adult literacy and educational attainment when compared to households with higher educational levels.

A very interesting revelation made here was that within the tribal communities in India, gender discrimination in household allocation of funds was least prevalent probably because most of the tribal communities follow the matriarchal system wherein the females hold absolute authority over the family group. In

communities such as the Khasi tribes of Meghalaya, not only is there minimal gender bias seen, but women participate actively in the social, religious and political activities of the villages as demonstrated by Wahlang (2015). Patriarchal systems in India follow the system of a male progeny and the son performing the last rites of the parents in the eventuality of death. However, in matriarchal systems, the maternal uncles distribute the property to the daughters of the family while the son has no right over it. With the introduction of modern education, females have outnumbered the males in terms of participation in various activities.

India, a mainly patriarchal society, developed a preference for sons for cultural and economic reasons (Jha and Chaudhri, 2013). Within this context, culture can be defined as "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time." (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020).

Matriarchy is at times confused with matrilineal. When considering the definition given in the Cambridge dictionary (2020), "Matriarchy is a type of society in which women have most of the authority and power." By contrast, "Matrilineal has been defined as tracing descent through the maternal line." (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2020) It is evident that some specific groups within India have followed a different system whereby matriarchal influence has challenged the current status quo. Kerala, a southern state in India, for instance has been practising matrilineality possibly from around the 11th century but it is not practiced by all groups (Jeffrey, 2004/2005). Households such as the Nairs, Mappilas and some tribal groups follow matrilineality even today. This system allows physical mobility for girls and women in a system where the principle of "value of the girl child" is very high. This is quite different from the patriarchal culture followed in a major part of India where the birth of the daughter is not considered to be auspicious.

Girls are less likely to go to school, and even if they do, are often withdrawn at an early age to either take part in domestic responsibilities or because of financial constraints in the family (Basu, 1992 cited in Bose, 2012). Though several studies have been conducted in India on gender disparity, none of the studies have investigated the preference of sons in the persistent gender disparity. It is these factors that contribute to India having the lowest female

literacy rates in Asia (Bose, 2012). Frequently cited reasons for this gender gap in education are:

- labour market discrimination against women and
- sons and daughters being treated differently by their parents.

The first reason can be understood as “if the return rate to women’s schooling is lesser than that of men, then girls face poorer economic incentives to schooling than boys” (Kingdon,2002). If parents prefer having sons than daughters, then they give greater benefit and welfare to their sons because they value the return of the sons’ education personally, whereas the returns on a daughter’s education are reaped by her in laws (Kingdon,2002, p.26).

Focusing upon the situation in India, a study conducted in a small village in Central India highlighted instances pertaining to girls attending primary school along with shouldering household responsibilities because these girls believed that compliance to their parents’ demand of cooking and cleaning besides going to school would translate into ongoing parental consent to continue education (Froerer, 2012). This study was conducted as ethnographic portraits to understand how girls studying in Class 5 and lower, viewed schooling as a “holiday” from domestic responsibilities and social mobility opportunities. It also highlighted aspects of how schooling is viewed differently by the parents and their girls. In due course of time both these different valuations tend to get aligned with each other. Some communities in India believe that a woman’s position should be inside the house and that education is meaningless to her. Hence it can be summarized that socio-cultural norms and orthodox ideas contribute to the low female literacy rate in India (Katiyar,2016; Maity,2016).

4.2 Education of Girls:

In India where gender discrimination continues to be persistent and entrenched, encouraging the education of girls is seen to be increasingly important to empower them socially. A paper by Aikman, Halai and Rubagiza (2011) argues that quality education in low-income countries can be achieved only when they recognize and realise the rights and capabilities of all girls and women as well as men and boys. To understand this, it is important to recognize how gendered inequalities are experienced, reinforced and maintained not only in schools but

also in societies where political, social and economic situations may undermine the importance of education to boys and girls and its importance after school.

Amongst all the debates surrounding women and their status in India, one that has harboured interest is Education, especially higher education for women (Singh, 2018). Education attained after 12 years of schooling is termed as Higher Education in India and has gained extensive importance globally. Although important gains have been made in the field of women's education, there are factors which are partially eclipsed such as lack of gender parity. One of the reasons it is such a debated topic is because of the difference in people's beliefs about how it must be done. In my opinion, the One-Child Policy adopted by China seems to be a good option to achieve gender equality. This would make parents value their only child and treat a female child exactly how they would treat a male child (Lee, 2012). Girls may even get benefits of better intra-household finances as well as better educational opportunities. China, similar to India, practices son preference to a large extent because of the concept of Confucianism which officially supports patriarchy. Under this ideology, women are conditioned into believing that before marriage they must be obedient to their parents and brothers and after marriage they belong to their husbands and hence must conform to whatever is told, first by husbands and later by their sons. As a result of this ideology, families came into believing that investing finances on girls is a waste and hence resorted to more biased allocation of family funds.

Women's education in India is still considered an unnecessary indulgence by a significant part of the population in most parts of India. Prakash *et. Al*(2017) in a study conducted in Karnataka, the state in which I also carried out the research reported in this thesis, identified high levels of dropout rates from secondary education amongst girls from communities that held entrenched views about the roles of women in society. These researchers suggest that whilst in many of the middle-class communities in India significant progress towards educational equality has been made, there remains much to be done to change the attitudes and practices in those that cling to traditional beliefs and prejudices. Differences in opinions of whether women must be educated or not has caused a rift when it comes to how to do it. In the United States, women's education has climbed the rungs of the ladder beginning from no education at all, to receiving education

only in certain fields, receiving education in various areas and then concluded with receiving the same education as the males in that country (Dean, 2017).

Gender parity and equality are highlighted in one of the six Education for All (EFA) goals in the Dhakar Framework for Action (UNESCO,2000). It stated that gender disparities in primary and secondary education would be eliminated by 2005 and gender equality in education would be attained by 2015, ensuring girls full and equal access to basic education of good quality (Subrahmanian, 2005).

In order to ensure the survival, protection and education of girls in India, the Prime Minister launched a programme known as "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" (translated as Save the Girl Child and educate the Girl Child) in 2015 in the North Indian State of Haryana. It was launched in 100 districts in 2015 and was then extended to 61 more districts by 2016 as a nationwide campaign (Ministry of Women and Child Development,2019). This was launched with the sole aim of ensuring the celebration of the birth of a girl child and ensuring she receives education. The scheme ensures that girls are born and nurtured without any discrimination and they in turn grow up to become empowered and independent individuals of the society.

According to the National Education Policy (draft) of 2019, it is very important that the youth of India is equipped with the required skills, knowledge, attitude and values that would in turn empower them to contribute to India's social and economic growth and transformation (National Education Policy,2019). According to this policy as well as previous literature reviewed, it has been observed that several communities in India believe that girls need not go through formal schooling and it is more important for them to stay at home and learn the domestic chores. Social biases contribute further to such discriminatory practices in conjunction with historical discrimination against various groups. A long-term consequence of such bias is that such discriminated groups become under-represented and discriminated against when they grow up (National Educational Policy,2019) They begin to believe that they do not have the right to be treated at par with others. This policy recognises the importance of women in the society and hence aims at providing high quality education to girls. In order to achieve this equality, the Policy has aimed at tying up with State and Community organisations under which:

The Government of India will build a "Gender Inclusion Fund" which will focus on 5 main aspects:

- a) Ensure 100% participation of girls in schools and high participation in higher schooling.
- b) Close gender gaps in educational attainment.
- c) Changing mindsets and abolish harmful practices to ensure gender equality and inclusion.
- d) Develop girls' capacity for leadership to build current and future role models.
- e) Improve dialogue with the society to exchange best practices.

As witnessed in the community under investigation, many girls are made to withdraw from school owing to gender stereotypes and domestic responsibilities. Hence, this Education Policy aims at identifying and eliminating gender stereotypes such as encouraging allocation of funds for boys' education, early marriage, not allowing girls to opt for higher education. As a researcher seeking a change within the Devanga community, I hope that with this Policy, societal mindsets and attitudes within the community under research will change overdue course of time.

According to the report generated by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the 2011 census indicated that the highest female literacy rate has been reported in Kerala (92.1%) followed by Mizoram (89.3%). These numbers are a clear indicator that Karnataka (the state investigated in this research) still needs to improve as far as literacy and educational programs are concerned.

While looking at this issue from the State's perspective and with an intention to improve the literacy rates, the Girls' Education under Sarva Shiksha Abhyan 2010-11 initiated several projects such as Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya and National programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level.

As required under the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya scheme, the Government of India aims at setting up residential schools at elementary level for girls who have dropped out of school and belong to minority communities such as Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Communities. The aim is to ensure access and education to all girls belonging to disadvantaged

groups to ensure their participation in the society. Girls are enrolled based on a house-to-house census wherein girls are identified between 10-14 years of age who have dropped out of school and they are then counselled to understand the importance of education.

The National Program for Education of Girls at Elementary Level aims at reaching out to the "hardest to reach girls" while continuing to retain the girls who are already in school. This scheme is doing an excellent job at addressing the specific learning needs of girls as well as community mobilisation and gender sensitization of teachers.

As stated by Bose (2012), parents are more likely to educate their children if there is a return on the investment on education and the education is relevant to their family structure. This also contributes to the low female literacy because higher education is considered unnecessary for girls. However, the Karnataka Government has now come up with a scheme called "Karnataka Girls Free Education Scheme" under which the State Government will bear all expenses of a girl's education till post-graduation in order to increase the State's female literacy level ratio. The Scheme is applicable to all government colleges within the State and will be implemented from the academic year 2019-2020 (Sarkari Yojana 2020).

According to census data compiled by the Government of India in 1991, 2001 and 2011, Karnataka's female literacy rate has increased from 57.45% to 68.13% in a span of ten years (2001 to 2011). The State's female literacy rate is slightly better than the National female literacy rate but the gender gap in literacy of Karnataka (14.72%) is lower than that of India (16.68%).

While trying to understand the reasons for not being allowed to go to school and complete higher education, I came across a Statistical Compilation of Gender related Indicators in India (2018) which looked at reasons for non-enrolment of boys and girls in both urban and rural sectors. According to this data, 270 females (for every 1000) said they were not interested in attending school while 325 boys cited the same reason. Financial constrain was cited as one reason by 185 females and 236 males. Domestic responsibilities were a reason for 218 females not to be enrolled in school as well as no tradition in the community to go to school was a reason for 67 females as compared to 28 males.

4.3 Is the Situation in this Indian Community like that seen elsewhere?

Several similarities have been observed in the obstacles to women's progress between India and China, where the primary reason for female illiteracy was found to be traditional and outdated ideas, where women are subjected to such extreme traditional bias by their husbands and mothers in law that they begin to hold narrow expectations and opinions about themselves and fail to attend school. In cases where women are illiterate, they begin to limit their own expectations so that they avoid attending classes. And in situations where women rise above traditional ideas, resistance and opposition is often seen from their husbands and parents in law which is an obstacle to development of literacy and other critical learning skills. Hence the socio-cultural features and the parenting styles in India and China are similar and researchers working in these areas can gain from each other's experience. Beliefs about childhood have been found to directly impact the practice of child rearing particularly in how parents mould and treat children (Chao, 2002). Indian parents like most Asians, traditionally follow an authoritarian style of parenting where children are expected to follow strict rules and instructions strongly influenced by tradition, values and culture set by the parents. They are compared to "white paper" because of their lack of knowledge, goodness and innocence (Chao and Tseng, 2002, p.60). Children are prepared for their adult roles from a very immature age with an emphasis upon taking care of the family. They follow a patriarchal, joint family system in which the father is viewed as the bread winner and is portrayed as a stern figure and the mother is the primary care giver and nurturer, as reported by Tseng and Chao (2002).

In several parts of South Asia and East Asia, the number of "missing" girls has increased significantly raising concerns world over (Das Gupta, Chung and Shuzhuo, 2009). This could create possibilities of further social problems arising due to a shortage in the number of girls. There is also evidence from Klasen and Wink (2002) as well as Zhu and Keskeith (2009) that sex-selective abortions and gender mortality are predominant features in China. This is contradictory to what I have found within the Devanga community. Members of this community do not opt for sex-selective abortions. Instead, they go through repeated pregnancies till a male is born. They are firm believers that it is wrong to kill an

unborn child and hence do not opt for such measures. It could also be possible that the truth is kept hidden in order to avoid unnecessary speculation because there is no single factor responsible for son preference in India (Mitra, 2015). With several respondents within the Devanga community suffering from poverty, having additional girls may be considered as a financial burden and hence I assume, the truth may not be revealed. One might presume that women living in urban households may be less likely to exhibit son preference, but that may not be entirely true in the case of the Devanga community because of the societal and community beliefs and practices. Education is considered to be a significant factor in reducing the preference for sons, but the question is how many women within the Devanga community are educated enough to be able to raise their voice?

Similarities have also been found between India and Pakistan, both being patriarchal and known for their non-egalitarian gender norms (Jejeebhoy and Sathar,2001). Apart from these, the societal rules and women's autonomy varies from region to region in India. For instance, women in South India have more autonomy whereas women in North India have limited freedom, no rights in decision making and the only means of improving their status within the family is through the number of sons she can bear (Rao,2018)

Arokiasamy (2002), claims that on the domestic front women are burdened excessively with the various household chores such as washing, cooking, cleaning, providing for the family, taking care of the elderly and young ones. In several countries, restrictive norms and Islamic laws suggest patriarchy, and often suggestions are made to substantiate preferential treatment of sons in Hinduism (Mukherjee, 2013, p.8). Upper caste women, especially those belonging to the Hindu caste were largely uneducated and depended on their ability to have sons as a means of being recognised socially.

I believe that educating a woman means educating the entire family, thus equipping her for various roles such as a mother, wife, sister, nation builder and contributor to the family income. Making women more informed about aspects of nutrition, health, childcare could lead them to make better and well-informed decisions. Secondly, making women independent financially would increase their self-worth thus improving their decision-making abilities and finally, educating

women may make them want to raise more girls than boys (Mukherjee, 2013). It also improves a woman's capability to deal with the outside world (Amin, 1996). It probably would also increase the chances of equal partnership within the confines of their homes as well as the ability to overcome some orthodox beliefs.

Though there is ample evidence from literature that educating girls is important and it equips her with all the necessary skills, members of various communities in India including the Devanga community, restrict the completion of girls' education. Though parents want their daughters to achieve their academic ambitions, they are worried because getting their girls educated would mean not finding a suitable groom for her and a girl's marriage was and continues to be of utmost importance to parents, and girls who were well versed with domestic skills had the advantage of acquiring a suitable match (Froerer, 2012).

Bose (2012) also indicated that adult female education is an important precursor to lower gender bias against girls in education. Women with some education believe in investing more on their daughter's education when compared to women with no education at all because they believe an educated daughter would contribute more to the family's income by having a better hold on household accounts and be better equipped to supervise her children's education at home. Drawing attention to this I would like to provide an example which emerged during a small-scale study conducted by myself. The data from a transcribed interview included one of the participants stating that encouraging her daughter to achieve high academic results is futile because her final role lies within the confines of the house (Haridarshan, 2015). This does not conclusively indicate differentiating between the son and daughter but being prepared for the child's future in Indian society. Which means that however well the girl is educated, she eventually must don the role of a primary care giver to her husband and children and her professional skills end up being perceived as of lesser importance. However, it is still quite unclear whether women truly believe in this theory or if they have undergone a shift in their cultural perspectives?

It is important that arguments for changes in the education of girls should be based upon evidence, preferably that obtained through empirical study. Psaki (2019) suggests that too often, assertions are made about the need to educate

girls without sufficient attention being paid to the ways in which this may be beneficial. She argues that simply stating that equality of education is a fundamental human right will not persuade policy makers in countries where current systems have been long established. It is, she believes, important that researchers provide sound evidence of the socio-economic and political benefits that may accrue from change. Such considerations were important to me as I conducted the investigation reported in this thesis.

It may be interpreted that women who have had a pleasant childhood and supportive parents do not want their daughters to achieve extra ordinary results in academics as that would be a hindrance to their domestic lives in the future. This has been evidenced in the data collected for this research and will also be explained in the Discussions Chapter of this thesis. However, to have a brief understanding of this, it might be helpful if I could say that supportive parents understand the importance of education in a child's life. At the same time, they are also aware of the rules of the Devanga community which means that girls may not be allowed to pursue their dreams once they are married. Hence, some of these parents encourage their daughters to achieve their own ambitions without pressuring them excessively, at the same time also ensuring they get supportive husbands. These women understand that if their daughters achieve extra ordinary results in school, they will want to pursue their academic ambitions later in life, which may or may not be possible. Gendered socialization practices at home may play a role in shaping these self-perceptions in children (Eccles,2011). This could also mean a distortion of their children's competencies and capabilities based on gender which may lead to parents overestimating the capability of their sons or undermining their daughters' talents. This can be linked to the gendered socialization process wherein parents' gendered perceptions and experiences undermine a girls' capabilities to such an extent that she may decide not to pursue a career in a field of her choice. In my opinion, however this may be interpreted, the girls feel they are the losers and are not considered worthy enough of being given the freedom to do as they choose.

Religious customs and traditions play a significant role in influencing social norms such as dowry and paid work. For people who are unaware about Indian traditions and customs, the role of the Indian woman can be quite puzzling.

While they hold a relatively poor status in the society, their role within the confines of their homes is bound by strict roles, values and principles (Mane, 1991). On one hand, she (Indian woman) is treated as an embodiment of religiousness, spirituality, purity and power while on the other hand she is conditioned into portraying herself as weak and submissive. Information obtained from ethnographic studies have indicated that women belonging to patrilineal communities of South Asia rarely ever recognised and realised their rights to property and inheritance that the Hindu law had promised them (Agarwal,1994, p.249). In Hindu sonless families, a son could be adopted and made the legal heir, thus bypassing the daughter completely (Agarwal,1994, p.250). Several sets of legal bills were passed beginning 1955 such as the Hindu marriage Act in 1955, The Hindu Succession Act in 1956, the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act. All of these were passed keeping the Hindu family law in mind pertaining to aspects of marriage, divorce, adoption and property inheritance. The Hindu Succession Act aimed at providing equal inheritance opportunities for sons and daughters and has been the most disputed aspect of all the other Acts passed (Majumdar, 2010). This further underwent revision and in 2005 the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act came into effect which granted daughters equal rights with sons along with liabilities and disabilities related to the property. A study conducted by Sapkal (2017) indicated that women who had access to this reformed Act experienced greater schooling years as well as average months of employment, and this positive effect was observed even with their daughters. Denying a woman her rights to property can restrict her mobility which is in turn a source of women empowerment. According to The World Bank (2012, p.19) " the most promising policies to increase women's voice in households centre on reforming the legal framework so that women are not disadvantaged in controlling household assets, land laws and aspects of family law that govern marriage, divorce, disposal of property and active labour market policies which are directed towards improving the women's labour force participation are particularly important". The Hindu Succession Act reform has triggered a sharp rise in the educational attainment of women by not just increasing economic opportunities but also expanding its accessibility (Sapkal.2017).

Boys' and girls' educational paths are different because of several barriers that exist parallel to one another which include societal stereotypes which hinder a woman's role in society restricting her choice of occupation as well as her employer's attitude towards her role as a child bearer and nurturer (World Bank, 2012). McCauley, Stitt and Segal (1980, p.197) defined Stereotypes as generalizations "about a class of people that distinguish that class from others" and *stereotyping* as a "differential prediction based on group membership information". As a researcher I have investigated those solutions that have been proposed in the literature as being likely to make maternal education more beneficial to the advancement of girls. In rural China, it is reported that it was only appropriate to focus on the mothers because in most families they provided for their families. They are the ones who play a pivotal role in casting their children into gender roles. This is quite similar to the situation in India. The child's persistence at school may be impacted by the mother's educational aspirations (Zhang *et al.*, 2007). However, with support from literature, I would like to reiterate that education influences a woman's position in her family which in turn will increase her perception of the value of daughters (Bose, 2012). From my previous experience in conducting the small-scale study referred to above (Haridarshan 2015) it was demonstrated that mothers who are educated themselves and who have had a pleasant childhood are more likely to display unrestricted and unbiased views on gender and discrimination. Socio-cultural norms which value the dependent and domestic roles of women, financial dependence of parents on their sons and men's inheritance of family property are a source of disadvantage for women. Until this attitude changes, gender discrimination and preference of sons will continue to be a stubbornly persistent feature in India (Mukherjee 2013, p. 21). In relation to the context of this research, "Academic expectations can be defined as the knowledge attained and skills developed in school subjects" (Parveen *et al.*, 2013, p. 20). Comparing siblings within families also indicates girls being at a disadvantage compared to boys. It can also be hypothesized that women exhibiting son preference probably had mothers with low levels of education and they were settled in regions with weak women's status (Bose, 2012). In support of my proposal, Husain and Sarkar (2010), found on an average, lower gender disparity in Southern states across educational levels. It is interesting to note here, that gender discrimination in household educational expenditure is not just restricted

to socially and economically backward states such as Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Bihar and Rajasthan but has also been seen in what have been described as progressive states such as Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala (Saha,2013). Bose (2012) also pointed out that the fact that son preference is more prevalent in North India than elsewhere in the country, maybe due to regional cultural differences. Hence, I am curious to investigate the same trend in South India which may have been influenced by recent increases in migration of families from North India to South India. These gender differences often translate into gender bias in education. However, mothers who are educated might exhibit lesser preference for sons and may prefer to reside in communities with high female literacy levels (Haridarshan,2015). This furthered my interest in this area and hence the focus on maternal expectations.

4.4 The Role of Families:

Before interrogating the Indian context and role of families, it is important to understand the framework of a typical Indian family. Indian culture is usually defined as being interdependent and collectivist, where all members (especially women) are taught and encouraged to base their actions on familial and societal norms and not just on their interests (Ahmed and Ghosh 2004; Rastogi and Therly 2006; Tichy, Becker and Sisco 2009). It is the essential agency of socialization to learn the basics of culture and tradition in India. Substantiating the above literature, it can be said with no doubt that a daughter in law/ wife should be obedient, subordinate and deferent to her husband and his family (Gangoli and Rew 2011; and Koverola 2005, cited in Iyengar and Ragavan 2017). Traditionally in India, after marriage a woman moves into her husband's home and lives with her in laws, in an arrangement usually defined as a joint family/ non-nuclear family or an extended family. According to Mitra and Singh (2007) and Rastogi and Therly (2006, cited in Iyengar and Ragavan 2017), a woman's in-laws, especially mother-in-law plays a significantly authoritative role in her life because the daughter in law is looked at as a child. A study conducted by Ragavan and Iyengar, 2017 illustrated the existence and prevalence of psychological and physical abuse of the daughter in law by the mother-in-law in Udaipur district of Rajasthan. Analysing the difference in men's and women's perspectives regarding physical and psychological abuse, this

study concluded that participants viewed psychological abuse to be acceptable when they were not abiding by the norms of the household. However, this study was conducted in a highly patriarchal region where traditional gender roles are to be followed strictly. It also illustrated that despite a difference in their views regarding domestic violence, men believed that they could hit their wives if they did not obey the mothers in law. This further increases the complexity of the Domestic Violence situation in India wherein in-law abuse and partner violence cannot be regarded as two separate entities, rather they are interwoven very closely and may occur synchronously. Women however did not agree that men could hit their wives, instead they must try and stop the abuse. According to Tichy, Becker and Sisco (2009), there seems to be a strong relationship between socio-economic status, gender disparity and domestic abuse. Women belonging to lower socioeconomic strata of the society are known to make irrational decisions whereas women belonging to working class and upper socio-economic strata tend to look for support and guidance from a reliable source. However, this study also reported that some higher status women may have difficulties escaping the abuse due to financial obligations and reliance which may contribute to the already existing barriers. These may force women to overlook the abuse and continue facing it rather than reporting it.

Hence there is a strong difference in the role that husbands play in cases of in law abuse and that may suggest shifting beliefs about patriarchal attitudes and gender equality in India (Ragavan and Iyengar, 2017). Families form the basic tenet for expressing and moulding social behaviour in a society and hence has been a subject of interest for several centuries in the past and continues to be a topic of discussion. According to Gregory (2009), a variation in a familial structure could be either due to preference or by chance. Nuclear families comprise of the father, mother and children and is considered a full-fledged unit. An extended family can be a combination of two or more nuclear families living together. For instance, in India several families are extended units where the husband, wife, children and the husband's parents live together as one unit. As stated by Ramanujam (1972), due to personal or financial reasons, there is a current tendency to establish nuclear units though the jointness of an extended family is maintained. In my opinion, as well as that being supported by Gregory (2009) in such altered family structures the entire family operations get

reformed. When a woman is newly married, she may be under the control of the husband and in laws in some societies in India.

Women described a range of abuses inflicted by the mother-in-law such as controlling behaviour, verbal abuse and physical abuse to a lesser extent. This theory can be further understood by the data obtained in this study wherein a majority of the participants were subjected to psychological abuse by their in-laws, particularly their mother's in-law. Since the gender-specific roles are so pronounced in Indian culture, men may not even be aware of the existence and prevalence of mother-in-law abuse. Even yelling and scolding (which is often a form of psychological abuse) was viewed as acceptable when a woman is perceived to be disrespectful or has not been doing the expected chores (Iyengar and Ragavan, 2017).

Occurring concurrently with mother-in-law abuse is physical abuse by the husband/partner. Several women in the research conducted by Ragavan and Iyengar (2017) thought that the husband can and must serve as a mediator to solve conflicts and misunderstanding between the mother-in-law and daughter in law.

Moving out into a nuclear family arrangement is an option that is sought after all other options have been exhausted. And this can be achieved only if the husband is sufficiently empathetic and loving towards the wife to understand the abuse she is going through.

Having discussed abuse and identified this as a significant factor in the suppression of women, it does not mean, families in India are not supportive of women. I, as the researcher, being married into the Devanga community have had immense support and encouragement from my family in achieving ambitions of pursuing higher education. There is also evidence from the data collected in this research about husbands being supportive of their wives' ambitions and encouraging them to pursue and fulfil the same. Understanding gender specific roles yet breaking out of the stereotype is the need of the hour in India for girls and women to be able to recognize their interests and pursue them with whole-hearted support and encouragement from their families. Social support is and support from the husband and his family is directly related to a woman feeling empowered (Batool and Batool, 2018). It can be taken as a personal reference

as well as that supported by evidence from Khan and Maan (2008) and Tijani and Yano(2007) that when a woman's husband is encouraging and kind to her, thus giving her the freedom of expression, she automatically feels empowered. This could possibly be attributed to the fact that in India, families abide by what the male members of the family have to say which could be the fathers, brothers, husbands or uncles.

4.5 Fulfilling unfulfilled aspirations through children

Quaglia and Cobb (1996, p. 130), defined Aspirations as "*ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work towards those goals.*" This can be studied as two aspects: inspiration and ambition. Inspiration reflects an exciting and enjoyable activity to an individual whereas ambitions represent the perception of importance of an activity as means to future goals. In this study, I am focusing on the fulfilment or the desire to fulfil ambitions because it can be viewed as possible fulfilment as well as planning for the future. I consider it important because in this study women can identify and set goals for their children and are also motivated to progress towards those goals, however due to cultural differences and interferences, it may or not may not be achieved. This study focuses on understanding the childhood experiences of women within the Devanga community and its impact on their aspirations for their children. Though mothers have high aspirations from their children, several nuances exist across cross sections of the Devanga community which hinder their fulfilment such as focusing on the future family or gender stereotypes. Several women in India, especially those within the Devanga community have had their childhood ambitions denied because of various reasons such as poverty or simply because they were born as girls. Having become parents themselves, they aspire to see those ambitions fulfilled by their children especially their daughters. Unfortunately, the way these aspirations are embedded within family contexts and governed by other factors are neglected (Froerer, 2012). Gutman and Akerman (2008), in their research report talked about the educational aspirations and educational achievement for girls, saying it is higher for them when compared to boys, especially in minority ethnic groups and from higher socio-economic backgrounds. Unfortunately, several contributory factors are associated with this such as gender stereotypes, early entry of women into

parenthood as well as low self-confidence of women in their own abilities. While trying to understand the relationship between modernization and education, it becomes necessary to understand linking factors between education and other social institutions (Chanana,1990). My understanding from the data I have obtained is that “progression” and “modernization” may not have the same meaning to the Devanga community as what it has to me. According to me, men and women are entitled to the same basic rights in education, health, family discussions and child rearing. All girls must be given equal opportunities as boys to complete their education and achieve their ambitions.

Similarly, the interpretation of education and ambitions varies from one family to another within the Devanga community itself. Another factor to be kept in mind is the development and progression of aspirations in the mind of children, especially girls. Aspirations form early, but they change throughout childhood in response to their own changing perceptions and understanding of their abilities (Gutman and Akerman, 2008). Parents form an important link between forming aspirations and attaining them and have a direct influence on shaping their aspirations and values. Gutman and Akerman (2008) have also reported of instances where parents who hold high aspirations for their children are the ones who firmly believe they can help their children achieve those ambitions. But that does not mean that parents who cannot help their children do not hold high aspirations, because the study reported in this thesis has evidence of the same. Few mothers have reasonably high expectations from their children, but they are also aware that due to their lack of education they may not be able to help their children academically.

One of the reasons attributed to these women’s’ childhood ambitions having remained unfulfilled could be poverty (as discussed above) or the lack of understanding of the importance of education and being an independent individual. An added disadvantage to women is their gender, because of which they are kept at home to supplement family welfare and taking care of their siblings. It sounds quite contradictory because on one hand there are women who want to see their children, especially daughters fulfil their dreams but on the other hand these women succumb to societal pressures and get their daughters married early. Hidden patriarchy continues to control society even to this day, where it may seem almost invisible (Thapar, 2014). Hence, it can be

said that the obtained data(as will be shown later in this thesis) and available literature together indicate that though there is evidence of willingness to embrace change on the part of some within this community, this necessarily need not be the norm. This can also be viewed as an aspirations gap: the distance between what an individual aspires to do and the situation he/she is living in (Ray,2006, p.418). If the gap is too small, there is very little an individual aspires towards and if the gap is too large then there are a lot of aspirations. As Appadurai (2004) indicated, "the poor may lack the capacity to aspire." This resonates with women participants in this research stating that because of extreme poverty, they were kept away from completing their education because household finances were either allocated towards the boys' education or towards domestic responsibilities. External factors make the poor even more susceptible to have low aspirations and thus put lesser efforts in achieving their ambitions. This can be evidenced from the obtained data in this thesis where some women mentioned that they discourage their children especially daughters from pursuing professions such as medicine because it is very expensive. Hence girls end up pursuing courses which does not fall in their line of interest as they too are aware that once they are married, their educational qualification would be pointless. Unfortunately, the idea being missed here is that for a peaceful and poverty free world, investment in girls' education is a must as this would result in high returns in the future (Oxaal, 1997). Providing role models helps girls identify and understand the desire for education probably because girls' academic needs seem to be more circumscribed than boys because of pre-existing factors such as socio-economic backgrounds and poverty, to name a few. In some situations, boys are required to contribute to the family's activities, just like girls. For instance, in Bangladesh girls between the ages of 13 and 15 years spend almost ten times as many hours as boys on domestic work whereas boys spend twice the amount of time on farming and wage work. Hence, it is also up to parents to decide the investment on their children, whether financial or on gender equality (Oxaal, 1997).

Several indirect costs are linked to girls' education such as substituting for their mothers in domestic chores, lesser private returns to the household because of wage differentials between educated women and men. There is a lot of debate about the role of education contributing to the economy. The population studied

in this study also argued that education may not contribute to the economy in the bigger sense but at least it would equip women to be able to take independent decisions regarding the family. All these factors directly and indirectly contribute to families restricting girls' education. As a result of not being able to allocate finances for girls' education, families within several communities in India as well as in the Devanga community deviate the funds to the girls' marriage, which in most cases is at a very young age. It acts as a deterrent for female education when compared to males because marriage is also an expensive affair in India, hence, parents prefer setting aside funds for their daughters' marriage rather than on their education. Early marriage takes place before girls have attained the legal age to be married which is 18 years in India. It is a prevalent issue in South Asian developing countries such as India as well as in countries like Vietnam also (Le, Tran, Nguyen and Fisher, 2013). According to the definition laid down in the Cambridge dictionary, "a developing country is one with little industrial and economic activity where people generally have low incomes." A large segment of the female population in India still suffers from discriminatory activities and deprivation (Garg, 2018). He also says that if women need empowerment, they must be able to raise their voice against men and the society who have been taking undue advantage of their lack of education. Indian society is largely patriarchal to such an extent that it is often difficult to pull oneself out of this. After being married must look after their husbands and children even though they have insufficient information about how to do so. It seems to be a controversial topic for discussion because with progression in education and urbanization, one would expect this trend to be fast disappearing. Unfortunately, it still exists in our society because of our religious beliefs, norms and social impact. Having spoken of the existence of religious norms and practices, Indian society has also seen, and continues to see a significant increase in urbanization because of commercialization and modernization, thus resulting in the emergence of women obtaining higher degrees. These are coupled with an increased desire to pursue professional positions related to their education (Singhal and Maslak, 2008). Transition into an independent lifestyle would not only delay the prospects of marriage but would also enable girls to prioritise themselves as independent entities, capable of decision making. However, as a researcher within the Devanga community, I have been unable to witness girls being permitted to pursue a career path of

their choice for more than a year or so because it is then time for them to get married, attesting the above-mentioned aspect. Adding to this is the preference for sons as families believe it would lower their intra household expenses. Son preference is more prevalent in north western India and is lesser seen in South-east India (Tipandjan,2015). One would expect that with India's rising socio-economic status and modernisation, gender preference would be a fast disappearing aspect. Unfortunately, this is not the case in the Devanga community which is still strongly driven by rules of patriarchy, marriage transaction costs and traditional beliefs. There has been an observation that girls are less precious than boys and hence it is important for every woman to bear a son in order to "feel complete". There is a huge identity crisis seen in the girls of the Devanga community which is experienced by them throughout their life.

The question, "Are boys permitted to do as they please within the Devanga community?" is important. Men within the community definitely have better opportunities for employment since they are provided better educational opportunities, but they are still not encouraged to work outside their homes due to the dominance of patrilineal rules which restricts their roles within the family business itself. Hence, though son preference and patrilineality is a feature strongly seen in North India, the Devanga community in Bangalore proves to be an exception depending on individual family structures and the individuals who decide the norms to be followed.

4.6 Social change in India:

Significant social changes have occurred in India in the twentieth and twenty first centuries which have considerably changed the perception of the role of the Indian woman. For children belonging to the middle and upper socio-economic strata of society, education is a priority for both boys and girls (Saraswathi, 1999, cited in Singhal, 2008). Parents have also risen from the traditional ideas and have begun to support their daughters' desire to study and develop a professional status (Chaterjee 1988; Gupta and Sharma 2003; Saraswathi 1999, cited in Singhal,2008). These in turn contribute to an increase in the girls' self-confidence and self-respect which in turn relate to the need for independence and socio-psychological independence. With a greater value added to education, parents as well as girls would realise that education does not merely serve the

means for getting a good husband, instead is required for prospects of a better life. Wolfe (2014), published a media review based on a movie "Girl Rising" which typically depicts the position of girls in nine developing countries of the world such as Sierra Leone, India, Ethiopia, Cambodia, Nepal, Egypt, Haiti, Peru and Afghanistan to portray the day-to-day challenges girls face in their lives. The movie has an underlying theme of the importance of education and what it can do when 600 million girls in a country get good education. The response was: "Unequivocal everything". But it cannot be ignored that in countries like India and Pakistan the beneficial and transformative effects of education are masked by the cultural norms in which she operates (Wolfe,2014). Another advantage of educating girls is to make them safer. Yet are they safe against domestic violence and rape? Both these instances indicate that gender functions as a part of the social organization and girls' access to education is just one tiny part of the larger puzzle. Given the dominance of categorization of women as a disadvantaged group, it becomes necessary to ensure gender equality and this can be achieved through empowerment and liberation of the mind (Rahman, 2014). One important step towards ensuring women have access to education even after they are married is Open and Distance Learning through which technology is used to deliver instructions to a student a different location (Siddique,2004). As evidenced time and again in this thesis, women are denied access to education for various reasons, one of the most common being early marriage. Once girls are married, they are usually forbidden to step out of their homes to attend school. Through the concept of Distance Education, educational benefits can be made accessible to everyone, especially those who have been repeatedly denied access and hence can also be used as a women empowerment strategy. As a researcher concerned with the emancipation and empowerment of women of the Devanga community, this concept seems extremely appealing to me and making it accessible to the members of the community would ensure more girls completing higher education. It can be used as a tool to improve the literacy rate in the state of Karnataka as well as within the Devanga community without taking the woman away from her domestic roles.

The preceding literature review must not be considered belittling of communities in India. Neither does it mean that harassment and gender discrimination of women happens in every family in India. There are families such as mine which

follow egalitarianism and women are treated very well but other families within the same community differ in their actions and this has been supported by the data as well.

An inter-generational study conducted by Shukla (2015) in the North Indian State of Uttar Pradesh looked at comparisons in attitudes towards the role and status of women. She found that in the coming years being unsupportive to women's rights to inherit ancestral property as well as in issues of dowry, violence against women and traditionalism in education and employment areas is likely to continue because girls have not become open-minded and non-traditional when compared to their mothers and grandmothers. Another interesting finding made by Shukla and Kapoor (1990) was that with age, women tend to become more orthodox and conventional with age whereas men seem to mellow down with age.

It is quite alarming that with all the social changes and educational policies for women, the sex-ratio in India is still declining despite of increasing literacy of women (Kumari,2015). I believed that illiteracy was the reason women submitted themselves to such practices but that does not seem to be the case, which is also evidenced in this study conducted in the state of Bihar. Education and literacy programs fail to spread the message of abolishing female foeticide especially in Urban India. From this, it could be concluded that female literacy has no relation to sex ratios because states which have high level of urbanisation have low sex-ratios. Though this study was conducted in Bihar, the results could be generalised to some sections of Indian communities. On the same lines could it also be understood that if a woman is more educated, she is less likely to experience domestic violence? (Simister and Makowiec, 2008). It is not just a woman's education that matters, Indian men are less likely to inflict violence if they too are educated. But, like mentioned earlier in this thesis, violence need not always be physical, it could also be psychological and most of the times it is within a woman's acceptable limits. Some communities in India believe that "wife-beating" is required to deal with insubordination whereas some communities in Rajasthan feel it is required to ensure women of the household stay "under control". Though the effects of education and its effect on reducing violence are known, it still remains a matter of debate whether education overrides the effects of childhood violence faced by women or whether it stops

men from exhibiting “machismo” type of behaviour (Simister and Makowiec, 2008).

The underlying aspects of this research were preference of boys over girls and limited educational opportunities for girls. After having reviewed such a wide range of literature, the assumption with which I began this study seems to have become stronger. Patrilineal mindsets seem to dominate, and women seem very varied in their thinking when it comes to their beliefs regarding preferences of boys over girls. This was evidenced in the study conducted by Kumari (2005) wherein, though women were educated, they preferred boys over girls and that too purely because of the “perceived costs” incurred with the birth of a girl. Since this study was conducted in Bihar, the “perceived costs” was dowry, but in a community like that of the Devangas, it is the burden of getting girls and boys educated when girls are considered to be a temporary member in the family.

It can now be stated with ample reference from the available literature that just by ensuring girls are educated and providing them with autonomy, there is no guarantee that society will change. It is more important to bring about a change in the mindset of all parties concerned after understanding the reasons for differential treatment of boys and girls, as well as preferring sons and not daughters. Change is often seen as a source of conflict with “tradition”, and tradition has withstood the test of time, in my opinion, and hence has persisted over many years. Any change within “traditional Indian culture” is labelled as “alien” and I would suggest that makes it increasingly difficult to incorporate and inculcate change. There remains a section of the Indian population that I perceive, believes that women’s empowerment is unsuitable to the Indian context and what we have as a society resonates clearly with that thought. Many male members of the patriarchal society believe that all women have a specific role to play and must not cross that boundary under any situation. To state a recent example to support this, a girl’s High School in Maharashtra made their students take a pledge that they would not fall in love with anyone and would only marry the boy their parents chose for them (NDTV,2020). This is a report in one of the local newspapers in Maharashtra and hence the authenticity of the article may be questionable. Several reasons could be attributed to this, but in my opinion, while discussing aspects of equality and education, we must ask how do such traditional and orthodox ideas percolate into educated minds? The

population under scrutiny here is taken from a High School which has teachers and a Head teacher involved who have had an important role to play in this case. As a researcher and a woman belonging to the Devanga community, I have reasons to believe that I too am viewed under the same lens by other members of the community.

5. Methodology: Part One: Identifying the Issue and defining my approach

The focus of the research reported in this thesis stemmed from two influences. Firstly, as no previous research has been undertaken in the area of maternal expectations and aspirations from children within the Devanga community with which I am familiar, there was an opportunity to undertake a unique study in this area. Secondly, I derived inspiration from a personal commitment to try to help women within this community realize the importance and value of education for girls. Hence, the research was conceptualized with the aim of seeking answers with a greater understanding of prevalent issues within the Devanga community (as described in Chapter 1 of this thesis).

Creswell et al., (2012, p.378) stated that "research begins with an assumption that investigators gather evidence based on the nature of the research question and theoretical orientation." However, the approach which I adopted for my research consists of much more than just collecting data in the form of qualitative and quantitative responses. The strengths of both the theoretical construct upon which the work is founded and the methods used, needed to be combined to answer the research questions. One of my motivations for doing this research was to dissect a widely debated topic of women's education and gender discrimination in a small section of the Indian population, the Devanga community. I hold strong views on the treatment of women which necessitates that I challenge the "stereotyped" roles commonly presented. However, I am aware that my commitment to a feminist perspective inevitably means that I do not come from a position of neutrality which has demanded that I needed to exercise caution to ensure that my ideas and opinions as expressed in this thesis are always made only after substantiation through research data. Issues of objectivity in research cannot be ignored if the findings are to have any credibility and it is therefore important to justify a feminist stance in research such as that reported in this thesis. Stanley and Wise (1983) argued that access to an understanding of ignored social contexts can sometimes best be guided by the lived experiences of women that are unavailable to men, and that these experiences cannot be nullified or denied. They, along with others who have discussed the phenomena of feminist research (Rolin,2006; Hussain and Zada Asad, 2012) have emphasized the need to ensure that statements made by

researchers are fully justified through rigorous triangulation and presentation of the data. Such writers suggest that few researchers entering the milieu of qualitative research do so without bringing with them a host of personal experiences and beliefs. The key to trustworthy data is in acknowledging that this is the case and demonstrating the procedures have been conducted fairly and with transparency.

In acknowledging my stance as a feminist researcher and one who is working with emancipatory intentions (Wolgemuth and Donohue, 2006; Nkoane, 2012), I align myself with the ideas expressed by Blakeley (2007) who suggested that emotional engagement with the subjects of research is a common and necessary aspect of investigating situations of oppression or disadvantage. Blakeley (2007, p.63) comments that:

"To take responsibility in the context of emotionally engaged research involves recognition of ourselves as imperfect or as thinking and feeling, emotional researchers in imperfect contexts (i.e., settings or studies). Our research is and can be only partial in its outcomes, data, method, design, and setting as well as in its understanding of the research participants and the subject studied itself."

Blakeley suggests that this form of emotionally engaged research is guided and motivated by an ethic of care through which the researcher establishes an emotional connection and concern for an issue and for those who are most impacted by this issue.

I would argue that this is a phenomenon that not only impacts feminist research but must be considered in terms of the motivations of all researchers whose interests emanate from an intention to understand and improve the lives of those who may be termed disadvantaged or marginalised. Other researchers who work in the fields of disability (Rose and Shevlin, 2017), poverty alleviation (Sime, 2008), or with refugees (Eastmond, 2007), have discussed the challenges of objectivity and whether it is necessary or manageable within qualitative investigations. These researchers suggest that the notion of objectivity is disingenuous in research of this nature, but that such research should be appraised by a scrutiny of the efforts made by researchers to present data that can be trusted (White, Oelke, and Friesen, 2012; Elo., Kaariainen., Kanste., Polkki., Utriainen and Kyngas, 2014). In conducting the research

reported in this thesis, I have been guided by the principle and issues of trustworthiness which are discussed later in this work.

5.1 Research Questions:

At the beginning of this research, I had several questions that I wanted to explore and understand within the Devanga community. But as I progressed, I realized I could not answer too many general questions, rather “unpacking” of the general research question was needed into more “specific” questions. Punch (2005, p.60) states that “specific research questions emerge from general research questions and are more detailed, specific and concrete.” With a personal interest of seeking answers to the prevalence and impact of stereotypes within the Devanga community and an understanding of substantial literature, I devised my three research questions:

- A) How have the childhood experiences of a sample of women in Devanga community in Bangalore impacted upon their aspirations for their children?
- B) Do mothers in this specific sample have differing expectations with respect to the educational outcomes for their sons and daughters?
- C) How have the life experiences of women in the sample influenced their views on the role of women in the Indian society?

These questions were developed with an aim to assist with the collection of data which might at a future date enable me to improve participants’ lives by giving their voices an opportunity to be heard. I therefore needed to be sure of selecting appropriate methods to ensure openness from the participants and to obtain the most relevant data, which would effectively answer the research questions without my own beliefs playing an unfair influential role.

5.2 Theory underpinning the research

This premise encouraged me to adopt a feminist approach to my research because as Winters (2011, p. 668) states “feminism focuses on injustices as they have historically developed and currently exist in our society.” Flax (1979;1996, cited in Winters, 2011) also presented one definition which substantiated the basis of my research by describing these injustices in the

following terms: *“women’s oppression is not a subset of some other social relationship; the oppression of women is part of the way the structure of the world is organized; and one task of feminist theory is to explain how and why this structure evolved.”* (p. 18–19).

Many different research traditions advocate that knowledge is socially constructed, subjective and situational and that value free scientific objectivity is a myth (Orminston, 2014). Feminist researchers think differently and feel that this research methodology requires openness and emotional engagement as well as developing trust with the respondents in what may seem to be a potentially long-term relationship (Punch, 2005, p.148). They also believe that there are multiple pathways to gain scientific knowledge and several perceptions of the “truth” (Hesse Biber, 2012; Jayaratne and Stewart, 2008; cited in Beckman 2014). Feminism can take different forms in enabling our understanding of the world and seeking change. Winters (2011) posed a 3-point definition to understand this. Firstly, feminism emphasizes that all women have something valuable to contribute to the world. Secondly, because of the oppression women face, they have been unable to develop their full potential of participation in society and have to wear “masks in society” to function and third, all feminists iterate that this situation needs to change across all spheres of society.

Feminist Research aims at considering how women experience various aspects of their lives and how gender norms are maintained or disrupted. They do not approach the research with the answer already in mind, instead they understand that because they live in a society that privileges men’s viewpoints, they may not actually see the realities of women’s lives unless they specifically look for it (Winters, 2011). At the beginning of my research, I presumed that the notions of stereotypes and gender norms which I believed existed, were largely a myth and did not exist anymore in substantial form. But listening to the women’s experiences throughout the research process led me to believe that there is more to see than what is visible superficially. Conforming to societal norms of getting girls married young and, ensuring that women do not have freedom or financial independence are still predominant influences within the Devanga community and as a feminist researcher who belongs to the same community, I believe that change needs to be implemented. I am guided by the belief that the

relationship I share with the participants must be encouraging and empowering for them to act in respect of their own situations.

Inclusiveness and diversity, the importance of social and historical context, combating power and privilege and social activism were identified as the four important principles of feminism by White, Russo and Travis (2001), cited in Beckman, (2014). Beckman (2014) based her work heavily on the findings of White and colleagues and deduced 8 major principles of feminist research which are relevant to my research.

1. Power imbalances: Asymmetrical power dynamics hugely impact the inequality between men and women within various social constructs. Earlier, feminist researchers mainly concentrated on cultural values which represented the lower status of women in society thus establishing male dominance and giving women lesser access to resources. Power and privilege are a part of our social structures and if equality has to be established, these social structures and policies need to be impacted.
2. Expand the questions asked: If research questions are framed in a language that does not reflect theories of feminist research, the results and their interpretation will be of limited relevance and may not contribute to the knowledge and understanding of women's lives and experiences. Questions framed wrongly can lead to one sided result, which can in turn bias a complex phenomenon leading to harmful effects (Beckman,2014)
3. Listening to women's voices and experiences: Focusing on women's lives leads to the identification and examination of issues that are of great importance to them, in this case these being, their childhood experiences which have impacted their aspirations from their children, the relationships they share with their husbands and in laws, the societal expectations and norms, caregiving and domestic chores. Listening to women's voices allows for rich knowledge to be uncovered. Brooks (2007,p.14)proposed that women's truth is more valid and has lesser reason to be distorted than men's because they need their experiences to be heard as well as remain attuned to men's behaviour in order to survive in their lower status. The more oppressed a woman is, the more objective and truthful she will be. I relied heavily on this principle during my

research as this was the only way to gather information and make social connections.

4. **Emphasis on diversity and intersectionality:** The term intersectionality was coined by legal scholar and critical race theorist Crenshaw in 1989 who defined it as "*The view that women experience oppression in varying configurations and in varying degrees of intensity. Cultural patterns of oppression are not only interrelated but are bound together and influenced by the intersectional systems of society. Examples of this include race, gender, class, ability and ethnicity.*" Black feminist scholars have defined intersectionality as "a complex process by which people's position of race, class, gender and sexuality lead to inferior social status." (Rogers and Kelly, 2011, p.399). In other words, it means that every woman has multi layered facets in her life that she deals with on a day-to-day basis. Concurrently, other scholars isolated race and gender as the primary reasons for disadvantage. Several of these articulations only focused on groups that held multiple positions of disadvantage by highlighting aspects of race and gender. Miller and Swift (1991) suggested that the words sex and gender are not the same: one being biological and the other, socially induced. In practice several individuals experience all these statuses of race and gender simultaneously, being fluid and complex in nature. In the case of the Devanga community too, women experience lower status not only because of their gender but also because of poverty, lack of education, community stereotypes and societal expectations. So, when aspects of intersectionality are to be viewed, all these need to be considered concurrently to better understand the position of women within the Devanga community.
5. **Multi-disciplinary and Mixed Method Approach:** Feminists such as Grossman *et al.*, 1998 iterate that there is no single way of discovering knowledge about the world. Having framed the research questions, the research needs to fit the question which will require using new methods. Hence in order to understand complex social contexts, a mixed method study using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods needs to be employed (Beckman, 2014).
6. **Reflexivity:** Lykes and Hershberg (2012, p.28) stated that all individuals use their inner reflections about themselves and their reactions towards

others to uncover different types of knowledge. The feminist researcher tries to recognize what he/she brings to the research and how the participants interpret the same. A self-understanding of one's values, biases, experiences, and feelings can help the researcher identify aspects of ethics, participant involvement and improve understanding (Beckman, 2014). This is clearly not an easy process but is an ongoing one. For instance, in my research, gaining participants' confidence during the interviews was a challenge as they viewed me as an outsider but when I conducted the interviews telephonically, being unable to "see me" created a feeling of confidence amongst the participants and they spoke without any hesitation. A lot of reflection on why participants were apprehensive to talk to me led me to take this step coupled with the disadvantage of being unable to travel to their residence for the interviews.

7. Social relationships during the Research process: "Ethics of care" is an aspect that feminist approach entails because it questions who benefits from the research as the idea of giving women an opportunity to be heard makes them active participants rather than passive collaborators. Feminist research allows participants to read and comment on the researchers' interpretation of their information which may increase their competencies and sense of empowerment in turn improving their resilience and motivation (Beckman, 2014).
8. Use of research results: The main purpose of feminist research is to apply the research. Feminist researchers, importantly, work for the empowerment and upliftment of women, thus emphasizing their competencies and not their deficiencies. Dissemination and application of knowledge is more important than disseminating through publications and journals. Hence it is important for me, as a researcher to be able to identify how oppression functions within this social context, and to be able to decrease power differentials.

Strategies to reduce power differentials can include girls placing greater emphasis on the importance of their education, refusing to get married till they feel they are ready rather than being forced into this, women being able to stress on their basic rights to be valued and respected, through a process which can be most readily defined as Libertarian Feminism (Baehr 2013; 2017)

5.3 Libertarian Feminism (sometimes referred to as Individualist Feminism):

The libertarian feminist seeks freedom from coercive interference. Women have a right to freedom equal to that of men and should be afforded the status of being in control of their own bodies, intellect and actions. The libertarian feminist opposes the oppression of women and other minorities particularly from the state, patriarchy, and from traditional repressive hierarchies. Those who subscribe to this form of feminism, including myself, seek to influence change in legislative and community systems in order to challenge gender privileges and to ensure that all individuals have equal rights.

Some libertarian feminists (Baehr, 2017) have placed an emphasis of the need to ensure that the family must be an institution founded upon equality and justice. They argue that it is often in the home that examples of how the relationships between men and women are established influence generations of young people who adopt role models and are influenced greatly by family traditions. This builds upon the earlier work of Okin (1989) who believed that in circumstances where such traditions are difficult to change, patterns of perpetuation are established which are very difficult to break down.

There is no ideal form of feminism, the concept has several complexities but is guided by the belief that the relationship between the researcher the researched must be encouraging and empowering enough to take action thus improving their own or others' lives (Winters, 2011). Women seem to be caught in a cycle of inequality at work and at home and the expectation that leads to women bearing more responsibilities at home aggravates inequalities. Okin (1989) clearly acknowledges that something of great value is at stake but it seems to be a value worth sacrificing. In my opinion, I agree with Okin's emphasis on believing that balancing work and home is often just a woman's problem. It only requires negating the assumption that a woman's responsibility is domestic whereas a man's responsibility is financial (McKittrick, 2006). Understanding a woman's traditional role would probably help in gaining a better understanding of getting these things done in the best possible way without sacrificing other rights and values.

The following table indicates how at each stage of the research reported in this thesis my work was informed by a feminist approach and the theories associated with libertarian feminism.

5.4 The influence of feminist theory on the methods deployed in this research

Development of the research instruments	This research was conceptualised with an aim of gathering data which might ultimately assist in enabling and empowering women within the Devanga community. Libertarian Feminism reinforced my ideas as it focuses on a woman’s right to freedom and her being in control of her own body, intellect and actions. I decided to use the principles of Feminism while designing my research instruments as being most appropriate for this purpose. Women of the Devanga community formed the sample of my research and since the focus was on their childhood, personal experiences and their expectations for their children I had to choose instruments that would enable them the freedom to respond as well as give me an in depth understanding of their lives. Hence the decision to adopt questionnaires and, interviews particularly was taken because I was guided by the belief that the relationship I share with the participants must be encouraging and empowering for them to take action in respect of voicing their experiences of their own situations. The process of designing adopted those principles of feminism which values and respects women’s voices and experiences, adopting a multi and mixed methods approach, expanding the questions asked (through interviews), reflexivity and establishing social relationships.
Analysis and	The analysis of the obtained data began with initially

<p>interpretation of findings</p>	<p>segregating all the responses based on the research questions. Each response in the interviews was colour coded. For instance, the responses that I felt answered the first research question were colour coded as red, the responses of the second research question were green and the third were purple. After having segmented the responses, I derived codes for each response. To cite an example, a response which indicated that the society or male members were against girl's education was coded as AGE and a simple definition was given to it. After having derived numerous such codes for every research question, I went ahead and segregated the responses as positive and negative which would enable me to discuss them under appropriate headings in the Discussions chapter of this thesis. After having done this, I began to identify similar codes in order to reduce the number, also known as Collapsing the Codes. This reduced the number to almost half of the initial number. This was then followed by making each research question into a theme and organising these codes under each one of them. This process made it relatively easier for organising the qualitative responses obtained in the interviews. The quantitative responses had already been tabulated and organised into tables, hence that could also be considered for the final interpretation of the data.</p>
<p>Discussion of findings</p>	<p>After having organised all the responses under the research questions, each one of them had to be discussed in detail with appropriate references from literature. In order to do this, the discussion chapter of my thesis brought together all the previous discussions along with an exploration of further issues that arose. An honest and sincere attempt was made</p>

	<p>at retaining the voices of all the participants so as not to lose the essence of the data, however while translating the responses from the local language, Kannada to English there might have been minor changes. While conceptualising this research I only began with considering the childhood experiences of women and its impact on her aspirations for her children. However, by the end of the research, I realised there were several other factors that were delicately interspersed with each other such as poverty, early marriage and gender discrimination, and required a mention in this thesis. The drawback faced was the paucity of Indian literature that discusses childhood experiences of women and in order to make a conclusion I had to draw references from literature derived from other countries such as Pakistan and China.</p>
<p>Conclusions drawn from the research</p>	<p>As a result of this research, women of the Devanga community felt they had a desire to have their stories heard. Women have been demanding equal rights and status in society, but their situation continues to remain inconsistent and they continue to face oppression both inside the house as well as outside. Strong reasons such as poverty, being born as a girl, getting the girls married at a young age and in some cases psychological abuse within families have emerged as key findings of this research. They have given rise to more questions which I would like to explore further.</p>

5.5 My role as a researcher - part insider and part outsider

My position as a woman who is concerned for the improvement of other women living in what I perceive to be disadvantaged situations has influenced my decision to adopt a feminist stance as a researcher (Maynard and Purvis, 2013; Jaggar, 2015). Feminist researchers are generally concerned with both the construction of new knowledge and the promotion of social change. The work of such researchers is generally focused on the meanings women give to their world, is politically motivated and seeks to remove the power imbalance between the researcher and the subject of investigation.

Typically following a feminist methodological approach can help in understanding women's lives leading to identification and examination of issues that are important to them (Beckman, 2014). Also, feminist researchers, by definition, are committed to considering how gender implicates or is implicated by the phenomenon of interest. Most often, this focus leads feminist researchers to consider how women experience various aspects of their lives or how men's experiences affect women's lives, the role of the researcher on the research as well as bringing about a positive change in women's lives as it is related to diversity in their lives (Huilman and Winters, 2011).

There were some possibly sensitive issues of which I needed to be aware as my data collection involved lengthy interviews between the participants and myself about their personal lives. I had to be careful about what questions I asked and to ensure that these did not cause offence. Since this research sought to understand an aspect of the lives of a specific community within their cultural setting. It was important for me to gain first-hand information from the women in my study. Although my study was not conducted through pure ethnography, my approach was again informed by the respectful principles of considering the lives of my subjects in order to build a picture of their experiences. Wolcott, (1999, p.156), emphasizes the need to develop a "picture of the way of life of a particular group in the society which always seemed strange to the researcher." My purpose was to learn about, record and portray this culture in a manner that was fair and sufficiently detailed to provide insights that increase knowledge and understanding. My decision to adopt this approach has been

influenced by a definition by Goodenough (1976, cited in Wolcott.,1997) which says that:

"The culture of any society is made up of the concepts, beliefs and principles of action and organization that an ethnographer has found could be attributed successfully to the members of the society in the context of his dealings with them". (p.5, cited in Wolcott.,1997, p.156) This definition serves as a reminder that culture cannot be explained but only observed and the final test of an ethnographic study lies in how well it is explained rather than on its methods (Wolcott.,1997). As a member of the Devanga community, I might be regarded as an insider in relation to the sample studied, but as someone who has been distanced from the traditions of this community through my marriage into a liberal family which has challenged the expected conformities confronted by many women, I feel able to justify my position as an outsider. However, I am also aware that as the possessor of "insider knowledge", I straddle two unique positions as a researcher, hence defining my role as part insider and part outsider. My "outsider" position in relation to this study certainly at times proved to be difficult as I attempted to investigate the intricacies of the cultural system, but embedding myself as an observer within this group, which was only possible because of my "insider" connections also proved advantageous and enabled me to obtain a broad and analytical perspective of the factors which I was investigating.

My intention was to obtain both a broad picture of the experiences and beliefs of women within the Devanga community, whilst also developing a more detailed and nuanced appreciation of the experiences of individuals. Keeping this at the forefront of my consideration, I realized that using a combination of survey and interview methods along with literature scrutiny would be the most suitable approach for conducting this study as it allowed me to gain both a significant overview and first-hand insights into the lives of the women in my sample.

In this chapter I have stated the underlying influences upon my choice of research approach. I have emphasized that by taking into account my positionality as a researcher within the Devanga community and the sensitivities surrounding the phenomena that I am researching it was necessary to consider the challenges associated with trustworthiness in an investigation that considers

the “real” world we live in . Research can be valid and reliable even in situations where objectivity presents challenges and this can be achieved through triangulation, respect for participant feedback and self-reflections. When I began analysing my data, there were some transcripts that supported the research questions entirely while some threw up more questions. In this chapter, I have highlighted the underlying theory that pins my research in order to justify my research approach as well as making it more reliable and trustworthy. The following chapter will describe the various methods adopted to collect data and how it was analysed and interpreted.

6. Methodology: Part Two: Methodological Approach and Data Collection Instruments

6.1 Mixed Methods Approach

In order to understand the first-hand experiences of women in the Devanga community, I opted to use a combination of data collection methods that would allow them to express their views with honesty and forthrightness in as secure an environment as possible. I decided to adopt methods and strategies that would not just answer the research questions effectively but also be relevant to the research aim of enabling women in my sample to express their experiences and opinions. The three research questions centred around the childhood experiences of women and how these had impacted their parenting aspirations for their children and an intention to identify if there was a gender-based difference in these aspirations. In an ethnographic study the strength of the data lies in the multi-instrument approach as advocated by Pelto (1978, p.1), involving observation of human behaviour, noting patterns of human speech, examining patterns of behaviour especially those from museums and libraries. Whilst my work cannot be described as a pure ethnographic study, my immersion in a specific community in order to understand its operations was to an extent informed by the principles adopted by ethnographers (Castaneda,2006;Atkinson and Hammersley,2007). These researchers have identified ethnographic study as embracing a wide range of approaches, but all based upon a purpose of exploring and understanding a specific community through close involvement with its members. I therefore believe that the investigation I have conducted has been informed by the principles adopted by many using ethnographic approaches. While it draws upon the methods commonly adopted by ethnographers, because I was working for much of the time at a distance from the lives of my subjects, my research cannot be described as a pure ethnographic approach. As suggested by Serrant-Green (2007), "ethnography encapsulates a variety of perspectives and research methods." Problems should be viewed from multiple perspectives to enrich the meaning of a single opinion. This serves as an effective way to inform audiences of the reality of complex situations, if any emerge. My work was informed by this principle and although the study was not conducted as an ethnographic study

many of the approaches developed by ethnographers helped to inform the way I conducted my work.

After reading and reviewing a wide range of literature to decide on the methods to be used, I decided on using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and observations as appropriate methods that would enable me to answer my research questions. Using a questionnaire alone would not have provided the in-depth information I was looking for. Similarly relying purely on interviews would not enable me to obtain the wider demographic data which could assist at the interpretation stage of the research. Proceeding sequentially by using the questionnaire first, followed by an interview allowed me enough access to an initial broad sample which I could then follow further with a more probing research instrument. It also gave me the ability to gain access to a much larger sample, which initially had seemed almost an impossible task.

Using questionnaires in this study proved beneficial in my research because it set the agenda but did not pre-suppose the nature of response. In other words, it had a clear structure and sequence but since it was in part open ended, it gave the respondents the freedom to answer with a more detailed response (Cohen et al.,2007). A combination of closed and open-ended questions enabled me to obtain a better understanding of the respondents' demographic data as well as perspectives on personal influences and experiences which were beneficial in gaining insight into their family life, structure and decision-making processes. The data obtained from these questionnaires provided me with a sound basis for the second phase of data collection, using semi structured interviews to gather more information from the participants to enable an interpretation of the influence of childhood experiences of women in this specific community within India upon their aspirations for their children. The literature review was an ongoing and continuous journey, throughout the process of instrument development, data collection and analysis which provided valuable information to assist with the development of a frame for analysing the obtained data as well as ensuring its validity, verification and trustworthiness. Shephard *et al.* (2002) have suggested that most researchers are not clear about using a mixed methods approach. They use it because a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is "inherently good" without actually identifying the basic components of the process. Maxwell (1992, p.284) stated that "Validity is not an

inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose.”

It was important to triangulate my data obtained from both the phases: Phase one (questionnaires) and Phase two (semi structured interviews) because both had their strengths and weaknesses. The use of two methods gives ample scope for the weaknesses of one method to be supported by another by ensuring a process of validation and elimination of data which cannot be regarded as trustworthy. I also hoped that the use of two methods would reveal more information than would be possible using only one method. Semi-structured interviews were my primary choice because it allowed me to diverge from the main question in pursuit of a response, if required. The flexibility of this method allows information to be discovered by building relationships with the participants along with the establishment of trust (Nguyen, 2015). Qualitative research methods may also involve the use of focus groups but Morgan (1998, p. 58) suggests that focus groups must be avoided in cases where participants are uneasy with one another and hence will not discuss their views freely.

The research reported in this thesis primarily focused on a community in Karnataka called the Devangas which is a sub-caste in Hinduism and are primarily silk weavers. Devangas are Prakrut Brahmins (Brahmins by birth) and a clear majority of them are silk and cotton weavers. My interest in this domain and this community stems from personal reasons, as I am a part of this community. As a woman, I have grown up to be an educated, independent and opinionated individual with a lot of support and encouragement from my family. However, I have seen women (in this community as well as outside of it) who are not as privileged as I am. Girls as young as 16 years of age from within this community are married (irrespective of whether they accept this arrangement or not) with the prospect of a better life later. These women are expected to don the domestic role of a housewife and get equipped for numerous gender-defined roles such as a wife, mother and daughter in law. The term “Stereotypes” exists to a large extent within these households. With reference to previous literature, it has been demonstrated that education influences a woman’s position in her family, which would in turn increase her perception of the value of daughters (Bose, 2012). Ironically, many of the women within the Devanga community

seem quite happy in their respective roles and do not see the need to encourage or discourage the future generations of women from moving from the positions experienced by themselves. In the area I have researched, I wanted to ensure that if I was going to ask these women to participate in my investigation, it would give them a platform to share their experiences, both positive and negative. This personal understanding of the Devanga community and my feelings about the status of women within it inevitably shaped both my approach to the research (as described in the previous chapter) and my desire to use data collection methods that would enable me to engage directly with the subjects of my study.

6.2 Selecting the Sample:

Sampling may be defined as a process of selecting relevant units that may be used to generate data in order to address research questions (Mason,1998). The research reported in this thesis was conducted with a purposive sample which is a type of non-probability sample. A non-probability sample indicates that the chances of members of the wider population being selected for the sample are unknown (Cohen *et al.*,2007, p.110). As stated by Bernard (2002, p.147)purposive sampling is also termed as judgement sampling in which the researcher decides "*what needs to be found out and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by knowledge or experience.*"

When obtaining a purposive sample, the researcher selects a participant according to the study needs (Coyne,1997). Furthermore, as my research is focused upon the childhood experiences of women and its impact on their children, I knew that I needed to study the diversities in the culture being investigated and hence I adopted an ethnographic, qualitative, mixed methods investigative approach based upon a combination of qualitative and quantitative research (Denscombe, 2008). It was also clear that the population I needed to study would be mothers with 2 or more children (comprising both boys and girls).

The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for an in-depth study (Patton,1990). Information rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the research. It has also been suggested by Morse (1991, cited in

Coyne, 1997) that purposive sampling and theoretical sampling are synonymous with each other. She states that while selecting a sample, the researcher first selects the participant according to the needs of the study and as the study progresses, the description is expanded with more specific information and with that knowledge participants are sought.

A purposive sample of 120 mothers served as the focus of the initial survey questionnaire. These women were identified through community databases as well as familiar contacts. Key people within the Devanga community were identified and approached to obtain a list of all the families within the community. Telephone calls were made to each woman to identify their family structure as well as their willingness to participate in this investigation. The sample size was decided to be appropriate at 120 because in a qualitative study, the sample should not be too small to achieve data saturation or informational redundancy and neither should it be so large that it becomes difficult to analyse the data obtained (Onwuegbuzie, 2007). The women approached to be a part of this study essentially fell into one common category of having 2 or more children (comprising both boys and girls). The criteria for including these women as a part of my research can further be refined as three distinct purposive sample groups:

- a) Women who have completed school (either 12th grade or further)
- b) Women who dropped out of school early (either having made this decision themselves or due to compulsion)
- c) Women who have never attended school.

All the women included in the study essentially fell in the age group of 25 to 60 years of age.

It is important to mention at this stage that a small percentage of the research sample comprised women who had limitations with regards to their fluency in English. This largely comprised the women who fall into the 3rd sample group (women who have never attended school). Hence, it was required to speak to them and to translate the purpose, aims and importance of this research in their native language which is Kannada.

6.3 Why questionnaires?

The data collection method employed in the first phase of my research was a survey, in the form of a questionnaire. Questionnaires can often most appropriately be used for gathering significant amounts of demographic and general data that are otherwise difficult to quantify (Coolican, 2009). Keeping this at the forefront of my thinking, my reason for using questionnaires was because I wanted to gain a broad perspective of the sample women's childhood experiences, the kind of schooling they had, their childhood ambitions and related aspects which could then be explored more deeply through interviews. 120 women from the Devanga community formed my sample and having limitations to travel across the city to collect data, it was appropriate to use a questionnaire which enabled me to gain access to large numbers of women without too many difficulties. The questionnaire as used in this research may be described as an exploratory instrument which helped me gain insight into the personal lives of the women in my sample from a broad perspective. However, I also understood that distributing questionnaires came with the inevitable limitations of participants understanding questions differently or not responding at all (Creswell, 2008). The goal of having a questionnaire is to develop a set of items which will be interpreted the same way by every participant, enabling them to respond accurately and willingly (Artino *et al.*, 2014).

Having decided on this initial method to be used, I needed to be sure of the relevance of questions to be asked pertaining to my research questions. In order to do this, I had to investigate and understand whether similar studies have been done by other researchers in the past and if so, what questions other researchers had asked to maintain relevance in my study. Since there was no such study conducted on maternal expectations of women within a specific community, no directly relevant questionnaire came to light. Developing questionnaires requires time, knowledge, skill and some resources to be able to do it correctly (Artino *et al.*, 2014) The literature review proved helpful in the emergence of several factors and that helped me to design my survey questionnaire. My search also identified certain issues that had emerged during informal meetings with some of the women earlier. All this initial information assisted me to design a questionnaire which revolved around women's childhood

and personal information, though not in the detail which I intended to gain from the follow up interviews.

Decisions had to be made about the type of questions to be included in the instrument: whether they should be open ended or close ended and if I needed to follow a pattern. Since the intention here was to obtain personal details related to the age and schooling experiences of my sample, I selected close ended questions as an appropriate format for most of my questions. At the same time, these women also required the freedom to use their own language and describe certain aspects of their childhood and motherhood, hence some open-ended questions seemed appropriate and were applied. I was quite aware that analysing close ended questions would be easier to manage and would provide a broad overview whereas the analysis of open-ended questions would take longer. Having already decided to follow the questionnaires with individual interviews gave me the confidence to believe that I could get greater elaboration at the second phase of data collection. However, a means of gaining access to a wider sample and getting valid data was at the forefront of my mind and hence I decided to combine both open ended and close ended questions.

The first 15 questions in the questionnaire (See Appendix IV) were designed focusing on the participants' childhood: their schooling, their siblings' schooling, their level of education, ambitions and the importance of education in achieving those ambitions. The aim of including these questions was to maintain relevance to the first research question of how these women's' childhood experiences impacted their parenting styles.

The next 16 questions revolved around their marital life, family setups (nuclear or joint families), number of children and their children's schooling and what aspirations they have from their children. These questions also had aspects of these women's' position within their families which together would answer the second and third research questions about what different expectations they had for their son and daughter and what are their beliefs about the role of women in Indians society.

Based on their responses related to their level of education, the women were further categorized into 3 groups (as mentioned earlier in this chapter). Whatever their level of education, most of these women required assistance to fill out the

questionnaire and hence majority of the questionnaires were filled out in my presence. Segregating women based on their educational qualifications was not undertaken with the purpose of differentiating them, instead I wanted to explore the role of education in her parenting styles and its influence on her understanding of the role of women in society.

At all stages, the three research questions were always kept at the forefront to maintain relevance and specificity.

6.4 Distribution of Questionnaires:

I planned to send out questionnaires to my sample via post as well as delivering and overseeing the completion of some personally. I was concerned about retaining the potential participants for the second phase of the research and hence without wasting time, I decided to send out as many questionnaires as I could by post as well as personally. The ones sent out via post were distributed to the participants who lived very far away and had disclosed to other participants that they would be comfortable filling out the questionnaires discreetly. Well-aware of their domestic situation, I decided to respect their decision and sent some questionnaires via post.

I had communicated to the respective 'gatekeepers' before the commencement of the study itself, hopeful that they would play a key role in enabling me gain access to the sample population. The gatekeeper in this situation is a male member of the society who is a journalist by profession but has decided to do voluntary service for the Devanga community. He is self-appointed and works in close association with the community leader for creating better opportunities and opening up various avenues for the members of the Devanga community in India and across other countries such as United States of America. In this particular research he played an instrumental role in making me understand the various challenges I could possibly face with regards to obtaining participants' consent and what were the steps I could take to overcome the same. Getting this research printed briefly as an Information Sheet and as a Newsletter was one of the most helpful suggestions given by him to recruit more participants. Unfortunately, it was not read by the women of the Devanga community and hence nobody was aware of the reasons for having undertaken a research of this nature.

As suggested by Miller and Boulton (2007), relying on and gaining the cooperation of gatekeepers is important in contacting potential participants on the researchers' behalf or even advertising the research thus making easier the process of waiting for individuals to come forward and participate, I therefore decided to invest time in this important part of the process prior to field work. Unfortunately, these gatekeepers, who had assured me access to my sample, did not help me approach the women of the community. Initially, I was quite disappointed and worried that the study might be unable to commence, but then I gradually realized the necessity to take control of the situation and turn into an "opportunist". I had to rethink my research, and get all the information sheets, informed consent forms and the questionnaires translated into the local language as majority of the sample of women were not fluent or literate (as I was told by the community leaders) in English.

The next stage of this process necessitated thinking about alternative approaches to gaining access to the sample. Gathering all my documents, I began attending various social gatherings where I was confident of meeting at least a few women of the Devanga community. The response upon meeting these women was much better than I had expected it to be. Most women were eager to participate in my study and even obliged by spreading the word about my research thus beginning the process of snowballing (Creswell, 2008) whereby one informant provides details of other potential sample members to the researcher.

On the first day of pursuing this approach of attending functions, I returned home with 12 questionnaires and I was elated with my success. I was now confident that I did not have to rely on the goodwill of 'gatekeepers' since I could make approaches independently. This proved to be advantageous as all the questionnaires were being filled out in my presence, though without my intervention, so the quality and authenticity of responses was good. Initially a few women seemed apprehensive but when they saw other women filling out the questionnaires, they seemed motivated to do so themselves.

Attending social gatherings and collecting data via questionnaires overseen personally resulted in a response rate of 89 questionnaires. Apart from these, 31 questionnaires were sent out to a group of women who volunteered to assist

me in the data collection process. However out of these 31 questionnaires, only 7 were returned duly filled and with consent. In conclusion, 120 questionnaires were sent out, and 96 returned, which elicited a response rate of 80%, which can be considered good in respect of the general anticipated response rate for research surveys (Baruch, 1999).

The response rate illustrated some interesting findings. All those questionnaires that were filled out personally, were done so completely with no ambiguity of responses, however the ones that were sent out either via post or e-mail did not come back at all or were returned with an extremely poor response rate. The ones I had personally overseen were the participants who had sought clarity, if any, during the process of filling out the questionnaires. I also sensed a feeling of confidence and happiness in these women because nobody had ever brought up such issues and discussed those with them before. Their seemingly mundane lives were now gathering a lot of attention and this possibly gave them the encouragement to answer the questionnaires to the best of their understanding. This made me question if there might be a correlation between the attitudes and challenges that women face during such a study that makes them unwilling to participate? The reason I state the above is because I faced no major challenge obtaining the consent of women who were approached personally, however the ones that were sent via mail or post required a lot of explanation of the study.

6.5 Piloting the Questionnaire:

In conducting studies which fall under the broad remit of ethnographic research, it is essential to report not just what was found through the investigation but also how the researcher went about conducting it. Hence it is important to undertake "pilot research or a feasibility study" which offers a detailed and comprehensive account of the researcher's experiences of using the research instrument, its efficacy and the time involved. Pilot studies do not guarantee the success of the study but increases its likelihood (Tiejlingen and Hundley, 2002). Such piloting may be conducted as a trial run of those instruments to be used in the main study which could give fore warning about the possibilities of research failure or if the proposed research instrument seems inappropriate or requires significant modification. Malmqvist *et al.* (2019) suggest that pilot studies are often conducted in a somewhat tokenistic manner with researchers using them

simply to modify instruments rather than considering other critical factors. The pilot study that I conducted enabled me to think ahead to the ways in which I would need to organise and manage the data obtained and the means through which I might approach analysis of this. Thus, in consultation with my supervisors, having conducted the pilot study I went through a series of exercises related to how the data would be entered into a database and segmented in order to provide a sound foundation for the analysis.

Though conducting pilot studies mostly seems advantageous it also has a few potential disadvantages such as failure in adhering to the proposed means of distribution of the research instrument (Tiejlingen and Hendley, 2002). In ethnographic and qualitative research, data from pilot studies helps to stimulate reflective accounts of the researchers' experiences. Therefore, it is essential to run a pilot study prior to commencement of the study to steer the researcher's data collection process in the desired direction. Given below, is a summary of the pilot study I carried out to analyse the effectiveness of my research instruments and why I chose to do it this way.

I initially designed a questionnaire with 35 questions. While designing my questionnaire I also had to ensure that I was maintaining a feminist research approach that stems from my belief that all knowledge is situated within a cultural setting with social, political and historical relevance (Beckman, 2014). Grossman et al., (1997, cited in Beckman, 2014) report that there is no single way for discovering knowledge about the world especially in feminist research and very often, sufficient expertise may not be available to use methods that provide knowledge about women and marginalized groups. Thus, it is best to use a mixed methods approach. I decided to use questionnaires in the initial phase of my research as it would help me gain insight into the participants' lives without being too personal yet ensuring access to the information that I needed with strict adherence to my research questions. It would also enable me to obtain data from many participants which would then be analysed in relation to each of these questions. This initial data collection approach would be followed by semi structured interviews and observations informed by the findings from the questionnaire along with data scrutiny to obtain the required information to address my three research questions.

Though the number of questions could have been fewer, I had to ensure not to omit anything of importance and it was therefore judged to be better to divide the questions and have shorter answers.

Piloting began by identifying 3 women who essentially fell into the category of having two children, one male and one female. Since one of the criteria for including women in this research was the level of their education, I had 2 women who had completed under graduation whereas one woman had passed 12th grade. Within the Indian context, pursuing an undergraduate course typically means a professional or a vocational course taken up after completing 12th grade. Specifically, within the Devanga community, it is quite unusual for girls to study beyond 12th grade (18 years of age).

After identification of this piloting sample, Information Sheets (Appendix II) and Informed Consent forms (see Appendix III) were sent to them and they were asked to go through each carefully and give consent only after reading and understanding what their participation would entail. The Information Sheet (Appendix II) described the purpose of conducting this study as well as provided my contact details.

The Informed Consent form explained the rationale and context behind this research and assured respondents that participation was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. It also assured the participant with regards to data security and confidentiality. After having read and understood the above and given consent, the research instrument was given to the participants.

Of the three women, one answered the questionnaire in my presence, one did it on her own and sent it back via email whereas the third woman refused to answer it. The information sheet, informed consent form as well as the questionnaire were sent via post to the third participant. Sending out my research related documents in three different ways helped me understand the process of distribution of questionnaires at a later stage and how I needed to plan the entire process of data collection.

The participant who answered the questionnaire in my presence was very curious to know what I would do with the data and whether this would really help the community of women that formed the core of my research focus. She

was also very enthusiastic about participating in the interview as she felt she had a lot to contribute and could add to the richness of data. It was quite evident that she had been through tough times to reach where she is today.

The second questionnaire was sent via e mail and came back duly filled and with no queries.

The third questionnaire was sent via post and it came back without any responses. The participant did not reveal why she was uncomfortable answering the questions as told to me by her telephonically.

On receiving the returned questionnaires, I was confident that the research instrument returned from the two respondents was designed in a simple language with no technical jargon and made the participants comfortable enough to reveal their personal information.

The response obtained after piloting can be beneficial in improving the validity of the questionnaire. The final instrument needs to be administered in the same way as it was during the pilot study, checking whether all the questions have been answered or not, recording the time take for completion of the questionnaire, re-wording or re framing the questions if necessary, discarding the unwanted questions, if any, and lastly, analysing the questionnaire to check if the expected responses have been obtained pertaining to the research question. In the possibility that even one of the above points have not been answered, it is suggested there may arise the need to re pilot (Tiejlingen and Hundley,2002)

Nonetheless, to summarize the entire process of piloting the research instrument for the investigation reported in this thesis, I believe it went well and yielded the required information and also provided me with a clearer understanding of how the data should be managed prior to analysis. The questionnaire proved to be easy to understand and answer, the language was simple and neither of the participants had any concerns about divulging their personal information. Furthermore, the answers to questions provided data that was directly related to my research questions and gave me confidence that these could be appropriately addressed.

6.6 Why Interviews?

I decided to use semi structured interviews in phase II of the data collection process because I was seeking in depth information on a sensitive subject area within the Devanga community. One of the reasons to use the flexible format of a semi structured interviews was because it gives the participants the freedom to steer the discussion to issues that are of relevance to them within the scope of the research (Vincent and Warren,2001). According to Rubin and Rubin (2005, p.51), a qualitative interview is a conversation in which the researcher gently guides the discussion as an extended conversation, thus eliciting depth and detail about the research topic. Unlike a survey questionnaire, every qualitative interview is unique. This was certainly the case in this study, wherein depending on the participant being interviewed, some questions had to be reworded while some required more prompts than the others to extract information. In other words, the interview began with a broad question which gave a general flavour of the subject being considered and then questions were narrowed further. Though I had obtained the required information in the questionnaires, it was not sufficient and detailed enough to be able to answer the research questions, hence I chose interviews that would give me a broad and in-depth perspective of the various aspects of the Devanga community that were of interest to my study and research questions.

The foremost aim of this research was to provide the women in the sample an opportunity to have their stories and life experiences heard through the research process. To do this, I ensured that while conducting the pilot studies for the questionnaire and the interview, I revisited the research questions several times as well as asking the participant on whom I conducted the pilot study if the questions were relevant or if they were over-sensitive. This was important because the intention behind obtaining sensitive information was not to cause unease and offence to the participants. The importance of instilling confidence in interviewees in research, particularly when addressing sensitive issues is paramount (Dempsey., Dowling., Larkin and Murphy,2016). I discussed the use of comfortable and non-intrusive language and related issues with the participant and my supervisor and only then finalized the questions before beginning interviews (See Appendix V).

One of my research questions revolved around the childhood experiences of women impacting their parenting styles and aspirations for their children and this was kept in mind while designing the interview questions where I delved into the women's' personal childhood experiences and how their relationship was with their siblings (especially brothers). Did their parents have the same expectations for their sons and daughters? What unfulfilled/fulfilled ambitions did they have? And did they also raise their children the way they were raised?

Another research question aimed at understanding if the women in my sample had any significant difference in expectations for their sons and daughters and if they did, were there any extra provisions made for the daughters? To answer this question, I looked at aspects of these women's' marital lives and who takes decisions regarding their children's education in their family, what career aspirations do they have from their son and daughter, what aspect of their own education would they like to change if they had a choice. These questions made the women reflect on their past and in many instances the level of suppression that they have been subjected to and how it has changed their perspective of the importance of girl's education.

My final research question looked at understanding how the life experiences of women have influenced their views on the role of women in the Indian society and this was investigated by asking questions related to how they were treated in their families after marriage, their opinion on the role of women in society and where they position themselves in that role. This seemed to be quite sensitive for most of the women and the responses were quite genuine, much to my surprise, primarily because I least expected these women to develop such a high level of trust in me to be able to share extremely personal and sensitive information. Crow *et al.* (2006) maintain that informed consent can make the participants feel at par with the researcher and this can have a positive impact on the quality of data collected as the respondents' confidence increases and hence, they may be willing to be open about those aspects of their life that are being researched. I believe that this was apparent in my own study.

Though the informed consent forms were sent out before conducting interviews, I kept wondering about how well the participants were informed about the study. However, my doubts were laid to rest when I began the interviews and positive

remarks were made about the importance of doing this research and how they hoped the outcomes might influence change. It is important to mention at this stage that a small percentage of women in the sample were scared to participate in the interviews as they had not fully understood the process of being interviewed and audio recorded and the protective measures that were put in place. The process was mistakenly interpreted by them as being interviewed on a public forum. These concerns were cleared with no coercion and compulsion, enabling them to understand the process and to be reassured about confidentiality and anonymity.

6.7 The process of Interviewing:

The first three questions in the interview centred around the participants' childhood and what kind of a relationship they shared with their siblings and if they were given the same educational opportunities as these siblings. The main motive behind asking these questions was to have the first research question answered which aimed at understanding how the childhood experiences of women impact their parenting styles and aspirations from their children.

The next two questions revolved around the participants' marital life and the relationship she shared with her husband and in laws. These 2 questions were set as a precursor to the next two which focused upon the participants' perception/understanding of the role of a woman in the Indian society as that was the third research question.

The last six questions focused on understanding what career aspirations these women had for their children and what provisions they had made to ensure that their children (especially daughters) are able to fulfil their ambitions. These questions aimed at answering the second research question which required insights at understanding if these women had different expectations of their sons and daughters in respect of their formal education.

The order of the questions was given utmost importance to set the progression of the interview logically through the research and at the same time allowing sufficient time for the interviewees to build a level of trust with me. Also, in complete agreement with Stanley and Wise(1993), I believed that being a woman placed me in a better position than probably another male researcher as

I was able to shape social relations in a way which was perceived as empathetic on the basis of a shared female experience. I understood the importance of this while reviewing literature by Rao (1997) who conducted a qualitative study in Rural South India on wife beating and dowry harassment. He mentioned that being a male researcher he was unable to gain access to the female participants and hence had to engage female investigators who could elicit information from the participants as it involved personal and sensitive information.

My positionality as an insider researcher was useful as I was able to build a form of rapport and extract the data I wanted. It is always advantageous in qualitative research if the researcher and the participants share a good working relationship (Brooks and Maguire, 2014). As evidenced by Asselin (2003) when both the researched and the researcher are "insiders" in the same culture (in this case being members of the Devanga community), the researcher needs to gather data with "open eyes" assuming he/she knows nothing about the population being studied.

Interviewing is a skill that gets sharper with practice provided the researcher reflects on what is being learned during the process and thus, handling the delicate nuances becomes easier. I found that each interview I conducted had its own tone and rhythm and I was unable to apply a general rule to every occasion. Some women chose to spend a lot of time discussing about their childhood while some chose to just answer in monosyllables which in turn required several prompts to enable them to relax and understand the importance of their personal contribution to the research. At the end of each interview, I felt a mixture of emotions: there were emotional moments which made me feel angry or sad, but which I kept to myself, not wishing to influence my participants, but there were also moments of elation at having been allowed to share these women's' experiences for a brief period.

42 interviews were conducted personally with the participants after deciding on a convenient time. Most of these were completed immediately after my respondents had filled out the questionnaires as they were unsure of meeting me again. Since I had met these women at social gatherings, I conducted the interviews there and these felt relatively easy as there was no interference from anyone. This process also served as a motivation for the other women to

participate in interviews. A few of them chose to speak for close to an hour without any discomfort as they felt that they had been through a lot in life and had nothing more to be afraid of.

The last question in the interview asked if there was anything else, they wished to add, or which might inform my understanding of their situation and experiences. In most of the cases, women ended the interview by thanking me for having chosen this topic as it gave them an opportunity to revisit their past and reflect upon their personal experiences and situation.

In one extreme example, a participant vehemently voiced her opinion and told me to pen her name in my thesis as someone who had been subjected to such a strong system of suppression and defeat that now she wants to send out an emphatic message to the entire community to broaden their mindset and ideas of gender bias. This I obviously cannot do for ethical reasons but would suggest that this is an indication of the high level of emotion that this research topic has generated.

Interviewing personally came with its own advantages and disadvantages. The advantage, as mentioned earlier, was being able to make notes of the participants' body language and behaviour and getting first-hand information on their perception and understanding of the research process. I was always making notes in relation to the various settings of the women in the Devanga community because I was aware that I could refer to these notes to supplement what I was obtaining in respect of transcribed interview data (Appendix VI, p. 260). It is suggested that using qualitative interviews helps delve into important personal issues (Rubin and Rubin, 2012) and this was certainly the experience which I had during this investigation.

The disadvantage of this approach was that some of the participants were more interested in knowing what other women had said or would say and what I, as a researcher, should do with that information. This was dealt with by gently asserting that information disclosed by any participant is confidential and it is my right as a researcher to protect that information. Reiterating the aspect of confidentiality and data protection worked in my favour and reassured participants to be able to talk freely.

My focus in this study was to understand a particular cultural setting and how various lives of women in that culture were impacted by a range of factors, as is common in an Ethnographic Approach. Typically, this type of a research design describes the key norms and traditional values and customs in that culture and how it all fits together (Rubin and Rubin,2012). In my desire to understand the culture of the Devanga community, I also needed to reconstruct the past events in the history of these women to come to an appreciation of the current issue of parenting styles and differential expectations expressed by my sample. Working with such sensitive information could only be managed effectively through a personal interview. I cannot deny the fact that interviewing these women left me with a surge of emotions every time, because my mind was unable to rationalize the kind of treatment meted out to many of them. I was aware of my limits as a researcher but that did not hold me back from feeling that everything these women shared with me was very personal and I was struggling to switch on and off between my reality and theirs. The entire process of interviewing lasted close to 8 months and these emotions persisted throughout that period, though I was aware that my role as a researcher began where their role as an interviewee ended. These interviews were transcribed verbatim, with the assistance of the interpreter/translator whenever necessary (following all due ethical procedures). The ethical procedures required that the translator only translated the meanings of the words in the interview but did not give any meaning to these and I was aware that interpreters vary in their role from translating words (which may already be open to a variety of interpretations) to giving the words meanings and perceptions (Vincent and Warren, 2001).

Some of the flow and order of interviews was guided entirely by the interviewees, which I again felt was an advantage in enabling personal experiences to be articulated. Women who were being interviewed were often strong enough to carve out their own space thus controlling a part of the interview. In other words, these participants demonstrated that interviewees must not be regarded as passive subjects, but recognized as active participants in the research process (Vincent and Warren,2001)

As a feminist researcher, I was also faced with the dilemma of "translation". Standing (1998, p.2) suggests that "the dilemma we face as feminists when presenting the voices of the less powerful are those of translation and

compromise. How much of the women's voices and experiences do we lose by translating them into more academic language?" Hence the intention was to transcribe the interviews as spoken, thus retaining the essence of the words expressed by each individual.

21 women were interviewed telephonically as these participants declined meeting me in person, and just as in face-to-face interviews, these were recorded, once their consent had been obtained. Ideally, all interviews must be conducted in a single manner, either face to face or via telephone but one must be prepared for any eventuality of change. However, this is not always achievable and there are many instances of a mixed range of interview techniques being used in research studies (Sturges and Hanrahan, 2004; Rose *et al.*, 2015). Shuy, 2003 believes that interviews conducted via telephone lack the natural encounter and development of rapport and hence are not well suited in qualitative interviewing. I do not completely agree with this, because I was able to develop and sustain a rapport with the participants and the interviews conducted in this manner were no shorter than the ones conducted face-to-face. In fact, some of the interviews conducted telephonically lasted for over 45 minutes. On introspection, I felt, that I concentrated fully and better in telephonic interviews without having any external distractions to focus on. The absence of a visual encounter has its drawbacks as there are no observations that can be made in respect of facial expression or body language but that did not cause any kind of data distortion or data loss. Developing rapport during telephone conversations requires a high level of skill, patience and efforts (Appendix VI, p. 260). Several times, women slammed the phone down even before listening to what I had to say, and probably that turned out to be a huge disadvantage because had I been able to obtain data from these women I would have then had a larger number of respondents for interviews.

Although telephone conversations may seem more unnatural and impersonal, in this study, the method also proved to have some advantages because the women interviewed were unable to see me and appeared to feel quite secure and confident when disclosing their details. On occasions it was apparent that some women were slightly wary of divulging their personal details when met face to face. But doing the interviews telephonically appeared to create a safe distance between us which I perceived at times to put these women at ease.

6.8 Location of the research:

In education research, the location of the study is influenced by the research questions (Brooks, Maguire, 2014). The location of the study affects what and how respondents choose to share information, their level of comfort in answering the questions and their level of honesty. In my experience also, the women whom I interviewed in a neutral place were more relaxed and comfortable disclosing information when compared to those women who were interviewed at their homes. This is interesting, primarily because of the underlying fear of being intruded upon by a relative or a male member of the family. A case of interest worth mentioning here (this will be explained in greater detail in the Findings chapter of this thesis) is that of a woman whose husband had arranged for me to visit their residence and interview his wife as well as several other women of the Devanga community. This participant was very emotional and fearful throughout the interview owing to concerns of being overheard by her husband. The underlying fear was strong enough to interfere in the process of data collection as she did not consent for the audio recording of the interview but spoke willingly of all the anxieties and worries in her life, with the only intention of having her story heard. In my opinion, if the situation had permitted and I could have interviewed her in a neutral place, the data obtained from her would have been extremely sensitive and authentic to draw conclusions from. However, even without an audio recording I was able to make notes and observations which helped me in the analysis and interpretation.

6.9 Response rate of Interviews:

As mentioned above, 96 women returned the questionnaires, out of which 75 women consented to be interviewed. Out of these 75, 3 women decided to withdraw from the study as their husbands were aware of it and they were afraid of finding themselves in trouble. 5 women requested me to call later and when I did, I was met with no response from them and hence I presumed they had also withdrawn from the study and did not wish to subject them to further pressure. The final 4 were elderly women who wanted to be interviewed only for fun, obviously not understanding the seriousness of conducting this study. That left me with 63 women who wholeheartedly agreed to be interviewed and posed no hindrance to my research.

The initial idea was to travel to all the participants' residence and interview them, however due to physical constraints of distance and traffic, 42 interviews were done personally face to face while 21 interviews were conducted telephonically after obtaining consent for the same.

After having received all the questionnaires, I had to next decide on the interview schedule with the participants who had consented to be interviewed. For those women who filled out the questionnaires in my presence, I discussed with them and made a note of a convenient time and place for the interview. But for those who did not wish to be interviewed at home, I fixed an appointment with them during which I would call them and interview them telephonically.

After one round of piloting and making necessary changes based on the feedback during the pilot, I was ready to begin the interviews. The first interview was done telephonically and was successful in terms of the data obtained as well as clarity of the questions asked and understood. The participant was sceptical initially but warmed up within a few minutes and was thorough in answering my questions. This interview was transcribed successfully, with assistance from the interpreter who had agreed to confidentiality as it was conducted in the local language. Having completed one fruitful interview, I was quite motivated and excited to do a few more on the same day.

Since I was very eager to make this interview group as representative as possible, within a particular time frame, I justified myself by being stringent by proceeding with the rest of the interviews. But I was also faced with a problem of conducting this research in a respectful and ethical manner because the population I was working with is an underrepresented community of women (Smith,2008). Circumstances such as low income (in a few cases), low literacy levels and inaccessibility to the outside world proved to be compounding factors in gaining access and recruiting these women (Cassell and Young 2002, Rogers 2004). These were factors I had to keep in mind while designing the interview schedule and so the decision of conducting interviews telephonically at a convenient time was taken, to safeguard the interests of the participants.

METHOD DEPLOYED	SAMPLE FOCUS	NUMBERS SENT	NUMBERS RETURNED
Questionnaires	Women of the Devanga community	120	96
Interviews (face to face)	A sample of women drawn from those who returned questionnaires	42	
Interviews (telephonic)	A sample of women drawn from those who returned questionnaires	21	
TOTAL INTERVIEWS		63	

Table 6.9.1 Table indicating the research data collection methods and sample sizes

The above table indicates the various data collection methods deployed to collect data from participants in the main study.

6.10 Obstacles faced during Phase II:

As a researcher concerned with collecting data which might enable me to understand the position of women in the Devanga community, my duty was to report the findings as obtained as truthfully as possible. This would have been relatively easy had I been able to conduct all of the interviews in English. Whilst I have some understanding of Kannada, this was limited and presented a challenge I had not quite anticipated, but being faced with this situation, I had to look for solutions. The first step was to get the interview questions translated into the local language, Kannada and then approach a neutral person to enable me with enough fluency to ask the questions. This neutral person was not a part of the research and was an interpreter who would later assist me in the transcription of interviews, after having discussed with my supervisors and gone through all necessary ethical procedures. This included establishing a code of confidentiality and limiting access to data other than during the translation process.

With the initial hurdle crossed, I now faced a bigger challenge of transcribing the interviews which were not in English. Not being fluent and literate in the local language came with its own challenges. After each interview, I listened to the audio recording and transcribed what I could independently. But wherever I was

faced with a difficulty, the interpreter assisted me in understanding what the respondents had said, and the responses were then transcribed by me. This entire process was tremendously time consuming and exhausting as it required extra time and effort in understanding first and transcribing later. Confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents were respected throughout the process of transcription of data.

Issues which arise in interviews when addressing sensitive subjects can often be unexpected and particularly distressing, both for the participant and the researcher (Miller and Boulton, 2007), as was evidenced in the research reported in this thesis. A significant percentage of women broke down emotionally while discussing their personal lives and made me understand that they are caught in a vicious cycle out of which they see no escape. A common observation I made at the end of all the interviews was that the initial discomfort faced by the women was replaced by a sense of satisfaction as the interview process gave them an opportunity to feel important, and to believe that they were making a significant contribution to the community of women. This instilled a ray of hope and encouragement in them as well as in me though I was still sceptical as to how I was going to help them. I seemed to be playing the role of a "sympathetic listener", which was quite enjoyable for the participants (Vincent and Warren, 2001).

The issue of catharsis in research interviews has been discussed by a number of researchers (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden 2001; Hillier and Diluzio 2004) and is often regarded as inevitable in studies which consider challenging and emotive subjects. In my research I believe that providing an opportunity for women to express their views in this manner was often cathartic. However, a considered analysis of data using a carefully structured analytical framework enabled me to remain dispassionate and to present my findings in a fair and balanced manner. Haniff (1985) discussed the challenges of being an insider researcher. She suggested that "it is only when we are perceived and accepted as an insider that we can truly understand the meaning of the lives we study." (Haniff, 1985 p.112) However, she also identified the need to establish safeguards to ensure fair interpretation of the data received during the field work process. In particular, accurate transcription, systematic coding and objective reading in relation to the original research questions is an essential process. These

safeguards were at the forefront of my mind throughout data analysis as will be discussed later in this thesis.

6.11 Segmentation and Coding of Data

Cameron in 1963 (cited in Chowdhury, 2015, p.1135) stated that "Not everything that can be counted counts, and not everything that counts can be counted". In other words, he meant that some of the most important phenomena cannot be quantified in numbers, sometimes a holistic approach is needed.

Qualitative data analysis is an ongoing and reflexive process that begins as data is being collected and continues till it ceases and hence is often an arduous approach to preparation of data for interpretation. In order to ensure the trustworthiness of the interpretations made, the researcher needs to be systematic and organised in the management of the analysis pathway. This begins when the researcher reads through the data, analyses it and identifies points of interest or significance throughout the process. In other words, qualitative analysis is not a process carried out at the end of data collection, it is an activity that continues throughout the life of the research (Basil, 2003). Most qualitative researchers analyse their own data throughout the research based on what they know, thus refining their interpretations. This was certainly the case with regards to the research in this thesis.

It can also be said that qualitative data focuses more on meanings rather than on the interpretation of numbers, an approach which demands that the data be studied in depth and in detail. Data sets generated in qualitative studies are often based upon fewer cases than maybe those accessed through large scale surveys but often these enable the researcher to examine more aspects of the research question and in greater depth.

Researchers tend to be individuals who have strong opinions and beliefs which influence their lines of enquiry. This inevitably means that whilst reading data they are influenced by their professional experiences and personal constructs. Such a situation is unavoidable in any research, no matter what the paradigm adopted for the study may be. However, rigorous scrutiny of data, accompanied by processes of triangulation when judiciously applied will ensure fair

interpretation and reporting (Shenton,2004; Bratlinger, Jiminez, Klinger, Pugach and Richardson,2005).This belief was also supported by Ely *et al.* (1991, cited in Basit, 2003) who propose that qualitative research is based on our analysis and understanding of our previous work, disciplines and professions and the models we have internalised from what we have read.

As I collected data, I began to realise that I had several preconceived notions on a woman's role in Indian society and those expectations that she was supposed to meet. But the process of acquiring data revealed something contrary to my beliefs. Women, within the Devanga community are in no way considered to be equal to men and are not given the respect that I believe they deserve. I believe that men and women must be given equal opportunities, a factor largely influenced by my childhood experiences although I am quite aware that my experience cannot be the sole basis upon which I base my data interpretation. Indian society generally thinks and acts in a patriarchal nature and hence, I have had to rely not just on my personal beliefs and experiences but also on the review of various literature and other people's experience to make any kind of generalisation about this population. Casual conversations revolving around education and profession have sparked multiple discussions, the theme of it surrounding the idea that independence and empowerment gives rise to defiant and arrogant daughters in-law. Probing further revealed that these ideas were not originally the women's but have been inculcated in them as a result of conditioning them into believing that there is no necessity for women to be professional. Once a woman gets the financial stability and independence, she may not feel the need to continue being the primary care giver in the family which may in turn lead to friction and disruption within a family.

Hence when I began to analyse the data- following my field work, there was also a lot of unnecessary and extra information found in my transcripts which had to be cleaned up. Tesch (1990, p.139) refers to a process known as data condensation or data distillation which means that the entire chunk of data in research does not merely reduce. It becomes more manageable because it is organised and hence it is an important part of ensuring a thorough process of interpretation and organization.

According to Cicourel (1979, p.172), in qualitative research most people use what he refers to as the “vacuum cleaner approach” wherein every piece of data is swept in the study thereby ignoring the quality of the database. We then assume that all the data is worthy of analysis. Instead, it would be a better idea to go by Lather’s(1991) (cited in Pierre and Jackson,2014) work which said it’s better to use theory to first determine what counts as first “data” and second what can be considered as “appropriate data”. If this approach is followed, a lot more can be achieved in terms of interpreting the phenomena with less data. To do this, the research questions needed to be continuously revisited and the acquired data had to be correlated to these throughout my data analysis process. This process is generally referred to as data Segmenting (Creswel,2002; Newby,2010).

The sequence adopted for my research began with collecting data from questionnaires followed by conducting interviews with individuals who had consented to participate in this process. These interviews were transcribed in a tabular format (see Appendix VI) which would help me to analyse it easily. Looking at and segmenting the data, in relation to each research question, began the process of cleaning and also increased my familiarisation. All the interview questions which revealed data pertaining to the first research question were coded in red. This made it easier to sort through the significant quantity of data obtained and was a very effective way of managing the data set. After having segmented all transcripts according to the research questions, came the process of understanding the responses and assigning codes to them. Coding is one of the important steps taken during analysis to interpret and make sense of textual data (Basit,2003). Gillham (2003) describes data coding as a process that becomes increasingly robust as the researcher progresses through transcripts and achieves a more detailed picture of emerging themes and ideas. During coding it is very important to read through the segmented transcript and then assign codes carefully. To code data, words in interview transcripts and field notes can be broken apart and decontextualized by assigning codes (Pierre and Jackson,2014) Importantly, the codes being assigned must be applied whilst keeping the main idea of the research/ research question in mind. For instance, wherever there was a response about a mother wanting her children to study to achieve what had in effect been her unaccomplished ambitions, a code

PAEC (Positive Academic Expectations from Children) was assigned. This abbreviation (code) was then defined in simple yet clear terms (see Appendix VI). Miles and Huberman (1994, p.58) stated that there are two ways of assigning codes. In the first approach, the researcher first collects data, sees how many varieties he/she gets and how the data nests in its context. The other approach is a method preferred by Miles and Hubermann, wherein codes are created prior to collecting data based on the conceptual framework of the research. In this research, I have adopted the method of collecting data followed by assigning the codes according to the research questions and the obtained responses.

Since qualitative data is textual and non- numerical, codes help in organizing and making sense of it. It permits the researcher to connect with the data, which in turn facilitates a better understanding of the underlying and emerging phenomena thus helping in gaining a conclusion (Basit, 2003).

Once, all interviews were transcribed, segmented and coded, clusters of overlapping (similar) codes had to be identified and then reduced to a more manageable number. This was first done by identifying all the codes which related to the first research question that aimed at understanding women's' childhood experiences and how those impacted their aspirations for their children. Aspects of poverty, gender discrimination in their childhood, financial restriction on their education, women's' unaccomplished ambitions and similar ones were grouped as one. Similarly, codes that pertained to the second research question which discussed aspects of educational opportunities being provided by the women of the Devanga community to their children and if there was a difference in the opportunities provided to boys and girls were highlighted as one group. This encompassed aspects of education for girls, academic expectations from girls and boys, families aspiring more for boys than girls and whether women understood the importance of education. The third group comprised of questions related to the third and final research question which discussed aspects of the role and status of the women of the Devanga community. Under this, I clustered aspects of lack of independence and decision making, societal expectations from women, gender bias, lack of financial independence, and women being dissatisfied with their lives. I coded each of them using colours in the electronic version. After having made groups of codes

under each research question, I went on to identify positive and negative codes. Positive codes referred to the positive aspects which emerged during the interview such as women being encouraged to pursue their ambitions while negative codes referred to the ones in which the participants were unhappy discussing such as them not having a say in the domestic matters, and not being given any respect within the society. Doing this helped me to organise the data and discuss it appropriately in the Discussions Chapter.

Once coded, and identified according to the research questions, they were further organized into themes. In order to make it relatively easy for me to be able to manage all the codes and data, I chose to make each research question as a theme and discuss it further. So, the three identified themes were:

- a) Childhood experiences of women
- b) Expectations from children
- c) Role and status in society

As I began with the Analysis, despite having all the codes and the quantitative data clearly set out, I had to revisit the transcripts because I needed every minute detail from each interview, including the body language and tone used by the participants, in order to completely understand and interpret the data. The codes and the themes definitely gave me a starting point which helped me manage the vast amount of data.

6.12 Personal Reflections

The process of distributing and getting the questionnaires back took close to 3 months and I must admit, was a period of heightened anxiety for me. The reason for the anxiety was that gaining access to women within the Devanga community was a challenge which I had overcome in some ways but retaining these participants for the interviews was a huge concern. Women had consented to participate in the study without their families' knowledge and approval and if, by the slightest chance their families got to know, there could possibly have been a high rate of attrition.

In my efforts to recruit and engage a wide variety of participants, had I overlooked the aspect of their personal safety? In a few cases, I had to give questionnaires to the husbands who assured me that they would get these filled

in by their wives, but I was not prepared for a situation where the husbands themselves would give consent for their wives and complete the questionnaire. That led me to think about how close minded and fearful the male members of this community are. The point I am trying to make here is that men within the Devanga community believe that it is a norm to treat women as subordinates but when the matter is discussed with people who think and act differently, the same members of the Devanga community pretend as if they too believe in equal treatment of women. Was this because of the apprehension that the traditional bias and stereotyped behaviour exhibited by men would be disclosed by the women? Or was it the trepidation of not allowing the women of the Devanga community, especially of their families to participate in a study that was designed to challenge the stereotyped notions? The process of introspection had just begun for me and making diary notes was all I could do at that point in time. A sense of helplessness gave rise to anxiety during which I perhaps also wasted a lot of time and energy. It was a process of reflection for me as well not to take for granted my position as a woman, who has received tremendous amount of support and encouragement to pursue my ambitions and lead life on my terms.

6.13 Ethical Concerns:

It was important in my study as in any research to ensure that all of the work was conducted in an ethical manner. The ethical processes that I adopted were informed by the British Educational Research Association (BERA) and the University of Northampton's research Ethics Committee (REC). This inevitably required that I should consider the documents used and procedures which I developed for my research in terms of the cultural requirements of the population which I studied.

All ethical issues related to my work were discussed with my supervisors after which ethical approval was sought from appropriate university committees. Before conducting any research, I had obtained informed consent for conducting interviews and sharing the data to be obtained with my supervisors and those in my sample through a written informed consent form. An Information Sheet in the local language (Kannada) was also given to all the participants to ensure the intention of the research was clearly understood. One of the aims of this

research was to give all the participants an opportunity to voice their opinions and have their stories and life experiences heard and to ensure that all the questions were relevant and sensitive to their needs. The research instruments had to be piloted and the consent procedures were in place for this. I felt that it would be more empowering if I was able to have conversations with the participants before formally conducting the interviews about pertinent issues as that would make me more aware of their needs and the areas of concern, and therefore engaged in some informal conversations prior to data collection.

I had decided at the initial stage that I would be interviewing women of the Devanga community either within their own environment or request them to step out of their homes and participate in this research.

6.14 Informed Consent

After having discussed the ethical concerns and gained an approval from the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Northampton, an Informed Consent form was designed(see Appendix III).The consent form stated that the potential participants were in no way obliged to participate in the research and were free to withdraw at any stage. To ensure complete understanding of the process, a copy of the informed consent form as well as the Information Sheet was given to all the women for them to carry home and read at their convenience and leisure, before which I had explained the rationale behind the research and why their participation was so important to this research as well as to the Devanga community. It was also made clear that I was available to answer their concerns at any point in time, if the need arose. The Information Sheets and Consent forms were printed in the local language to aid better understanding by the women who were unable to read English. In case of respondents who were unable to read the consent form and give consent, an oral consent was obtained and recorded.

Utmost care was taken to ensure that all participants felt comfortable and were treated with respect and dignity. In order to ensure this, the questionnaires were designed with a lot of care and professionalism as this was a sensitive topic and I did not want any participant to think I was being over inquisitive in their lives which they might find embarrassing or intrusive. However, as in any research of this nature, there was always a possibility of “emotional harm” being caused

inadvertently. Hence, the questioning was undertaken with a lot of care and with due respect to the women's dignity and with every effort made to put them at ease. It also made it simpler and gave them some feeling of security when the women in my sample saw other women of the Devanga community filling out the questionnaires. In some instances, women belonging to the same family had to ask each other for some information which I thought was quite comforting for them.

There were situations when some women enquired if they could see the information provided by other women. This was a hard situation to handle because saying yes would mean a breach of confidentiality, at the same time saying no could mean "shutting them off". Due to this reason, I had to be very sensitive and careful about how I spoke to them and explained the nature of confidentiality without causing them discomfort or a feeling of "being harmed emotionally". It was important that the women in my sample understood why I could not disclose information provided by their peers.

6.15 Anonymity and Confidentiality

At the beginning of the data collection process, all respondents were appraised of the importance of their participation along with the importance of maintaining confidentiality and anonymity. This was done to ensure the participants had privacy when they answered the questions without anyone else being allowed to see the information they provided other than my supervisors. Consent for allowing my supervisors to access the obtained data at the outset of the field work. All the interviews were conducted in a neutral space based on the convenience of the participants. In case of telephonic interviews, Informed consent had been obtained for audio recording the conversations as they had to be transcribed later.

In order to maintain anonymity of data, all participants were given a number which was known only to me and all their personal details were securely maintained. This also ensured that women belonging to the same family did not have consecutive numbers.

6.16 Security and Ownership of data

After having completed the analysis, all the data was securely stored in my computer which was password protected with access available only to me.

6.17 Lessons Learned During the Pilot Study

While carrying out the pilot study I learned that participants were ready to be a part of this research without giving their informed consent in writing. Out of the three participants, one showed no concern regarding the information sheet and informed consent form while one other asked me to give consent for her, requiring me to reiterate her rights and the ethical procedures which I was required to adopt. I am unaware of what kept the third woman from participating. While designing the research instrument, I had least expected surprises like this. But it is good to be prepared for situations such as these and for the researcher to hold ethical ground.

6.18 Ethical challenges in Phase I

Keeping the ethical framework, which had been approved for this project by the University of Northampton's Research Ethics Committee (REC) in mind, I had to ensure the application of a series of processes before collecting data. One of the underlying objectives of this study was to ensure these women's voices were heard in conjunction with them providing truthful responses. To ensure this, getting written consent from them was mandatory. However, a significant number of women were fearful to give consent as it involved signing on the Informed Consent form (Appendix III). As suggested by Corrigan (2003), obtaining consent ensures that participants have reviewed and considered the information given and then freely chosen whether to participate or not. During the distribution of questionnaires, women verbally agreed to consent, but when I insisted that without them reading and understanding the reasons for this research, I would not proceed with administration of the questionnaires, they were in a state of conflict. I believe that it was likely that in a patriarchal society like India and furthermore in the Devanga community where women abide by the stereotyped roles which have been assigned to them, signing on a document without their husbands' approval prevented these women from giving written

consent. A few of the women from the sample requested me to give consent/sign on their behalf as they were worried about their signatures being disclosed to the entire community. Clearly this was not an option. Thus, explaining the purpose of this research as well as the roles of the participants consumed a lot of time to ensure that once 100% comprehension and confidence was achieved, I could proceed with distribution of the questionnaires. Ultimately consent was recorded for all participants prior to their participation and a record of the ethical procedures followed was also recorded.

This was only the first hurdle crossed, with regards to the questionnaires. The rest of the process in Phase I was uneventful and satisfactory.

6.19 Ethical Challenges in Phase II:

Conducting interviews in a sensitive population such as the women of the Devanga community came with its own set of challenges. On one hand I wanted to document what goes on in the life of the women of the Devanga community and on the other hand I wanted to be careful not to overstep my boundaries of being a researcher. I knew all along that I had to develop and maintain a "rapport" with all the participants, keeping the ethical guidelines in mind and not get over friendly with them. Initially, it did not seem difficult as women were enthusiastic to discuss their lives however, in a few instances, participants felt that they have been misunderstood in the past and hence were reluctant to participate as they did not see how an outcome to this study might have advantages.

Some participants had been asked to participate in a research project previously and though they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, no measures were taken to maintain the same. I presume, that their information was divulged and hence caused a certain level of unease and discomfort due to which these women were apprehensive about participating in this research.

This too was an unanticipated challenge along with that which came from gatekeepers who were wary about allowing me access.

In addition, I faced a challenge of interference during some interviews which made me question the authenticity of the data. This can be illustrated with an example of one of my participants who was prompted to respond in a particular

way by her husband (Appendix VI, p.260). In short, it appeared I was interviewing the husband and not the wife and hence the reliability of data was a concern. How was I to ensure the authenticity of the data? Calling her on a different day would prove futile as this participant was extremely fearful of her husband and there was no way in which I could get her to participate in the interview alone. As a researcher I had a duty of care towards this woman which naturally meant that her personal safety was of greater importance than my data. This was the same participant whose husband had earlier chosen to fill out the questionnaire in her name. For obvious reasons this data could not be used to inform my research.

Completing all my interviews well in time, I came to the realization that a large amount of time and energy needed to be invested in collating all of my data and making sense out of them. This can be quite a circuitous process and there are no rules or formulas for this (Wicks and Whiteford, 2006). The position of the researcher seems to play a pivotal role in the process in three ways: first, when a researcher seems sympathetic to the participants, the respondents may feel more willing to share information (De Tona,2006). Second, the researched population may steer the nature of information depending on their comfort which would affect the quality of information shared and third, the background of the researcher may impact how he/she constructs and interprets the obtained information (Kacen and Chaitin,2006). I had developed a special relationship with most of my participants probably due to the personal data shared by them. Ensuring their comfort with the process also meant understanding their perspectives within a contextual framework in conjunction with being personally reflective and conscious of my actions.

The entire process which began from conceptualising the research to devising the research instruments, then collecting data and organising them into manageable clusters, finally followed by understanding these and interpreting them took a long time. But this journey taught me to persevere and to be objective at the same time. Having developed a special relationship with each of the participants, it was quite difficult to pull myself away emotionally while interpreting the observations and data. However, it is important to be able to make a rational decision and to recognise that only when a researcher is objective, he/she can make a fair understanding of the research. This chapter

has outlined my journey as a qualitative researcher within an ethnographic framework and highlighted my role as a researcher in the participants' lives. There have been several instances when participants have met me in a social context and enquired about the progress of the research and if they can be of any help in collating the data and understanding it. Personally, I take this as an achievement because when I began the data collection process, I was looked at as a stranger who was going to ask personal questions, But by the end of the process, the respondents had become friends who found themselves to be closely associated with a study of this nature.

7. Findings: Part One

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from my research in relation to the first of my three research questions by presenting the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews conducted during field work. These findings will be discussed in a later chapter (Chapter 10) alongside the relevant literature from my review presented in Chapter 2 and 3.

The data presented here is from the interviews and questionnaires and is representative of responses received from the sample population. This was achieved by thematic coding of my data following segmentation as described earlier in this thesis. In this way I was able to extract excerpts from transcripts which can be seen to have typicality in terms of the data obtained. All the reported data from interviews is presented verbatim as quoted by the participants. The decision made to adopt this approach was both in compliance with the feminist approach adopted for this investigation and as a mark of respect to those who were willing to share their data with me. This approach will also be adopted in the following two chapters (Chapter 10 and 11).

Question 1 which will be discussed in this chapter was:

How have the childhood experiences of a sample of women in Bangalore impacted upon their aspirations for their children?

The chapter will address this question under a series of subheadings which emerged from thematic analysis of the data. Since this research question discusses the childhood experiences of women, there are several overlapping issues between one finding to another. Some of the tables which represent the quantitative data relate to more than one finding and hence may seem repetitive but have been retained as they are for the ease of the reader. The decision to present the findings in this manner is based upon the need to emphasise key emerging issues which I will discuss in subsequent chapters.

7.1 The impact of poverty

Evidence from the data suggests that poverty was a factor in determining the decisions made by parents in respect of prioritizing educational opportunities. In some instances, this led to an imbalance between the provisions made for sons

and daughters. 12 out of the 63 women stated that their parents gave priority to their sons' education rather than their daughters, citing poverty as a justification for this action. During interviews a number of examples were provided which emphasized this situation.

"My mother started facing trouble with regards to fees. They had to provide good education for my brothers, and they used to tell me you are a girl. They got my brothers educated very well but they didn't let me even complete my graduation." (Participant 2).

This participant is a young mother who now has extremely high aspirations for her children, primarily because opportunities were denied to her. Socio-cultural norms which perpetuate a belief that girls do not require a high level of education in order to fulfil their eventual domestic and maternal duties coupled with poverty can be a crucial determinant of educational attainment. From my understanding of the data obtained for this study along with an appreciation of literature, parents are usually quite happy to send their daughters to school in the primary years but once they attain puberty or the number of children in the family increases, these same parents would prefer to withdraw the girls from school and help them acquire domestic skills. There are indications in my data of extreme poverty, due to which women have had to work at a very young age to earn two square meals a day, so sending them to school in such conditions was not an option for their parents.

"We were 4 sisters, and it was my mother who took up all our responsibilities because my father wasn't very concerned. She was worried about getting all of us married. So, we have struggled a lot. Our uncles got us involved into all the handloom work, all typical Devanga business. We used to work the entire night to make ends meet. We slogged a lot." (Participant 7).

As stated above, in this case, it is quite difficult for parents to be able to afford their children's education, especially that of their daughters when sons are seen as needing to become family bread winners. Poverty has been found to be a major reason for high illiteracy among girls in India as will be discussed later in this thesis (Chapter X). We might ask the question when it is evident that families are living in extreme poverty, how is it possible to send their children to school. A failure to send a child to school does not necessarily mean that their

families are against providing their offspring with an education, it would often be more realistic to state that their financial conditions failed to enable them to support their children’s education and that they had to make difficult decisions and choices.

"It was very good though we lived in poverty. I wanted to study but my father couldn't afford to get me educated. So, I only studied till tenth grade and not beyond that. We were five girls, so it was difficult for my father." (Participant 62)

This excerpt indicates that this woman lived in extremely poor conditions but at no point does she indicate that her family was against her attending school or did not want to invest in her education. Clearly, in this example there were no finances to be allocated.

In some of the excerpts, there are indications of the family being poor but having prioritised their son’s education in preference to that of their daughters because they felt it pointless to invest in their daughters’ education, as will be evidenced in the discussion of the next main finding.

While looking at my questionnaires, I gathered evidence for this finding from question 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12 and 13(see questionnaire in Appendix IV) all of which sought information on women’s childhood experiences of schooling, their siblings’ schooling as well as the encouragement they received to achieve their ambitions.

Did you go to school?

Yes	93	96%
No	3	3%

Table 7.1.1: Data indicating participants’ schooling.

What kind of a school did you go to?

Government	43	44%
Private	52	54%
Both	1	

Table 7.1.2: Data indicating kind of school participants attended

If you have brothers, did they go to school?

Yes	81	84%
No	8	8%
Only child	3	3%
No brothers	4	4%

Table 7.1.3: Data indicating participants' brothers' schooling.

If yes, what kind of school did they go to?

Government	39	40%
Private	47	48%
No Response	3	3%
No brothers	4	4%
Only child	3	3%

Table 7.1.4: Data indicating kind of school participants' brothers attended.

If you have sisters, did they go to school?

Yes	67	69%
No	14	14%

Table 7.1.5: Data indicating participants' sisters' schooling.

13 participants had no sisters; hence they did not respond.

3 participants did not have siblings, hence have not replied.

What Kind of a school did they go to?

Government	44	45%
Private	31	32%

Table 7.1.6: Data indicating kind of schools participants' sisters attended.

12 participants had only brothers and no sisters hence have not responded.

3 are an only child, hence not responded and 6 participants chose not to respond.

How many years did you attend school?

Up to 5 th Grade	11	11%
Up to 10 th Grade	54	56%
Up to 12 th Grade	18	18%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%
Completed graduation	10	10%
No Response	2	2%

Table 7.1.7: Data indicating number of years participants attended school.

Till when did you study?

Completed graduation	15	15%
Completed 10 th Grade	47	48%
Completed 12 th Grade	13	13%
Dropped out before completing 10 th	15	15%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%

Table 7.1.8: Data indicating participants' level of education.

Till where did your brothers' study?

Completed graduation	31	32%
Completed 10 th grade	44	45%
Completed 12 th grade	7	7%
No response	11	10%
Less than 10 th	3	3%

Table 7.1.9: Data indicating participant's brothers' level of education.

Till where did your sisters study?

Completed graduation	10	10%
Completed 10 th Grade	42	43%
Completed 12 th Grade	7	.07%
Less than 10 th	12	12%
Not responded	22	22%

Table 7.1.10: Data indicating participant's sisters' level of education.

2 participants did not have sisters; hence this question was not relevant to them.

Were you encouraged to attend school and achieve what you wanted to academically?

Yes	61	63.5%
No	33	34.3%
No response	2	2%

Table 7.1.11: Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve their academic ambitions.

None of the responses indicate the reasons for discontinuing schooling as they are close ended questions with greater insights being provided by the qualitative interview data (as shown above).

7.2: Born as a girl: A diagnosis or a problem?

Being born as a girl is often seen as another reason by parents to restrict allocating finances for their daughters' education thus serving as a justification to get them married early. The questionnaire data reveals that out of the 96 women who filled and returned the questionnaires, 32 women were married before the age of 18 years which means they were still officially minors according to Indian law. Even before their minds had matured, they were married and hence had no way of fulfilling their educational ambitions. To avoid spending on their daughters' education, parents arrange marriages for their daughters at a young age on the pretext that if they are educated, finding suitable grooms will be a problem. Early marriage hence emerged as one of the key aspects impacting upon the lives and education of women in my study.

A 28-year-old woman, living on the outskirts of Bangalore states *"Life was hard. I wanted to study a lot, but it wasn't possible. I only wanted to study and take up a job. I was not allowed to study further as well as I got married early."* (Participant 59) In her interview responses, she mentioned that though she had ambitions in life her father was not supportive and wanted her to be married early. After that, her life only revolved around listening to her husband and doing as he says and so her expectations for her daughter are that she must be independent and not be a burden on her husband because that has been her experience. In India, patriarchy rules the society to a large extent and due to this when a girl is born, finances are set aside for her marriage rather than her education.

We had ambitions of studying but our parents wanted us girls to get married as soon as possible (Participant 15)

This participant is a 53-year-old woman who was married at the age of 18 years which according to her parents was "very late". Educational opportunities were provided but on the condition that once a proposal came along, this had to be given up. Early marriage is an important means of maintaining a girl's sexuality as well as maintaining patriarchal control in the society.

"Opportunities were lesser for us girls. I wanted to study but I wasn't allowed to. Got me married early." (Participant 41)

Poverty is closely followed by early marriage as a major issue within the Devanga community as attested by this excerpt stated by a 36-year-old woman. She was married at the age of 15 years and was not encouraged to pursue any of her ambitions.

Questions 18 and 19 in my questionnaire provide an indication of the age at which the women got married and how many years they have been married for. Of the 96 women, 32 women were married before the 18 years of age which indicates that they were married before attaining the legal age for marriage.

Less than 18 years	32	33.3%
18-21 years	47	48.9%
21-25 years	13	13.5%
25 and above	4	4%

Table 7.2.1: Data indicating Age of Marriage.

32 women were married before attaining 18 years of age, 47 women were married between the age of 18 and 21 years, 13 women were married between 21 and 25 years of age whereas only 4 women got married after the age of 25 years. As a result of early marriage these women had no way of fulfilling their educational ambitions.

How many years have you been married for?

Less than 5 years	1	1%
5-15 years	18	18%
15-25 years	31	32.2%
25-30 years	12	12.5%
30-40 years	23	23.9%
More than 40 years	11	11.4%

Table 7.2.2: Data indicating number of years of married life.

7.3: Parents aspiring to see unfulfilled ambitions fulfilled

Several women in India and specifically within the Devanga community have had their childhood aspirations denied for various reasons ranging from poverty to perceived unnecessary allocation of funds and simply being born as girls. Now, these women having become parents themselves aspire to see their unfulfilled ambitions being achieved by their sons and daughters. Some excerpts from interviews which are reflective of this finding are:

"Whatever I could not achieve/do in my life, I want to achieve all that through my children. I didn't go to college, but I want them to attend college. So, definitely I want to experience all that I couldn't in my life through my children. I want them to enjoy life." (Participant 40)

The above excerpt is from a transcript of a 32-year-old woman whose ambitions of studying after 12th grade remained unfulfilled as she was married at the age

of 17 years. Feeling quite remorseful about the fact that she was not encouraged to pursue her dreams, she now aspires to see them fulfilled by her children.

"Even my mother was very keen on me going to college but since my father was not very supportive because in those days' girls were not allowed. I only want my children to get good education and come up in life." (Participant 34)

Having suffered oppression in her maternal home because of a strict father, this participant has high aspirations for her children but is also aware that her personal ambitions aspirations may differ from her children's.

"I only want my children to get good education and come up in life", is her belief and she also stated that if she had the education, she wouldn't have restricted herself to the domestic front. Unfortunately, she receives no support from her husband to become financially independent.

"I didn't have education, but I wanted my children to be well educated, be confident and courageous independent individuals. It was my dream to study at least till twelfth grade, if not till XII std, I should have studied till tenth grade. Even today I feel bad about it. "(Participant 3)

This participant is a 56-year-old woman who was raised with several restrictions in her childhood. Her parents believed that girls must not be sent to school after the attainment of puberty which was around the 7th grade. After that girls had to stay indoors and learn domestic work. She ensured that while raising her children, she gave them the freedom and independence they deserve so she could see them lead an independent and courageous life. Her unfulfilled ambitions of being able to study at least until 12th grade is now fulfilled by her children who are successful professionals.

A 26-year-old young mother said in the interview:

"I want to give that freedom to my children. We were not encouraged to study but I want her to study well." (Participant 38)

Having received no encouragement to attend school and also being raised with dissatisfaction for being born as a girl and having 2 other sisters, this respondent regrets having not been able to study. Also, being married at the age of 17 years, she feels disappointed that she was not allowed to do anything of her

choice but is very encouraging of her own children's ambitions of pursuing medicine. Lack of exposure to the outside world coupled with no education can have a detrimental effect on a person's self-esteem. She even says that:

"Our parents should have taught us to be braver and more courageous, nobody taught us that. I feel bad. Even today I am scared to do something". (Participant 38)

Having had bitter experiences in her childhood, she is trying to ensure that her children are encouraged in everything they aspire to do.

I have 2 children and whatever I couldn't do in my life, I will make my children do all of that by overcoming any obstacles. I am providing good education to my children because that is the most important (Participant 54)

Participant 54 is a 41-year-old graduate who was practically raised by her brother because her father was a chronic alcoholic who was not concerned about his children, she led a very harsh life until marriage. Her dream was to attend a few extra classes outside of school so she could study further, but because of being discouraged by her brother she failed to do so.

Though she encourages her children to achieve all their academic aspirations she is unable to spend sufficient funds on her son's extra-curricular activities because of her financial instability and feels bad about this. She even admits to getting very little support from her husband for her children's education:

"My husband isn't all that serious about our children's future, so I take all major decisions."

Lack of support from a spouse is also a major factor in understanding the lives led by women of the Devanga community, which will be discussed in the future chapters of this thesis.

On looking at the questionnaire data, I found that questions 13,14,15 and 16 discuss the aspects of mothers seeing their unfulfilled ambitions being fulfilled by their children. These questions revolved around understanding the various ambitions women of the Devanga community had and if they were able to achieve them.

Yes	61	63.5%
No	33	34.3%
No response	2	2%

Table 7.3.1: Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve their academic ambitions.

These 33 women stated even in their interviews that they were discouraged from pursuing their ambitions in their childhood and hence are now living their dreams through their children.

Question 14 enquired about extracurricular ambitions wherein 62 women said they had other ambitions such as aspiring to become a beautician, fashion designer, pursue law, become a teacher or just be financially independent but they were not encouraged to fulfil their ambitions because of lack of family support which in turn was due to poverty or being discouraged by the male members in the society. Most of them responded by saying they were not encouraged to do anything primarily because they are girls. This has also been evidenced in the interview excerpts as discussed in detail above.

Yes	62	64.5%
No	26	27%
No response	8	8%

Table 7.3.2: Data indicating participants' extra-curricular ambitions.

Question 15 enquired about the importance of education in achieving their ambitions but this was a close ended question.

Important	43	44.7%
Not important	20	20.8%
Not responded	33	34.3%

Table 7.3.3: Data indicating the importance of education in achieving ambitions.

Question 16 only aimed at understanding whether the women of the Devanga community were encouraged to participate in other activities at school in their childhood.

Yes	70	72.9%
No	23	23.9%
No response	3	3%

Table 7.3.4: Data indicating encouragement to participate in other activities at school.

7.4 Distinction between participants and their male siblings during their childhood

Several women in my study attested the dominance of gender bias faced by them in their childhood. Their parents provided more opportunities to their sons than those afforded to their daughters with the intention of getting their girls married at a young age. Reasons for this (as described above) are that girls are temporary members in their natal homes while boys take care of their parents till their last breath. This amalgamated with the preference of boys over girls intensifies the need for understanding the reasons for this phenomenon. Significant gender bias is seen in some families that influences choices related to the allocation of finances.

"Girls were not given any preference in our times. Nobody bothered if we had even attended school, I wanted to do medicine, but I could not because of financial reasons. My brother got an engineering seat, and I got a medical seat at the same time. But then my family members said she is a girl and will anyways get married and go away so why spend so much on her education".
(Participant 5)

This participant came from a big family of 11 members and was practically raised by her elder brother due to her father's demise. Though she received encouragement to study and attend school, when it came to allocating finances for higher education (medicine in this instance), her family members opposed it because they did not want to "waste" finances on a girl. She further goes on to say:

"I wanted to study medicine and because nobody wanted to spend so much on a girls' education I had to opt for a different career."

Further evidence of this type of practice was obtained from Participant 8:

"We girls were educated only till Tenth grade, but my brother attended college, because my father didn't want girls to study beyond that." (Participant 8)

This data was collected from a 44-year-old mother who was able to attend school only until the beginning of tenth grade because her father did not believe in sending girls to school after that time. He determined that they had to stay at home and learn the domestic chores. Indian women are often expected to exercise self-sacrifice and maintain the home whereas men are often regarded as superior to women in all aspects of life. This could be one of the reasons for many of the women in my sample having faced gender discrimination in educational and co-curricular opportunities in their childhood.

A 50-year-old woman received no encouragement in her childhood to attend school but managed to complete her 10th grade. She and her sisters were enrolled in a government, Kannada medium school while her brothers were sent to an English medium, private school. She said that:

"My parents enrolled them in a good school, English medium school because they wanted the boys to get good English medium education." Her ambition was to become a pilot, but she said "They did not even send me to college, forget becoming a pilot. Don't you have to study to become a pilot?" (Participant 23)

As mentioned in the above respondent's situation, this participant too having faced gender bias in her childhood wanted to ensure her children were well supported and encouraged. Unfortunately, she was unable to provide good educational opportunities for her daughter due to various reasons and feels guilty. The inability to support her daughter financially and emotionally is attributed to her lack of education.

Participant 35 is a 48-year-old woman who was allowed to attend school after 10th grade on the condition that as soon as a proposal is approved for her, she would be married. She was married at the age of 16 years. Though her father supported her education, her grandparents intervened and ensured that she was married rather than complete her education while her brothers were provided all the support necessary for completion of their education. So, she says:

"Our environment is like that, boys get encouragement, but girls don't."

Within families of the Devanga community, other than parents, other family members, especially male members such as the grandfather, brothers or uncles play a dominant role in deciding the girl's future. Owing to this, her daughter developed similar feelings of not being encouraged and hence chose her career path independently, fought against the entire family and settled abroad. Her mother (Participant 35) supported her entirely and has no regrets about this, and with regards to the sample being studied can be seen as somewhat exceptional and from a feminist perspective and can serve to be a role model for other women in this and other Indian communities.

This response can be evidenced from questions 3, 4, 6,9,10,11,13,14 in the questionnaire.

Questions 3, 4, 5 and 6 sought data related to the educational opportunities and the kind of school the participants and their brothers attended in their childhood.

Did you go to school?

Yes	93	96%
No	3	3%

Table 7.4.1: Data indicating participants' schooling.

What kind of a school did you go to?

Government	43	44%
Private	52	54%
Both	1	

Table 7.4.2: Data indicating kind of schools participants attended.

If you have brothers, did they go to school?

Yes	81	84%
No	8	8%
Only child	3	3%
No brothers	4	4%

Table 7.4.3: Data indicating participants' brothers' schooling.

If yes, what kind of school did they go to?

Government	39	40%
Private	47	48%
No Response	3	3%
No brothers	4	4%
Only child	3	3%

Table 7.4.4: Data indicating kind of school participants' brothers attended.

Question 9 enquired about the number of years the women attended school.

How many years did you attend school?

Up to 5 th Grade	11	11%
Up to 10 th Grade	54	56%
Up to 12 th Grade	18	18%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%
Completed graduation	10	10%
No Response	2	2%

Table 7.4.5: Data indicating number of years participants attended school.

The next question (Question 10) sought data related to these women's educational qualification. This aimed at understanding the overall years spent in studying.

Till when did you study?

Completed graduation	15	15%
Completed 10 th Grade	47	48%
Completed 12 th Grade	13	13%
Dropped out before completing 10 th	15	15%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%
No response	5	5%

Table 7.4.6: Data indicating participants' level of education.

Question 11 gained insights about the educational qualifications of these women's brothers.

Till where did your brothers study?

Completed graduation	31	32%
Completed 10 th grade	44	45%
Completed 12 th grade	7	7%
No response	11	10%
Less than 10 th	3	3%

Table 7.4.7 Data indicating participant's brothers' level of education.

Questions 13 and 14 sought data about the level of encouragement women received to pursue their academic as well as extracurricular ambitions.

Were you encouraged to attend school and achieve what you wanted to academically?

Yes	61	63.5%
No	33	34.3%
No response	2	2%

Table 7.4.8: Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve their academic ambitions.

Did you have any other ambitions?

Yes	62	64.5%
No	26	27%
No response	8	8%

Table 7.4.9: Data indicating participants' extra-curricular ambitions.

7.5 Stereotyping:

As mentioned previously in the Literature Review (Chapter 4) of this thesis, Agars (2004, p.104) defined stereotyping as "the conscious or unconscious application of (accurate or inaccurate) knowledge of a group in judging a member of the group." With reference to the Devanga community, gender stereotypes are deep rooted perceptions of the roles of men and women and those societal beliefs which ensure its continuity. Data revealed in this study

indicates that a majority of men and women of the Devanga community strictly abide by these stereotyped rules with the fear of being looked down upon if they disobey it. Though several women in the interview responses confessed to disagree with these rules, they lack the courage to stand up for themselves.

"In our families once girls attain puberty, schooling is stopped. It was a great deal that we even studied till tenth. I was also not all that interested in studies and they had told me earlier itself that I will not be allowed to study beyond tenth, so we also had no expectations. My sisters used to study well and were very keen on studying further but my parents didn't listen." (Participant 17)

The above excerpt is from the interview transcript of a 44-year-old woman who received no encouragement to study when she was young because her parents believed that girls must not step out of the house after attaining puberty. It is important for them to equip themselves with competence in the domestic chores. She went on to say:

"When I was in eighth standard, I wanted to learn music/dance/instrument very badly, but my parents didn't send me for anything. They never used to let us out of the house."

Families play a key role in developing these gender stereotypes, which is also indicated in some literature and evidenced in the data obtained. Different role models are assigned to men and women depending on what the tradition is, and this conveys deep rooted messages to the future generation who become conditioned into believing that women are incapable of anything other than being a mother and a wife.

My parents never discriminated between me and my brother but because we lived in a joint family and my grandparents used to visit, they were slightly apprehensive about girls' education. They didnot like sending girls out of the house also. (Participant 25)

The above excerpt is from a 29-year-old woman whose father supported her enough to begin her graduation and is quite vocal about how orthodox and conservative her grandparents and other relatives were. Her father fought against everyone but was only able to ensure his daughter being able to

complete one year of graduation after which he too succumbed to family pressure and arranged for her to be married.

"By the time I reached college, people started pulling me down because we belong to an orthodox family, so they used to think a lot whether they should get us educated" (Participant 25). Though parents are supportive and encouraging of their daughters' education, society and extended family plays a pivotal role in determining a girls' future and usually has a detrimental effect on any ambitions she may have, as evidenced in the above excerpt.

"I just wanted to go out, but I was not sent, so we just grew up that way. Stayed inside the house and learned the domestic work. It was very clear- girls will study till 7th grade and boys till tenth grade. The reason for this was that once girls attained puberty they were not allowed outside the house."(Participant 3)

Superstitious beliefs such as girls "deviating from the right path" once they attain puberty thus bringing a bad name to the family is one of the reasons cited to keep girls at home after the age of 12 years. This was also evidenced in the excerpt from my interview with Participant 15 who mentioned:

"There were restrictions on our clothing and we initially did not like it but then we realized that if we listened to our parents, nobody will look at us with an evil eye and girls will be safe. So, I respect my parents for that".

Participant 15 in my study is in some ways an exception because her beliefs are that in earlier times girls were restricted from going to school and married early and that was a good thing because they were protected at a young age. But now with changing times and girls being provided opportunities to get educated, it has a negative impact on the Devanga community because *"When girls were not educated, all these negative things were not there. Now girls have financial independence, so they are acting like this. They don't follow traditions, values and customs."* The reason I call her an exception to this study is because in all the data I have analysed, men have an opposing view to the importance of education and insist on abiding by the stereotyped notion of the community. But in this case, that of a 53-year-old woman, it is a woman who believes that girls must not be educated because education gives them the independence to act as they please.

The above finding can also be evidenced with data obtained from my questionnaires. Questions 3 and 4 in the questionnaire enquired whether the women participants were sent to school in their childhood. If yes, what kind of school did they attend.

Did you go to school?

Yes	93	96%
No	3	3%

Table 7.5.1: Data indicating participants' schooling.

What kind of a school did you go to?

Government	43	44%
Private	52	54%
Both	1	

Table 7.5.2: Data indicating kind of school participants attended.

Since this finding discusses about stereotyping and the roles assigned to boys and girls, question 6 from the questionnaire is considered here as it enquires about the kind of school these women's brothers attended.

If yes, what kind of school did they go to?

Government	39	40%
Private	47	48%
No Response	3	3%
No brothers	4	4%
Only child	3	3%

Table 7.5.3: Data indicating kind of school participants' brothers attended.

Question 9 seeks responses about the number of years these women attended school.

How many years did you attend school?

Up to 5 th Grade	11	11%
Up to 10 th Grade	54	56%
Up to 12 th Grade	18	18%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%
Completed graduation	10	10%
No Response	2	2%

Table 7.5.4: Data indicating number of years participants attended school.

Question 10 sought responses about the total number of years women studied for:

Till when did you study?

Completed graduation	15	15%
Completed 10 th Grade	47	48%
Completed 12 th Grade	13	13%
Dropped out before completing 10 th	15	15%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%

Table 7.5.5: Data indicating participants' level of education.

Question 11 enquired about these women's brothers' level of education.

Till where did your brothers study?

Completed graduation	31	32%
Completed 10 th grade	44	45%
Completed 12 th grade	7	7%
No response	11	10%
Less than 10 th	3	3%

Table 7.5.6: Data indicating participant's brothers' level of education.

Were you encouraged to attend school and achieve what you wanted to academically?

Yes	61	63.5%
No	33	34.3%
No response	2	2%

Table 7.5.7: Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve academic ambitions.

Did you have any other ambitions?

Yes	62	64.5%
No	26	27%
No response	8	8%

Table 7.5.8: Data indicating participants' extra-curricular ambitions.

How important was education to you in achieving your dreams?

Important	43	44.7%
Not important	20	20.8%
Not responded	33	34.3%

Table 7.5.9: Data indicating importance of education in achieving ambitions.

Were you encouraged to participate in other activities at school?

Yes	70	72.9%
No	23	23.9%
No response	3	3%

Table 7.5.10: Data indicating encouragement to participate in other activities at school.

This response was indicated in some interview transcripts wherein women mentioned that even if they were allowed to go to school, extra-curricular encouragement was strictly discouraged by their parents. It is for this reason I believed that the answers to these questions in combination with those obtained through interviews provides a clear indication of Stereotyping.

7.6 Encouragement to pursue their academic/non-academic ambitions and its impact on women's aspirations for their children

The first research question sought data in relation to the childhood experiences of women of the Devanga community and one of the findings is that some women in my study received encouragement to pursue their academic and non-academic ambitions in their childhood and that has had a positive impact on their parenting. It would be wrong to only discuss the negative childhood experiences of these women without highlighting those positive experiences which were evident in my data. Parents have begun encouraging their daughters towards higher education and wanting better employment opportunities for them because girls themselves have begun rejecting traditional Indian customs and adopting Western influences. Though changes are taking place, traditional ideas are still persistent.

"Our parents encouraged us a lot even in sports and drama. We are all providing our daughters the same opportunities." (Participant 1)

The above excerpt is of a 55-year-old woman who was not encouraged to attend school beyond 10th grade but was encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities by her children. She has 3 daughters and 1 son and I feel that she has raised her children the same way that she was raised: by not allowing her daughters out of the house after they completed 12th grade, as stated by her below:

"I didn't let my daughters out of the house, raised them inside the house itself. They got good education, I got 2 of my daughters married after 12th grade."

Her children also feel that if they were educated, they too could have been independent.

In her interview transcript, a 38-year-old woman said:

"Everything was equal, no discrimination. Whatever we showed interest in they encouraged us to do that itself. We could have done so much more if our parents had not got us married at such a young age and that's hurtful. I am raising my children the way my parents raised us, but my parents stopped our education mid-way. We couldn't study but we want our children to study so we are

supporting them in every possible way. Let them come up in life.” (Participant 10)

Though she was encouraged to attend school until 10th grade and participate in other activities at school, her ambition was to become a beautician (as disclosed by her in the questionnaire). She feels disappointed that she is unable to speak in English and is also not well educated to be independent. Although she received encouragement in her childhood, it was not sufficient for her to lead an independent and satisfying life.

“Yes, I received encouragement. Because the way we have grown up, we must raise our children also the same way. Not to that extent but in a more revised modern way.” (Participant 22)

The above excerpt is from the transcript of a 29- year-old woman who was raised with a lot of encouragement to achieve whatever she wanted to. Having been raised in a positive environment her aspirations for her children are also very positive, because when girls are subjected to a positive nurturing, they are able to pass the same to their children thus creating a better sense of self-worth and satisfaction. In this finding, I only discuss the encouragement of girls completing graduation and not beyond that because transition into a higher education programme would mean delayed marriage, which is not well accepted in the Devanga community. However, mothers who have had encouragement in their childhood have a more positive outlook towards their children when compared to women who were not encouraged to pursue their academic and non-academic dreams (as will be discussed next in this chapter).

The below excerpt is from a 37-year-old mother who was encouraged to complete her graduation and is now working as a Montessori qualified teacher. Though she is happy being an independent woman, her unfulfilled ambition is to have become a doctor which she now wants her daughter to consider.

“Yes, I was encouraged. The way my parents have brought me up, I have inculcated a few things in raising my children. And my expectations/ dreams, as apparent if your dream is unfulfilled you see it in your children.” (Participant 24)

“My father was very particular that all 4 children should be equally educated and even I was particular that my children also must be educated depending on their

interests. Daughter was interested in medicine and son was interested in doing his engineering so whatever their interests were, we were ok. I didn't impose any decision on them." (Participant 27)

The above excerpt is from the transcript of a 49-year-old woman who chased her dreams of becoming a maxillofacial surgeon, a rare phenomenon in the Devanga community because women are not encouraged to study. But this participant defied all the odds because her father encouraged her to pursue higher education and now, she also follows the same commitment for her children. She along with her husband supports and encourages her children to work hard and strive to achieve their ambitions.

Questions 3 and 4 in the questionnaire enquired whether the women participants were sent to school in their childhood. If yes, what kind of school did they attend.

Did you go to school?

Yes	93	96%
No	3	3%

Table 7.6.1: Data indicating participants' schooling.

What kind of a school did you go to?

Government	43	44%
Private	52	54%
Both	1	

Table 7.6.2: Data indicating kind of school participants attended.

How many years did you attend school?

Up to 5 th Grade	11	11%
Up to 10 th Grade	54	56%
Up to 12 th Grade	18	18%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%
Completed graduation	10	10%
No Response	2	2%

Table 7.6.3: Data indicating number of years participants attended school.

Until when did you study?

Completed graduation	15	15%
Completed 10 th Grade	47	48%
Completed 12 th Grade	13	13%
Dropped out before completing 10 th	15	15%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%

Table 7.6.4: Data indicating participants' level of education.

Were you encouraged to attend school and achieve what you wanted to academically?

Yes	61	63.5%
No	33	34.3%
No response	2	2%

Table 7.6.5: Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve their academic ambitions.

Did you have any other ambitions?

Yes	62	64.5%
No	26	27%
No response	8	8%

Table 7.6.6: Data indicating participants' extra-curricular ambitions.

How important was education to you in achieving your dreams?

Important	43	44.7%
Not important	20	20.8%
Not responded	33	34.3%

Table 7.6.7: Data indicating importance of education in achieving ambitions.

Were you encouraged to participate in other activities at school?

Yes	70	72.9%
No	23	23.9%
No response	3	3%

Table 7.6.8: Data indicating encouragement to participate in other activities at school.

How important is it for your son to perform academically?

Very important	80	83.3%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	4	4%

Table 7.6.9: Data indicating importance for participants' sons to perform Academically.

How important is it for your daughter to perform academically?

Very important	76	79.1%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	3	3%
No response	5	5%

Table 7.6.10: Data indicating importance for participants' daughters to perform academically.

Questions 30, 31, 32 and 33 sought responses about societal expectations women have for their sons and daughters as well as what career they would like their children to pursue. These being open ended questions, their responses have been coded using the same approach as that adopted for the interview transcripts accordingly.

7.7: Impact of having received no encouragement to pursue their academic/non-academic ambitions on their aspirations for their children

Women who have had no encouragement in their childhood have several unfulfilled ambitions and wish to see them fulfilled by their children. The literature has also indicated (as will be evidenced in the next chapter of this thesis) that a majority of girls in several countries face disadvantages right from birth and through their education, culminating in a limitation of their life chances. Girls are adversely affected by gender differences during the allocation of resources and finances within the family, due to associated negative perceptions of the importance of education in their lives. Furthermore, sending girls for senior and higher education for some members of the Devanga community indicates a waste of money because the girl will eventually move away into another family after marriage.

"No, I didn't get so many opportunities. We have decided to raise our children as equals. At least if I had completed my graduation, I would have also had name and fame. It's just my bad luck that I didn't complete it. Now there is no chance of re-doing it because my kids are also grown up." (Participant 2)

The above excerpt is from the transcript of a 30-year-old woman who was denied all opportunities in her childhood and also faced gender discrimination during her schooling, with her brothers being encouraged to attend school for higher education while she was not. Her brothers were sent to a private school while she was sent to a government school. Such unhappy memories have now led her to raise her children equally by providing them all the support and encouragement they deserve to lead an independent life. Gathering and analysing all the data, I realized that when women are raised in a positive environment their aspirations for their children are also positive. But when women are raised with lack of encouragement and over protectiveness, they are very eager to push through all adversities just to ensure that their children get the benefits they were deprived of, thus empowering them into becoming independent individuals.

The transcript example presented below is from a 37-year-old participant who was sent to a government school while her brothers were sent to a private

school only because she was a girl and would “anyways get married”. She only attended school until 10th grade because people in the Devanga community did not believe in sending girls to college. So, though she was not encouraged to complete her studies she was encouraged in extra-curricular activities such as sports. Her ambition was to study further but her uncles discouraged her from doing so and that has influenced her desire of supporting her children in doing whatever they wish to. She continues to face obstacles in her personal life as she is not permitted to go out of the house and meet people. Having continuously faced a lack of encouragement and dissuasion has made her a strong-willed person who is willing to push through adverse situations to ensure a good future for her children.

"None of my ambitions were fulfilled, because my parents couldn't afford it. I will not let my children grow up the way I did. I don't want them to experience any hardships in life. My elder daughter wants to do IAs and we will encourage her in that. My younger daughter though is very young wants to become a doctor; He says he wants to become a scientist." (Participant 7)

I liked political science, I wanted to become a lecturer or anything in the teaching profession, but I didn't get the encouragement and support, their only aim in life was to get all of us married. I sometimes feel its best if she completes graduation and then we can get her married early but on the other hand we also want her to study and do what she wants (Participant 16)

A 31 year-old-woman who has three sisters, all three of them having faced opposition to study and achieve their ambitions because their parents believed that there was no reason to send girls to an English medium school. Also, they were fearful that girls would “fall out of line” and bring shame and dishonour to the family, hence it was believed to be better to get them married at a young age. Her ambition was to take on a profession in teaching, but she was not encouraged to do so, the reasons given being that she was the youngest daughter, and she must be married before it was too late. She went on to say that:

"Before marriage I was interested in teaching but there should be cooperation from parents also. Their only aim in life was to get all of us married."

Her childhood experiences seem to have had an impact on her parenting style because her aspirations for her daughter are for her to become a doctor but at the same time she is torn between her ideas of traditionalism and modernity. Though she wants her daughter to take up the medical profession she also wants her to get married at a young age because that is “the accepted norm in society”.

This, once again reiterates the point: What role does education play for the women of the Devanga community if they are still finding their lives torn between what’s acceptable and what’s not? Who decides these norms?

A 44-year-old participant said *“Ambitions as in... When I was in eighth standard, I wanted to learn music/dance/instrument very badly, but my parents didn’t send me for anything. They never used to let us out of the house...” I wanted her to learn everything that I wanted to in my childhood, but I got no support or encouragement to do so.” (Participant 17)*

As discussed earlier in this chapter, not receiving encouragement from the family also has a significant influence on these women’s lives: in some instances, making them more aggressive, thus enabling them to build their own support system through their resilience. This participant too, began equipping herself with life skills through vocational courses to become more able and self-reliant. She was able to encourage her daughter in taking up higher studies before getting married.

In some cases, parents encourage their sons to study and achieve their ambitions even when they are not interested, in the process, snatching away opportunities from their daughters. This can be evidenced in the following participant’s excerpt where she says:

“Amongst all of us, my younger brother was encouraged to go to school, but he didn’t show any interest. If I was given the same encouragement I would have studied, but they gave it to him. So, I only ended up working at home that’s it.”

This has led to unpleasant memories of her childhood, as well as a feeling of dissatisfaction and dissent. However, she wants her children to study well and be independent and take up professions of their choice.

Another participant said:

"If I had received the encouragement, I would have studied that was my only ambition. I just want them to study well, that's my only dream. I have enrolled her in dance and music lessons, and she studies well." (Participant 48)

Being an only daughter to her parents, this 31 year-old-participant wished to become a beautician in her childhood but was not encouraged to pursue her ambitions because she got married at the age of 17 years." *I wanted to become a beautician, they didn't encourage me at home. I don't discourage my daughter from doing anything. She is interested in music and dance and I am sending her. I want her to do everything she desires to." (Participant 31)* Now, being a mother, she encourages her children to enrol themselves in extra-curricular classes and do everything that she was denied.

Questions 3 and 4 in the questionnaire enquired whether the women participants were sent to school in their childhood.

Did you go to school?

Yes	93	96%
No	3	3%

Table 7.7.1: Data indicating participants' schooling.

What kind of a school did you go to?

Government	43	44%
Private	52	54%
Both	1	

Table 7.7.2: Data indicating kind of school participants attended.

How many years did you attend school?

Up to 5 th Grade	11	11%
Up to 10 th Grade	54	56%
Up to 12 th Grade	18	18%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%
Completed graduation	10	10%
No Response	2	2%

Table 7.7.3: Data indicating number of years participants attended school.

Till when did you study?

Completed graduation	15	15%
Completed 10 th Grade	47	48%
Completed 12 th Grade	13	13%
Dropped out before completing 10 th	15	15%
Beginning of graduation	1	1%

Table 7.7.4: Data indicating participants' level of education.

Question 13 sought responses about whether these women participants were allowed to attend school and achieve their academic ambitions, while Question 14 enquired about their ambitions in childhood.

Were you encouraged to attend school and achieve what you wanted to academically?

Yes	61	63.5%
No	33	34.3%
No response	2	2%

Table 7.7.5: Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve their academic ambitions.

Did you have any other ambitions?

Yes	62	64.5%
No	26	27%
No response	8	8%

Table 7.7.6: Data indicating participants' extra-curricular ambitions.

How important was education to you in achieving your dreams?

Important	43	44.7%
Not important	20	20.8%
Not responded	33	34.3%

Table 7.7.7: Data indicating importance of education in achieving ambitions.

Were you encouraged to participate in other activities at school?

Yes	70	72.9%
No	23	23.9%
No response	3	3%

Table 7.7.8: Data indicating encouragement to participate in other activities at school.

Questions 24 and 25 sought responses about the expectations that women have from their sons in terms of academic achievements. Questions 26 and 27 enquired about the same aspect for their daughters.

How important is it for your son to perform academically?

Very important	80	83.3%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	4	4%

Table 7.7.9: Data indicating importance for participants' sons to perform Academically.

How important is it for your daughter to perform academically?

Very important	76	79.1%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	3	3%
No response	5	5%

Table 7.7.10: Data indicating importance for participants' daughters to perform academically.

Questions 30, 31, 32 and 33 sought responses about societal expectations women have for their sons and daughters as well as what career they would like their children to pursue. These being open ended questions, their responses were coded consistently with the interview transcripts accordingly.

7.8: Over-protective parenting

Based on the interviews conducted with women of the Devanga community, over protective parenting is defined as girls being bound within the house and not being allowed to attend school or any outdoor activities once they attain puberty

because it is only socially acceptable to discontinue her education and get her married early. These aspects of childhood experiences may seem repetitive, but they are important issues to be considered when talking about how the childhood experiences of women impact their parenting styles and aspirations for their children.

"We have tried to give them a little more freedom than what we had. But even they are not allowed to go out of the house." (Participant 62)

This excerpt is from a 41-year-old woman who was not encouraged to attend school after tenth grade. On being asked the reasons for this, she said: *"The domestic environment was like that. None of us used to get out of the house."* Several aspects of parenting in India, especially within the Devanga community are hard to understand because culture plays a huge role in raising children. Rules and norms are bound by the society and culture we live in and hence these issues are viewed differently by different communities in India.

A 48-year-old participant told me during the interview that her childhood was very difficult. She was sent to school only until tenth grade which was also left incomplete because of unknown reasons. Her parents got her married at the age of 18 years by which time she had learnt all the domestic chores.

"People had superstitious beliefs back then, girls were not sent out of the house." (Participant 51)

On being asked whether she raised her children with the same beliefs, she was reluctant to say whether her children had a better childhood than hers. It is important to understand here that though specific family patterns may affect an individual's way of reasoning and way of leading life, it is also almost impossible to delineate oneself from the cultural and traditional bindings of one's society. Though, this participant has tried her best at raising her children without superstitious beliefs.

At times, living within an extended family can be an inhibiting factor in the formative years of children's lives. Though parents follow a particular style of parenting, grandparents and other relatives can hamper that by imposing their beliefs on the children, as evidenced in this case:

"Since we lived in a joint family, we could not give too much freedom to our children. Even the slightest/smallest of things we had to take my in laws permission." (Participant 8)

Though she also says that while her in-laws were there, she resisted their beliefs and got her daughter educated until college, she was unable to encourage her daughter's extra-curricular ambitions because of her in laws. Every family is nestled within its own rules and culture, outwardly bound by the rules laid down by the society, hence making it difficult to break out.

"We lived in a joint family and my grandparents used to visit, they were slightly apprehensive about girls' education. They didn't like sending girls out of the house also." (Participant 25)

Like the above example of Participant 8, is this participant's story where she lived with her grandparents and they restricted her education and stepping out of the house because she was a girl. Though her parents supported her education, living in a joint family setup can hamper a child's ambitions and educational opportunities.

"They never sent us out anywhere, college was out of the question. I was not allowed to go out even with my friends, but we were not permitted." (Participant 38). Having no brothers and being taunted was already a difficult matter to deal with for this 26-year-old participant, in addition there was the issue of being restricted to the house and not being allowed to go out even with her friends.

A 46-year-old woman mentioned in her interview that because of her grandmother's taunts she and her sisters had no ambitions because they were aware of the stringent rules at home.

"They taught us to be fearful. We never stepped out of the house, we did not have the urge to go out and learn something, even if we did our parents never allowed us to because we were girls. Girls were not allowed to go out and do what they wished to" (Participant 42).

Closely observing the above excerpt, it is alarming to see that this participant was taught to be fearful and lead her life by maintaining a low profile. This has resulted in her believing that girls must be restricted to boundaries along with leading an independent life.

She even said: *“My grandmother used to live with us, and she used to say “Enough of schooling... What is the need to send your children to school, if you have completed Xth and you know how to read and write it’s enough.” (Participant 42)*

Several people within the Devanga community fail to understand the importance of education and believe that it is necessary only to teach their children in the future. Education is not seen as a tool to empower an individual thus equipping them to lead lives independently. Overprotective parenting, stereotyped beliefs and societal norms further add to the difficulties that women face in attending school and pursuing higher education.

Trying to understand the responses to this finding from the questionnaire, question 13 seeks responses about whether these women participants were allowed to attend school and achieve their academic ambitions.

Yes	61	63.5%
No	33	34.3%
No response	2	2%

Table 7.8.1: Data indicating whether participants were encouraged to achieve their academic ambitions.

Question 14 seeks responses about their ambitions in childhood.

Yes	62	64.5%
No	26	27%
No response	8	8%

Table 7.8.2: Data indicating participants’ extra-curricular ambitions.

Question 15 enquired about the importance of education in these women’s lives in achieving their ambitions.

Important	43	44.7%
Not important	20	20.8%
Not responded	33	34.3%

Table 7.8.3: Data indicating importance of education in achieving ambitions.

Question 16 talks investigated whether these women were encouraged to participate in other activities at school.

Yes	70	72.9%
No	23	23.9%
No response	3	3%

Table 7.8.4: Data indicating encouragement to participate in other activities at school.

Question 17 sought open ended answers to why these women were not encouraged to participate in other activities. The answers were obtained in interviews and not in questionnaire.

8. Findings: Part Two

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from my research in relation to the second of my three research questions by presenting the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews conducted during field work. These findings will be discussed in a later chapter (Chapter XI) alongside the relevant literature from my review presented in Chapter III and IV.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the data presented here is representative of the responses obtained from the interviews and questionnaires. In some cases, the quantitative data may seem repetitive but could not be represented in any other way as there are overlapping findings.

Question 2, the data from which findings will be presented in this chapter were related to the following questions as follows:

Do mothers in this Bangalore sample have differing expectations in respect of the educational outcomes for their sons and daughters?

The chapter will address this question under a series of subheadings which emerged from thematic analysis of the data.

8.1: Mothers Aspiring more for Sons than Daughters

My data gathered from women within the Devanga community provided me with evidence to say that there are instances when they hinder the educational opportunities provided to their daughters because of the traditional norms according to which girls must be married at an early age. This is evidenced in examples from the data collected where women have implicitly stated that education is not required after their daughters attain puberty because they need to begin training for managing the domestic situation at home. The possibility of their daughters leading an independent life often appears to have minimal relevance to occur to them. Hence, more importance is placed on their sons' education rather than that of their daughters.

"I have more aspirations for my son when compared to my daughters because I have only 1 son. I want him to have a better life than my daughters."
(Participant 51)

The above excerpt is from a 48-year-old woman who has 3 daughters and 1 son and has greater educational ambitions for her son. Only one daughter completed graduation whereas the other two completed school only until tenth standard. This could be attributed to the fact that girls are expected to get married and go away while boys are expected to take care of their parents in their old age, thus returning the investment placed on their education.

"The elders of the family were against us educating our children. My father-in-law always used to say why do you send your daughters to school? So, for this one reason I have fought a lot with the family. There was a lot of discrimination against girls for which I have fought." (Participant 5)

The above excerpt is from a 58-year-old-woman who was raised in a way that disadvantaged her compared to her brothers as is evident in her having been denied education. During arrangements for her marriage, it was promised that she would be permitted to continue her education, but things changed after marriage and she was expected to follow traditional and religious beliefs and norms. With her father-in-law being against education, she serves as a good example of a resilient woman who had the courage to fight against their orthodox ideas and ensure that her own children were well educated. She goes on to say:

"In our Devanga family, people will take a very long time to develop broad mindedness. They are very caught up in a materialistic world and gender discrimination is very prevalent in this community. In my younger days I could not even talk to people because that's what my in laws had done to my confidence."

Her family abided by the stereotyped norms of ensuring girls stay within the four walls of the house and learned the domestic chores of housekeeping while boys go out, get educated and become the bread winners of the family, irrespective of the fact that in most of the cases the boys are least interested in education. However, in their urge to abide by rules, opportunities are often snatched away from girls.

The excerpt below is from the transcript of an interview with a 42-year-old woman who clearly believes in sticking to the traditional norms laid down by the

Devanga community of getting girls married early and hence not providing them with educational opportunities.

But in our Devanga community, girls should be married off early. So, we got her married while she was studying.” (Participant 50)

Though she says:

“She (my daughter) wanted to earn for the family. When we told her about getting her married, she was very upset, but our community is like that, so we had no choice. Plus, my father-in-law came forward and offered to take care of the finances and since we too didn’t have money, we didn’t want to let go of the proposal, so we just married her off.”

In cases like these, though the male members of the family do not seem resistant or inhibitory to girls’ education, the women of the family fail to take a stand because they are fearful of what society would say if their daughters are not married “on time”. Her daughter was attending college and had not even graduated before being married.

“More than my daughter, we had hopes on my son.” (Participant 57)

The above excerpt is from the transcript of a 32-year-old woman who was not encouraged to study and was married at the age of 13 years itself. Having faced such hardships in her life, one must expect that she would be more encouraging of her daughter’s education. However, she placed more hopes on her son and not on her daughter.

Having obtained an understanding through my research of how the Devanga community functions, it appears that though the other participants in my sample have spoken of women’s equality and giving their children equal opportunities it may not be entirely true because they eventually do succumb to societal pressures.

Evidencing this theme from the questionnaires, question 23 enquires if all these women’s children attend school.

Do all your children attend school?

Yes	93	96.8%
No	0	
No response	3	3%

Table 8.1.1: Data indicating participants' children's schooling.

How important is it for your son to perform academically?

Very important	80	83.3%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	4	4%

Table 8.1.2: Data indicating importance for participants' sons to perform Academically.

How important is it for your daughter to perform academically?

Very important	76	79.1%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	3	3%
No response	5	5%

Table 8.1.3: Data indicating importance for participants' daughters to perform Academically.

Though the responses obtained in the questionnaire indicate that women place a lot of importance on their daughter's education, they are unable to provide their daughters with sufficient support to pursue their dreams because of being under pressure themselves to get their daughters married at a young age. There is evidence in the above interview excerpts in which women state that they want their sons to have a better life than their daughters either because they consider girls to be temporary members in their natal homes or probably due to the hopes they have on their sons for their future.

8.2 Equal importance on educating sons and daughters

Though the previous finding discussed how some women within the Devanga community place more importance on their sons' education, there is a significantly larger percentage of women who understand the importance of

education and hence place equal importance on educating both their sons and daughters. Women believe that girls must be given equal opportunities with boys at least until they get married because after marriage their future is decided by their husbands and his parents.

According to many of the women interviewed, education is the best asset they can provide their children. This is further supported by Dreze and Sen (1995) stating that education brings about social mobility and provides fundamental "social opportunities".

"How much importance is given to boys we give the same importance to girls (at least that's what we are trying to do)" (Participant 2)

The above excerpt is from a 31-year-old woman who (as mentioned in the previous chapter) experienced gender bias in her childhood and was not encouraged to fulfil her academic and non-academic ambitions because of being born as a girl. But she strives to provide equal opportunities to both her children. Her husband is supportive of her decision and encourages the children equally as mentioned below:

"My husband is not partial that way. We have decided to raise our children as equals." (participant 2)

The below excerpt is taken from an interview with a 38-year-old-mother who regrets at having not received any encouragement in her childhood because she being a girl amidst two other sisters was perceived to be a burden on her parents and therefore had to be married early instead of being permitted to complete their education. Her dream is to see both her children choosing their own career paths and become independent and respectable citizens in society.

"Both are equal. We don't discourage our daughter from doing anything and neither do we encourage our son too much. It's all the same for both." (Participant 10)

She also says:

"My husband and I both are not educated. I didn't have expectations, but my husband did because we want our children to study." (participant 10)

When she says that she and her husband do not discourage her daughter from doing anything, simultaneously they do not encourage their son too much, she is trying to indicate that her expectations are the same for both her children and she will be happy with whatever they choose to do.

A 31-year-old mother who completed her graduation and was not very interested in her studies, feels regretful for not having studied more and hence expects her children to fulfil her unfulfilled ambitions because she now understands the importance of education.

"I am raising my children together and with the same expectations and hopes. I have dedicated all my time and energy towards them." (participant 45)

She also believes that:

"Women need education. If they are educated, they will emerge victorious anywhere and everywhere. Education should not be given only to boys, even girls must be educated." (Participant 45)

The above statement attests the fact that education brings about social mobility by opening up several opportunities for an individual, hence validating its importance.

"I never wanted her to become a housewife like me. I wanted her to do everything even though she is a girl." (Participant 20)

This was stated by a 45-year-old woman who has raised her daughter with equal opportunities as those provided for her son. This approach is primarily because of having had no encouragement in her childhood, which she suggests has left a permanent scar on her mind that probably women are only meant to take care of domestic chores and not be financially independent. After marriage at the age of 18 years, she was expected to be a good wife, mother and daughter-in-law. Having faced some extreme situations, she says:

"When my husband was in coma, everyone in the society asked me why I am educating my daughter so much, but I stood my ground. Whatever I couldn't achieve in my life I see all that in my children. MY daughter did graduation, then worked and then got married. I have raised her like a boy. She took care of everything when my husband was in the hospital. I have made her very

courageous and encouraged her in everything. I never wanted her to sit at home. She has got a good husband and family also.” (Participant 20)

She ensured that her daughter was educated until the completion of graduation and then got her married. This must serve as a good example to the rest of the women of the Devanga community that if they delay their daughters’ marriage by a few years, they would have empowered them for life by providing them with education. Unfortunately, women fail to see this or are fearful of encouraging their daughters, the result of which seems to have become a vicious cycle.

Another excerpt given below is from a 29-year-old woman who seems to have no support from her husband’s parents in getting her children educated, especially her daughters. This can be seen in her interview response below as:

“Now they say, only boys should be educated but I don’t agree. Even girls should be educated and treated equally. Only if we educate boys and girls, they will have an identity. Boys and girls should not be differentiated from one another.” (Participant 21)

Despite the progress made by India in terms of education as well as urbanisation, wide disparities persist with regards to the access to education. Being considerate of one’s own values and beliefs, the values of the community we live in and those around the world is important for understanding the importance of education. Having understood the importance of education and modernisation, it is important to change our beliefs accordingly. We are still caught in traditional ideas and beliefs and find it difficult to break out of these for the reason of being regarded as disrespectful, but in order to implement change, it might be acceptable to be slightly disrespectful. Women’s education, hence, continues to be one of the highly debated topics in the world because there are so many differences in people’s perceptions of how it must be achieved whereas some people do not see the benefits of educating women.

Analysing the questionnaire data to provide evidence in support of this finding, it is important to consider aspects of these women’s schooling and what aspirations women have for their children as well as how much importance is placed on education.

Do all your children attend school?

Yes	93	96.8%
No	0	
No response	3	3%

Table 8.2.1 Data indicating participants' children's schooling.

How important is it for your son to perform academically?

Very important	80	83.3%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	4	4%

Table 8.2.2: Data indicating importance for participants' sons to perform Academically.

How important is it for your daughter to perform academically?

Very important	76	79.1%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	3	3%
No response	5	5%

Table 8.2.3: Data indicating importance for participants' daughters to perform academically.

The other questions were open ended and sought information related to the societal and career related aspirations women had for their children. These questions have been answered during the interviews and have been segmented accordingly.

8.3 Independent decision making

This is a positive finding from my data because understanding children's needs and supporting them gives rise to the ability of independent decision making. I consider this to be a positive highlight because a majority of women within the Devanga community have been subjected to suppression in their childhood and have had their ambitions denied. Hence, allowing their children to decide their career paths independently and supporting them towards achieving it is a way of marking their own empowerment and freedom from suppression. Of the 63

interviews conducted, 14 women have clearly mentioned that they would like their children to decide their career paths independently, thus enabling them to take decisions independently. Some of the excerpts are mentioned below in support of this:

The excerpt mentioned below is of a 37-year-old woman whose birth brought a lot of unhappiness to her father since she was the third girl child to be born to her parents. However, she was not denied of educational opportunities though she grew up in an overprotective environment. Having experienced that, she now believes in encouraging her children to pursue their interests as mentioned below:

"We are more open towards our children, so whatever they like or are their interests we would expose them to that." (Participant 36)

"It's better they choose their career." (Participant 34)

The above excerpt is from a woman who was married early and could not complete her education because of which she realises how important it is to educate children. She says:

"If I had the kind of parents my children have, I would have been elsewhere. My father was never interested in getting me educated. Nowadays we tell our children so much to study. Do you think if I had received the same opportunities, I would have stayed in the house just cooking and cleaning, I too would have achieved so much?" (Participant 34)

Realising the importance of education, she also understands that its best for children to choose their career path independently rather than imposing her ambitions and expectations on them because she also mentions that:

"We have different aspirations for them, and their dreams are different from ours. If we want them to become engineers but they are not interested, then it's not right to torture them mentally." (Participant 34)

A 36-year-old woman mentioned in her interview that she was always taught to look down and lead her life because she was a girl. According to her,

"Devangas are still very backward in terms of education, women's education and giving them respect. Women should not be cornered the way they are, isn't it?"

But in our Devanga community, it's just not possible to let that happen."
(Participant 14)

She feels quite strongly about girls being given opportunities and encouraging them to come forward on their own efforts and merit and hence says:

"I don't want to pressure her because I don't want her future to be ruined because of my expectations. Basically, she has to study and work hard and come up in life." (participant 14)

Questions 32 and 33 in the questionnaire sought responses about what career would the women participants like their children (son and daughter) to choose. Since these are open ended questions, their responses have been considered in the interviews.

8.4 Aspiring more for daughters

The reasons for women aspiring more for their daughters could possibly be attributed to being given fewer opportunities in the past because of which the present generation mothers feel they should be able to provide better for their daughters. Some women also feel daughters are a stronger emotional support to their parents when compared to sons.

A 42-year-old woman who completed her graduation and got married at the age of 25 years serves as a good example to the women of the Devanga community. However, she is not encouraged to work and be independent and hence has ensured her daughter gets all the encouragement and privileges to follow her dreams of becoming a doctor.

"I think my daughter has more freedom than boys. My daughter is older, so we keep telling my son to follow his sister. She is good in studies and social work."
(Participant 32)

On asking about her son, she responded by saying:

"I don't think he is such a smart guy, but he will do some job. Not like my daughter, she is good in studies and social work." (Participant 32)

Similar thoughts are echoed by a 37-year-old woman who has two daughters and one son and aspires for her children to pursue their ambitions and lead a

satisfied, independent life unlike her own. She believes that girls are emotionally more inclined towards taking care of their parents when compared to boys. This is quite different from the beliefs of the Devanga community members who believe that boys are supposed to take care of their families because daughters are considered to be temporary members in their natal homes.

"Actually, girls are better because in difficult times, it is always girls who come for support not boys. So, I have no hopes on sons." (Participant 7)

She also says:

"Girls should be encouraged in everything by her parents, husband or in laws. They should be taken care of well. They also deserve a good life that's the only dream I have." (Participant 7)

The below mentioned excerpt is from the transcript of a 41-year-old woman who does not receive too much support from her husband in ensuring her children are provided good education. Hence, she takes all decisions for the children and so she says:

"My duty is to ensure she is educated. She should study well. She wants to join the Air Force. Whatever she wants to do ill support her." (Participant 54)

Having grown up without her parents' involvement in her childhood, especially her father's, she is again faced with a situation of raising her children without her husband's support.

Although the above statement does not indicate that she aspires less for her son, she says:

"My childhood was very bad and something I don't want to think of. I have 2 children and whatever I couldn't do in my life, I will make my children do all of that by overcoming any obstacles. Education is the most important in today's generation. If we were educated, we could have decided appropriately for our children as to what is right and what is wrong. Now there is no gender bias because of equality. Considering boys and girls as equals they should be moulded into good citizens by their parents." (Participant 54)

The data obtained from questionnaires further validates this theme of some women having more aspirations for their daughters when compared to their sons.

Questions 24 and 26 sought responses about the academic expectations, women had from their sons and daughters. Being open questions, these responses have been considered in the interviews as explained above.

Questions 25 and 27 are given below with responses.

How important is it for your son to perform academically?

Very important	80	83.3%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	4	4%

Table 8.4.1: Data indicating importance for participants' sons to perform Academically.

How important is it for your daughter to perform academically?

Very important	76	79.1%
Important	12	12.5%
Not important	3	3%
No response	5	5%

Table 8.4.2: Data indicating importance for participants' daughters to perform Academically.

Who makes decisions regarding your son's education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	69	71.8%
Husband and in laws:	7	7%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	2	2%

Table 8.4.3: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants' sons' education.

Who makes decisions regarding your daughter's education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	75%	78.1%
Husband and in laws	2	2%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	1	1%

Table 8.4.4: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants' daughters' education.

The above-mentioned responses are indicative of the existent culture in these participant's homes which decide their aspirations and ability to take decisions for their children.

9. Findings: Part Three

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings from my research in relation to the third of my three Research questions by presenting the data obtained from the questionnaires and interviews conducted during field work. As mentioned in the previous two chapters, some tables representing quantitative data may seem repetitive. These findings will be discussed in a later Chapter (Chapter XII) alongside the relevant literature from my review presented in Chapter III and IV.

Question 3 which will be discussed in this chapter was:

How have the life experiences of women in the sample influenced their views on the role of women in the Indian society?

As with the previous chapters, this chapter will address this question under a series of subheadings which emerged from thematic analysis of the data.

9.1 Fighting against odds thus becoming independent and self-reliant

Several families in India, even today, prefer the birth of a son over daughters, the major consequence of which is seen as selective discrimination made in nutrition, education and healthcare (Bose, 2012). Three women in my study have also stated that they were an unwanted child in the family because they were born as girls and that in turn led to a lot of resentment as they grew up. It led to these women striving hard to stand on their own feet and make themselves independent, irrespective of whether they were educated or not. Some of them did odd jobs, others developed contacts with people who could help them earn some money. Along with lack of educational opportunities, community norms and attitudes also impact gender discrimination. Women in this study have understood this aspect of societal norms and believe that they need to stand up for themselves to survive.

A 56-year-old woman who received no encouragement to achieve any of her ambitions in her childhood, wanted to enter politics or go to work. Unfortunately, because of the lack of education, her ambitions remained unfulfilled. However, she wanted her children to lead independent lives and hence struggled to be self-reliant. She says:

"I used to do saree business, roam around with politicians during elections and that has helped me in developing some courage and self-confidence. I used to work as a daily wage worker and then ask people if they could sponsor my children's education, someone in a good position. Everyone helped me a lot, except my family." (Participant 3)

She had no support from anyone and hence:

"I had to slog and decide everything. Even my husband was without a job, so I had to do everything. Then my parents helped out a lot because it was very difficult. Nobody from my husband's family helped me in any way- not emotionally or financially. I had to do everything." (Participant 3)

A 37-year-old woman whose birth brought a lot of unhappiness to her father and the rest of the family because she was the third girl child to be born was not encouraged much to study by her father. This participant has benefitted from education because of the good will of members of her extended family who have opposed the will of her father in order to support her through her studies.

"I am the third daughter so when I was born apparently people were very unhappy because it was again a girl, so that's all I know. My only aim was to make my family happy some way or the other so that they don't repent that the third child was also a daughter." (Participant 36)

Having known her personally, I am aware that she is able to support her mother and two sisters financially which has been possible only because of her education and resilience to fight against all odds.

The below excerpt is from a 32-year-old woman who got married at the age of 13 years who leads a very restricted life and attended school only till 3rd grade. Due to the lack of education, she feels *"I have not studied so today I am not capable of doing anything." (Participant 57)*

However, with the hopes of providing her children good education, she empowered herself with small tasks and odd jobs as mentioned below:

"Because of my street smartness, I have started investing in small business and keep myself busy. Maybe if I had studied, I would have done something bigger. That is an unfulfilled ambition." (Participant 57)

Questionnaire data: None of the questions in the questionnaire explicitly refer to this finding though responses from all the questions can be correlated to this finding.

9.2 Desire to be treated with respect and dignity and be given equal opportunities as men

21 women in this study stated that not only are women better equipped than men to function independently but if they are given equal opportunities as men, they can even perform better. Unfortunately, a patriarchal society like the Devanga community believes in suppressing women and not providing them with educational opportunities.

The below excerpt is from a 46-year-old woman who did not receive encouragement to attend school and hence completed only tenth grade. She was very interested in studying but:

"My grandmother used to live with us, and she used to say "Enough of schooling. What's the need to send your children to school? If you have completed Xth and you know how to read and write it is enough. My mother also had some health disturbances due to which she could not work too much so everyone said its better I stay at home and help out and there is no need to go to college." (Participant 42)

Because of having been suppressed in her childhood, she now feels:

"Whatever encouragement is given to boys, the same should be given to girls as well. We should equip them with all skills, teach them to be courageous, they must also be encouraged to come forward, that is what I feel." (Participant 42)

It is usually in situations like these, that women realise their oppression and feel the need to speak up for themselves and their children, like given below:

"They taught us to be fearful. We never stepped out of the house, we did not have the urge to go out and learn something, even if we did our parents never allowed us to because we were girls. Girls were not allowed to go out and do what they wished to. Anything related to domestic work we were allowed to do." (Participant 42)

A 48-year-old highly articulate participant mentioned during the interview that:

"Now she has taken a role equal to men I don't feel there is any difference between a man and woman. Now she is competitive in everything and I like that." (Participant 35)

The above-mentioned participant's only ambition in her childhood was to work and be financially independent which remained unfulfilled. She fought fiercely for her children's education against her husband's family as they were not encouraging of educating the children. Today, her son is in a good job and her daughter is pursuing higher studies abroad which is a rarity in the Devanga community. She also receives significant disapproval for having sent her daughter abroad at an age when she should have been married and for standing against the odds and believing in equal rights for men and women. She is a good example of providing equal rights and opportunities for men and women because she accepts that she cannot go back on her situation when there was no support from family. Hence, she says:

"I think I get that satisfaction from my children." (Participant 35)

The below-mentioned respondent is a 37-year-old woman who has been forcefully restricted to the house because her spouse feels insecure of her gaining independence. Having none of her childhood ambitions fulfilled, her aspirations are for her children but alongside that she also seeks respect and equal rights for herself. Having attended school only until the tenth grade, she barely received any opportunities or encouragement from her parents because they too believed in keeping girls at home after a certain age. She lacks the freedom to go out of the house alone probably because her husband fears that she will then be a free agent and will no longer abide by his rules and norms. This is no surprise as the members of the Devanga community still believe that a woman's role lies within the house and not outside. So, when participants speak of gaining equal rights and opportunities it seems more like trying to be released from their repetitive, droning life rather than understanding what equity really means. In their understanding, letting a woman free of her domestic responsibilities itself means being given her equal rights as a man.

"They should be left free; their desires should be fulfilled and should not be restricted to the 4 walls of the house. My husband doesn't let me go out of the house because he feels if I socialise my mind will get corrupted. Girls should be

encouraged in everything by her parents, husband or in laws. They should be taken care of well. They also deserve a good life that's the only dream I have".
(Participant 7)

The below mentioned 45-year-old participant, being the oldest of four sisters was not encouraged to either study or work and was married at 18 years of age. Having no education beyond tenth grade, she has been able to take care of her husband's ill health and get her children educated, simultaneously also keeping up with her roles of a homemaker. Hence, she believes that:

"Women should be in everything. If a woman wants to go out and work, she also has to do the domestic chores. Women must be smart and forward in everything. That doesn't mean she should not respect her husband and in laws, but once she has taken up responsibilities she has to be equally committed."
(Participant 20)

Participant 61 also shares similar beliefs. She is 51 years old and after completing tenth grade, went ahead and completed a teachers' training course. Unfortunately, she was not permitted to work because being the oldest daughter in law of the family came with its own set of responsibilities and hence, she ended up as a homemaker. She says:

"Women are no less than men, they are equally capable of working hard, earning and raising their children independently. I want my children to also grow with that attitude and culture." (participant 61)

She also believes that:

"Like I said women are no less than men but that doesn't mean we act smart. Women have their limits and must stay within those. We must take men's opinion in everything we do." (participant 61)

It is rather difficult to understand whether the stereotyped notions have forced her to believe in women being submissive or it is her own thinking. Her daughter too was married after the completion of 12th grade:

"She too wanted to go out and work, but she got married early. Now she just stays at home." (Participant 61)

It is important to substantiate the above theme with relevant responses from the questionnaires as well. The following two questions sought responses on the involvement of women in decision making in their families, which in turn decides whether they are given importance to be able to decide for their children.

Who makes decisions regarding your son’s education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	69	71.8%
Husband and in laws:	7	7%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	2	2%

Table 9.2.1: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants’ sons’ education.

Who makes decisions regarding your daughter’s education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	75	78.1%
Husband and in laws	2	2%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	1	1%

Table 9.2.2: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants’ daughters’ education.

According to the questionnaire data, men and women are equally involved in taking decisions for their children, however there are some instances where women are not allowed to decide for their children. If observed closely, there is a slight variation in the responses for the question regarding who decides for their son’s education as well as daughter’s education. 7 women said their husband and in laws decide for their son whereas only 2 women said her husband and in laws decide for her daughter. Could this be attributed to the lack of interest in the daughter’s education? There have been instances in interviews where women have mentioned that her husband and in laws are not bothered much about her daughter’s education and this finding could be indicative of that.

9.3 Lack of freedom to express or take independent decisions

Out of the 63 interviews conducted, 38 of women have indicated that they have been inhibited or are still inhibited from doing certain things even today. While this is a significantly large number of participants, I have only considered the following excerpts as they are strongly representative of the entire sample.

The below mentioned excerpt is from the interview transcript of a 30-year-old woman who says:

"We have to listen to whatever they say. If they say wear a saree, we have to wear only a saree. We still don't have freedom to go out, they don't let us wear clothes of our choice, but otherwise its ok to go out with my husband. If I have to visit my mother's place, I can take permission and go. Only clothing is a problem. But if we listen to them its fine. we have to tell the elders if we have taken any decision." (Participant 2)

From this excerpt it becomes clear that some women within the Devanga community lack the freedom to dress as they wish or go out as they please. Limiting an individual's freedom and tying them to stereotyped roles is a common occurrence within several communities in India and is also seen in the Devanga community. Lack of freedom is seen not just in the husband's home but also in a woman's parents' home.

A 42-year-old woman's story is no different from the above. From her transcript it is evident that though she got married at the age of 17 years, she seemed fine with that arrangement and hence feels:

"I have always been a housewife so that's what I feel. All women must stay at home and take care of their husbands and families." (Participant 39)

Even when I enquired about her daughter she said:

"She is studying. I want her to study but more important is for her to get a good husband and settle down. Studying is important, she should at least have a degree but." (Participant 39)

She is reluctant to permit her daughter from studying further because she probably feels submissive to the societal pressures.

A 36-year-old woman narrated a similar story. Her 20-year-old daughter is currently pursuing engineering and would want to study further but this participant expects her to stop studying and get married because clearly from her interview she feels:

"Men and women must be equal, that's what everyone says. Equality. But this society doesn't permit equality. Women are always inhibited from progressing. They only want women to take care of the domestic front, that should change." (Participant 41)

Having faced gender discrimination in her childhood, one might expect her to make extra provisions for her daughter's education, but it doesn't seem like that from her interview. The participants of my study indicate that they have understood only a part of the meaning of inequality and base their opinion on that limited knowledge. As her statement clearly says, "everyone says, equality." it is indicative that she is only interpreting what she has heard someone else say, it is likely this is not her opinion.

She admits to having been restricted to the house as mentioned below:

"I have not done anything in life. Just been tied down to the 4 walls of the house, taking care of the children." (Participant 41)

The above participant was not encouraged to study further by her parents and that may have contributed to her thoughts of equality versus inequality. She may be right about societal perceptions of equality because a majority of the Devanga population only speaks of men and women being at par with each other, but this is not really practiced.

An only child to her parents, this 31-year-old woman was married to a relative at the age of 17 years rather than being encouraged to pursue her ambitions of becoming a beautician. Though she feels times have changed and society is more accepting to girls' education, she still feels:

"Women... Should listen to their parents and get a good name to the family is what I feel. That's how we are. These people (Devangas) have never come forward in anything, at least now through this we are hoping to see some change." (Participant 31)

The below mentioned excerpt is that of a 51-year-old woman who is educated but was not allowed to be an earning member of the house because the men in her family oppose the idea of women working outside.

"My husband and in laws will not let the women of the housework outside. Women have their limits and must stay within those." (Participant 61)

Surprisingly, her belief is that:

"We must take men's opinion in everything we do" (Participant 61)

Though she is educated, she is unable to exercise her rights of using her education because husbands or in laws do not approve of women going out and earning or doing anything that falls outside the domain of cooking and cleaning and women also get caught in this stereotyped conditioning.

A 36-year-old woman, discouraged from studying in her childhood, aspired to study after marriage but again, received no encouragement. She also faced several restrictions in her husband's home but says:

"I knew I had no choice because its taught to us that we are girls and we have to get adjusted. We have to just look down and lead our lives. Women are important but we should be encouraged to come forward. Women should not be cornered the way they are, isn't it? But in our Devanga community, it's just not possible to let that happen." (Participant 14)

She too, like the other participants mentioned above, feels that members of the Devanga community fail to understand that though men and women have well defined roles in society, there are also opportunities available that need to be availed if these are to be challenged.

The below mentioned excerpt is from the interview transcript of a 58-year-old woman who strongly believes that members of the Devanga community will take a long time to progress beyond their ideas of patriarchy and stereotypes and women like her are caught in this vicious cycle. She says:

"As soon as I got married everything they had promised was reversed. There were restrictions like not being allowed to talk to anyone, religious and traditional customs to be followed. I immediately had my children. So, I just swallowed all my hurt and pain and went on with life. I diverted all my attention

to my children and began to ignore all the torture that my in laws used to subject me to. They would speak badly if girls did not stay at home and follow the rules and regulations of the household. In our Devanga family, people will take a very long time to develop broad mindedness. They are very caught up in a materialistic world and gender discrimination is very prevalent in this community. Along with that, status plays a very important role” (Participant 5)

As mentioned by a 44-year-old-woman, her parents got her married at the age of 18 years. With no support or encouragement from either her parents or her husband, she feels remorseful that:

“I feel we have no identity of our own. There is no achievement, our life is a waste. That does not mean that we have no responsibilities because if we are not at home, the house doesn’t function. But still if we look at our personality, we feel we have not achieved anything so that little nagging thought is always there.” (Participant 18)

The below mentioned excerpt is from a 50-year-old woman, married at the age of 17 years, received no encouragement from her parents to study. She wanted her daughter to study but her husband opposed this decision. The opposition was to the extent of only the participant taking decisions for her daughter whereas her husband used to decide for their son. So, she says:

“Nothing goes as per our wish. Our dreams and our ambitions have no place in the society. We have to be scared of the society and live our life. That is how it is.” (Participant 23)

She also mentions the importance of the community and how the society is shaping their dreams because:

“People who are around us... That is how it is here in Cubbonpet (the locality where she resides)” (Participant 23)

Even if the family supports the liberalisation of women, the society we live in has a different opinion and that matters in day to day living. Judging women based on stereotyped roles is an act of society that everyone within the Devanga community is afraid of. Despite all the discussion on women’s empowerment and equality, girls are still raised to be afraid of what people will say or think and lead their lives in accordance with those rules imposed by the community.

A 29-year-old woman believes in maintaining a delicate balance between restricting the children’s freedom and raising them in a more liberal manner than how she was raised. She says:

"Women should have freedom but at the same time they should have restrictions and boundaries. Because if a woman goes on the wrong track, the entire family’s name will be ruined isn’t it? So, if we give too much freedom also, she can go on the wrong track, at the same time if we hold her down too much also, she can go on the wrong track. Mainly, women should know how much to talk and where to talk and that will decide her importance in the society."
 (Participant 25)

The above theme can be validated from the data obtained from questionnaires as well. The following questions are important to be considered because they determine the role of women within their families and the importance given to them in terms of decision making.

Who makes decisions regarding your son’s education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	69	71.8%
Husband and in laws:	7	7%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	2	2%

Table 9.3.1: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants’ sons’ education.

Who makes decisions regarding your daughter’s education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	75%	78.1%
Husband and in laws	2	2%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	1	1%

Table 9.3.2: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants’ daughters’ education.

9.4: Lack of support from spouse and ill treatment of women

Several communities in India as well as the Devanga community expect women to be subservient to their husbands because men's views on family matters take the upper hand over those of women. Most families prefer withdrawing girls from school once they attain puberty to get them married, as a result of which the girls' education remains incomplete.

Participant 9 in my study revealed that *"she was going through a very abusive marriage (physically and psychologically) and has been ridiculed and humiliated all her married life. Her children also do not respect her. Being hit and kicked by the husband is a part of her daily life and hence has no expectations from her husband or children because her children support the abuse. Her family condemns her for even eating three square meals only because she cannot go out and earn and contribute to the family's income."*

Because of the fear of being disclosed her interview was not audio recorded but the transcription was done based on her discussions with me. In some, traditional Indian families, women are a victim of domestic abuse, either at the hands of the husband or the in laws. In this situation, violence was perpetrated by her husband and children and a lack of a support system has resulted in submission to violence.

Women are also traumatised into having more children if they have only borne girls and the statement given below is evidence supporting this. A 33-year-old woman was put through extreme psychological abuse to bear a third child because the first two children were girls. The financial stability of the family is quite weak but that does not seem to deter them from longing for an heir.

"My husband is a nice person, but he is completely dependent on his parents, he doesn't have the ability to think and act independently, so I just keep quiet. I cannot take any body's decisions because my in laws don't understand all this. For my daughters I decide and sometimes ask my husband." (Participant 19)

The below excerpt is from the transcript of a woman who received absolutely no support from her husband or in laws after marriage. The only expectations from her was for her to do the domestic work.

"My husband also never supported me much. He was busy so he too didn't focus too much on us." (Participant 37)

The same questions which have been referred to in the above themes, hold good here as well as all the themes discuss about the role of women within the Devanga community. Hence it may seem repetitive, but it is important to mention it here.

Who makes decisions regarding your son's education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	69	71.8%
Husband and in laws:	7	7%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	2	2%

Table 9.4.1: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants' sons' education.

Who makes decisions regarding your daughter's education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	75%	78.1%
Husband and in laws	2	2%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	1	1%

Table 9.4.2: Data indicating decisions surrounding participants' daughters' education.

9.5: Encouragement from Spouse

There are also exceptional cases where a woman's husband is very encouraging of her restarting her education after having borne two children. The above theme discussed about lack of encouragement from the spouse whereas this theme discusses about women who have encouraging husbands as mentioned below:

"I wanted to complete degree also but couldn't and I used to feel very guilty about it. So now I have decided to do it. I want to do my BA next year. I told my husband I wanted to do graduation and he said go ahead so let's see." (Participant 40)

8 women clearly mentioned that their husbands provide them with encouragement and support required to lead their lives comfortably. This however doesn't indicate that the other women do not have supportive husbands.

It is usually quite difficult for girls to get adjusted after marriage. However, support from the spouse can help a great deal in this process. Husbands act as a mediator thus resolving conflicts between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law (if it arises). This is validated by a 46-year-old woman who mentions:

"My husband was very understanding and supportive in everything. He understood the difference in the way I was at my parents' place and used to help out in everything." (Participant 42)

A 47-year-old-woman told me during the interview that her father completely discouraged her education in her childhood, but her husband encouraged her to become independent by enrolling her in various classes, as mentioned below:

"Husband also was very cooperative. After marriage he enrolled me into computer classes, spoken English class and finally beautician courses." (Participant 28)

A 31-year-old woman pointed out that when she got married there were restrictions on her for everything ranging from the kind of clothes to wear to amending the way she spoke. Having been raised with a broad outlook by her parents, there initially were issues of adjustment but:

"My husband he is a very cool guy. He doesn't pinpoint for everything, he knows what I am, he gives me my space and that's what I like about him." (Participant 43)

She shares a friendly relationship with her husband and that has helped her achieve her ambitions of teaching young children despite the discouragement she faces from her in laws.

Questionnaire data to validate this theme is given below and is the same as the previous themes.

Who makes decisions regarding your son's education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	69	71.8%
Husband and in laws:	7	7%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	2	2%

Table 9.5.1: Data indicating decisions regarding participants' sons' education.

Who makes decisions regarding your daughter's education in your family?

Only you	13	13.5%
You and your husband	75%	78.1%
Husband and in laws	2	2%
Only husband	5	5%
No response	1	1%

Table 9.5.2: Data indicating decisions regarding participants' daughters' education.

10. Discussion:

This discussion chapter is presented in relation to the key issues that emerged from my findings. Within this chapter I discuss the following findings:

- a) Childhood experiences
- b) Expectations from children
- c) Role of women

When I began this research, I had preconceived ideas about the Devanga community. When I came to the end of the study, I felt that my research questions had been answered but, in the process I had also identified further questions which may form the basis of a follow up investigation. Some of these questions relate to actions which might be taken based upon the findings of my research. How might I bring about a change in these women's lives? Should I involve myself in the promotion of change? Will the women in my study begin to realize that they do not need to continue to live a life of contradictions, which involves denying themselves equality in their social and economic lives? From the findings of my research, I would suggest that there is an identified need for action to abolish the visible injustices that persist but these and similar questions remain. Researchers working within a feminist framework often report that the data obtained from their investigations provides a useful foundation upon which to build an argument as a catalyst for change (Beetham and Demetriades 2007; Stack,2018).However it is important to acknowledge that whilst the motivations for my research were the promotion of change, within the context of this thesis I am reporting the findings from an empirical study rather than constructing a rhetoric solely focused upon emancipatory practice.

This section of my thesis brings together discussions based upon findings from the questionnaires and interviews along with the critical analysis of the literature and thus will draw together aspects of the research findings that enable me to answer the research questions. It is important to recognize that this study was conducted within a small community in Bangalore and thus all the analysis is based on my interpretation which have been influenced by the values which I bring to the investigation as is common in research of this nature as discussed by Vincent and Warren (2001). These researchers suggest that while presenting respondents' voices, a degree of "translation" is required but during the process

some amount of data could get “corrupted” or “lost” in the process. In support of that view, Standing (1998, p.200) states that “*the dilemmas we face as feminists writing the voice of the less powerful are those of translation and compromise.*” How much of the women’s voices and experiences do we lose by translating them into more academic language? I have made a sincere attempt to retain the views and opinions expressed by the participants verbatim so as not to lose the essence of the research. However, while translating from the local language, Kannada to English there might be some minute changes which I have tried to retain to the best of my abilities. Having considered these potential limitations, I collected, analyzed and interpreted my data and believe that this research, like any other study should have an impact and therefore cannot be viewed as wholly neutral. However, I also believe that the most significant impact has been on my own understanding of the phenomena investigated particularly in my journey as a student and researcher. It has also increased my awareness of several realities of wider Indian society as well as the Devanga community particularly.

10.1 Childhood Experiences:

At the time of conceptualizing this research I considered all the factors that might impact a woman’s expectations of her children which led me to the conclusion that it would be important to consider their childhood experiences because those experiences play an important role in shaping them as individuals in adulthood. There is very limited literature that discusses aspects of childhood experiences and maternal expectations in India and hence most of my discussions on this topic are based on my data and my understanding and interpretation of this. Levtov *et al.* (2014) reported a study conducted in 8 countries on 10,490 men aged between 18 years and 59 years by the International Men and Gender Equality Survey. This research was conducted in Chile, Croatia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Brazil, The Democratic Republic of the Congo, India, Rwanda and Mexico. It was found that equitable practices in men’s childhood homes were associated with their attitude to the nature of equity. These attitudes were reflected in their participation in domestic chores, reduced violence and better relationship status. It was also found that men’s education as well as their mother’s education was positively associated with advancement

towards gender equality in all countries except in India. Levtov *et al.* (2014) argued that in domestic situations where fathers are more responsible and participative in domestic activities reduces the encouragement of stereotyped roles. Ironically, most of the data I obtained in this study reflected women's negative experiences of their childhood thus encouraging them to be more positive and encouraging of their children's schooling and higher educational opportunities. Educational aspirations are related to the chances of realizing them and this is in turn governed largely by social and economic constraints which are not in their control.

The interpretation of my data indicates that, poverty was found to be one of the factors in determining the decisions parents made with respect to their children's education. As stated in the findings chapter pertaining to the first research question, out of the 63 women interviewed, 12 women identified poverty as one of the major factors which resulted in opportunities for education having been denied to them in their childhood. While 12 may seem a small number in relation to the population studied, in my opinion it is important to be considered because it is a major inhibitory factor. There could have been instances where parents could have attempted sending the girls to school where the fee was lower, however they chose to cite poverty as a reason for keeping the girls at home. Also, since I am discussing these women's childhood experiences, these instances happened almost 25 to 30 years ago when it was important to estimate a minimum level of income to obtain a certain standard of education. Along with gender bias, poverty was a major barrier to these women's education in their childhood. It is possible to attribute this to the fact that lower economic conditions lead to a greater degree of competition for resources and thus there is lesser scope for gender equality (Seguino,2007). It has also been recognized by The World Bank (1994,p.9) that " Poverty is not only a problem of low incomes; rather it is a multi-dimensional problem that includes low access to opportunities for developing human capital and to education.." In the framework of Indian development planning, education is considered as one of the "basic needs" or "minimum needs" (Tilak, 2002) and hence I attach a lot of meaning to this reason though only 19% of my population cited it explicitly.

Within India, poverty has been seen to impact the lives of girls in several ways. Girls belonging to very poor families tend to be married earlier when compared

to those from richer households, presumably because the demand for dowry is lower for younger girls (Singh and Vennam, 2016). Paul (2019) identified a correlation between early marriage and educational attainment, suggesting that they are intrinsically interwoven, each impacting negatively upon the other. Getting the girls married at an early age could also mean cutting down the educational cost for girls. This indicates that simplistic approaches that attempt to tackle only one of the factors may be unlikely to break this chain of disadvantage. I would certainly concur with this conclusion and believe that my own findings indicate that a holistic approach to tackling this issue is essential if progress is to be made.

Gender oriented attitudes and behaviors are set in childhood and that's why I believe that looking into aspects of childhood was pivotal to this research. Girls are conditioned from childhood into believing they are supposed to be modest and develop proficiency in household chores as well as childcare in their natal homes until they get married and leave (Srivastava and Srivastava 2010). A study conducted by Ramanaik and colleagues (2018) in Northern Karnataka also found that girls who attended school regularly also participated in domestic chores, but not at the cost of their education. Parents were encouraging of their educational needs and were able to resist societal pressures to some extent. Women in my research have not just stated instances from their childhood of extreme poor conditions where they had to work as daily labourers to earn two square meals a day but have also mentioned that due to poverty, their parents were capable of only educating one child in the family and inevitably it would be the son because of the belief that girls are temporary members in their parents' home and hence it is unnecessary to spend money on their education. It is possible to interpret this situation as an indication that a failure to send a child to school need not necessarily mean gender bias or that families are against sending their children to school. It is possibly more realistic to educate one child in order to balance the family's financial conditions. In my opinion, gaining first-hand information on how much money is allocated for each child in each family might give me a better understanding of this situation, though sensitivities about disclosure of family finances are notoriously difficult to overcome (Preece., Murray., Rose., Zhao, and Garner 2020). Stromquist (1989) and Filmer (1999) say that a combination of poverty and traditional values are a deterrent to the

investment of finances for a girl's education. My data indicates that it also demonstrates the role of poverty in determining the future of girls' education because members of the Devanga community belong to the lower middle-class section of the society (which has been discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis) and investing on a girls' education does not seem to be of prime importance to them. They would rather invest their finances on the girl's marriage. In addition, the Devanga community has always abided by orthodox ideas and traditional norms of society and this amalgamation of poverty and tradition is an inhibitory factor to the growth and development of Devanga women as it has been in other similar Indian communities (Dreze and Kingdon, 2001). This has in turn contributed to "education poverty", the features of which can be classified as low levels of education of the population, wide-spread illiteracy, low rate of continuation in schools, high rates of dropouts and failures, low rates of achievement and above all- exclusion of the poor from education (Tilak, 2009).

10.1.1 Being born as a girl:

Closely overlapping with the above finding is the important indication that being born as a girl is often seen by families as a reason to restrict allocating finances for education. Stereotyping and conditioning young girls into believing they are meant to be inside the house is another major finding. Due to the overlapping nature of these findings, I will discuss them in continuity with each other.

In India, a large segment of the female population still suffers from discriminatory approaches and deprivation (Esteve-Volart 2004; Kingdon 2002; Garg, 2018). Patriarchy rules Indian society with such intensity that it is difficult to resist and overcome this deep-seated factor (Kohli 2017; Bhopal 2019). Owing to this, when a girl child is born, most families do not welcome her with happiness because raising a girl is considered an expensive affair. Reasons for this are attributed to expensive marriages, dowry system (in some communities in India), and additional religious rituals during puberty attainment. This has been evidenced from the data collected in my research, where two women clearly mentioned in the interviews that their birth caused dissatisfaction to their families especially to their fathers. Another participant's husband was unhappy at the birth of two girls. Agars (2004, p.104) defined stereotyping as "*the conscious or unconscious application of (accurate or inaccurate) knowledge of a*

group in judging a member of the group." With reference to this research, gender stereotypes are deep rooted perceptions of the characteristics of males and females which ensure the continuity of these roles. (Hussain *et al.*,2015). Most families within the Devanga community believe that education is only required for girls to be able to help their children with academic study in the future. My data reveals that the men and women of the Devanga community abide by these stereotyped roles with the fear of being looked down upon if they disobey them. Though several women in my study have confessed to disagreeing with the stereotyped norms, they lack the courage to stand up for their beliefs. The data is clearly indicative of the Devanga community not just being strictly patriarchal in nature, but also provides indications of boys being given the right to choose their career path. Families play a key role in developing these gender stereotypes, as indicated by Jacobs (1992) and is also supported by the data obtained in this study. Different role models are assigned to men and women depending on what the tradition is, and this conveys deep rooted messages to the future generation who thereby become conditioned into believing that women are incapable of anything other than being a mother and a wife. I disagree with these ideas as I come from a Devanga family myself but have been extremely fortunate to have received tremendous support and encouragement to pursue my ambitions of studying and working, besides being a mother and wife.

10.1.2 Marriage and education:

Adding further complexity to the situation is the aspect of getting girls married at a very young age, which is closely followed by looking for a suitable groom for the girls even before they are legally old enough to marry. Despite the progress India has made as a global power, there is evidence of girls getting married at a very young age because of the social and religious beliefs (Mather, Greene and Malhotra 2003; Maheswari and Rajeswari, 2018). In my research, the questionnaire data indicated that 32 women out of the 96, were married before they attained 18 years of age and 47 were married between the age of 18 and 21 years. This constituted 82% of my sample. As defined in the Handbook on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act of 2006 (UNICEF 2006), the legal age for marriage in India is 18 years of age but because girls are perceived to be an

economic burden in their families, this law is often ignored (Raj,2010). Additionally, the caste system and rules of patriarchy in some communities within India means that families prefer to get their daughters married before they attain the legal age. The societal and cultural beliefs impose the belief that girls must not be permitted to go to school once they attain puberty and this contributes to a significant percentage of girls being forced to discontinue schooling at a young age. Reasons for this are generally attributed to the risk of girls' minds being corrupted by external influences. This is strongly evidenced in my research data which has revealed participants' beliefs that it is better to restrict girls within the four walls of the house or it may be difficult to get them married. Often, in such situations, girls have little or no say in choosing their partners or deciding the age at which they should marry because the marriages are orchestrated by the families (Thornton and Jensen, 2003). Thornton and Jensen (2003) conducted a study in four countries(Benin, Columbia, India and Turkey) to show the correlation between marriage and educational attainment and their results indicated that across all these 4 countries early marriage was associated with little or no educational attainment. This has an indirect effect on the woman's power and autonomy within the family as well.

My observations and opinion is that parents are usually quite happy to send their children to school in the primary years but as the number of children in the family increases, parents might feel the increased need for help with domestic chores and this could have a serious impact on the education of the girl child, in turn affecting parents' decision to withdraw her from school. On an average, each family has 2 to 3 children within the Devanga community. For girls, acquiring domestic skills and know how along with learning the intricacies of weaving enables them to contribute to their families' immediate needs which is perceived to be the most important activity. This interpretation is further supported by Saha (2013) who states that gender discrimination in household expenditure on education has led to a disappointing progress in girls' education. Observations across different states in India have revealed that many households prefer incurring expenses for male members of the family rather than females (Gupta and Yesudian, 2006; Azam and Kingdon,2013) and the Devanga community follows this tradition closely. Educational opportunities are provided to these girls and women but on the condition that if a proposal for

marriage comes along, education has to be given up. I interpret this as a situation where getting girls married early and not allowing them to attend school after puberty are all means of believing that it is right that a girl's sexuality will be maintained along with continuing patriarchal control in the society. A thought-provoking statement made by Zhang *et al.* (2007) made me ponder that while parents consider investing finances on a child's education, it is also likely that they consider to what extent the child will take advantage of educational opportunities. In the current research on the Devanga community, women have expressed an opinion, either directly or indirectly, that though they would like to invest in their daughter's education they cannot see how will she be able to make use of that opportunity when the family decides to get her married? Inevitably, girls succumb to family pressure and let go of educational opportunities which in turn makes researchers such as me believe that it is seen to be a reason not to invest in a girl's education.

10.1.3 Fulfilment of ambitions:

Because of the above cited reasons, several women from the Devanga community aspire to see their unfulfilled ambitions being fulfilled by their sons and daughters and this emerged as an important finding for this research question. Having had their dreams and ambitions neglected in their childhood, most of the participants in this research condemned the patriarchal and stereotyped rules of the society and mentioned that they would like to see all their ambitions being fulfilled by their children. Unfortunately, the ways in which these aspirations are embedded within family contexts and governed by other factors are neglected (Froerer, 2012). Quite ironically, Indian women represent an interesting paradox. India is known for its representation of women in politics(Clots-Figeuras 2011; Ghose 2018), yet, most of the women are unaware of their basic rights when it comes to domestic issues (Jha., Ghatak., Menon., Dutta, and Mahendiran 2019; Calman 2019). While looking at my data from the questionnaires, I realised that out of the 96 women I interviewed, only 4 women were married after the age of 25 years. Could these women be considered as having brought dishonour to their families because they got married "late"? Unfortunately, out of these women only 2 were permitted to put their education to use and be financially independent. This raises questions about the

importance of education if women are not allowed to use it to be financially and emotionally independent and self-sufficient?

While trying to understand the relationship between modernization and education, it becomes necessary to consider linking factors between education and other social institutions (Chanana,1990). My understanding from the data I have obtained is that "progression" and "modernization" may not have the same meaning to the Devanga community as that which I have attributed to these terms. Similarly, the interpretation of education and ambitions varies from one family to another within the Devanga community itself. One of the reasons attributed to these women's' childhood ambitions having remained unfulfilled could be poverty (as discussed above) or the lack of understanding of the importance of education and of being an independent individual. Communities in India see a lot of pressure from mothers, pushing their children to perform better than others in primary school years. After having conducted this research, I can attribute this phenomenon to the fact that because these women were denied their education and access to extra-curricular activities in their childhood, they leave no stone unturned with their children. It may be interpreted that due to this, mothers have a better control on their children's lives than fathers but due to the lack of literature surrounding maternal aspirations, I was unable to delve deeper into this aspect of my research. However, there are other issues closely overlapping this which I will be discussing more in detail later in this thesis. The lack of literature was another motivating factor to take up a study of this nature. I have attempted to draw connections from literature with Chinese origin wherein it said that mothers' aspirations in terms of education may even impact a child's school persistence as well as mould them into gender specific roles (Zhang *et al.*, 2007). Previous studies have also indicated that for girls to continue their schooling they need to show more promise than boys. However, families are more forgiving of boys' performance at school and despite their often-lesser achievements they chose to keep them at school but prefer to withdraw girls. Scholars such as Cohen (1998), Epstein (1998), Mac and Ghail (1994), Power *et al.*(1998) argued that based on stereotypical identities, which falsely propose that girls have to work hard to learn while boys are naturally gifted and these kind of beliefs reflect in the casual attitude boys show towards schooling which also accord with my findings in this study (Legewie and

DiPrete,2012). In addition to this, the kind of schools that girls attend based on their class and ethnic groups also plays an important role. Middle class families may choose a school depending on their "educational capital" or the amount of money they can afford to invest on a girls' education. Also, for girls, with an increase in their domestic roles they may or may not be able to live up to the parents' expectations and that can then be considered as an excuse to make them drop out of school. Over and above all this, girls are also under immense pressure to be an "acceptable girl" which is usually not in synchrony with an academic achiever. An acceptable girl requires her to be accommodative, passive and expressing feminine desirability whereas to be an academic achiever she needs to be committed and determined towards her goals. My understanding of the community under research indicates that within a patriarchal, male dominated system such as the Devanga community being an academic achiever may not be as easy as it seems. Hence, as hard as I try not to sound stereotyped myself, it is better for girls to conform to the prejudiced notions of the community rather than be looked down upon.

Having stated the above, it cannot be ignored that in some instances, a mother's educational qualification and attainment also decides her daughter's school persistence. With reference to this context, school persistence indicates continuing education. In support of this finding by Zhang *et al.*(2007), I too found that in my research 10 women had completed graduation and are extremely supportive and encouraging of their daughters' schooling and continuation in higher education. They seem to have an egalitarian approach to parenting which means they follow the principle that everyone in society has equal rights. But they are also aware that they are bound by certain traditions and face the reality of the family's economic situation which they cannot move away from and that may eventually detract from their daughters' schooling and educational attainment.

10.1.4 Experiencing gender bias during childhood:

Since I am discussing the aspect of childhood experiences of women of the Devanga community and its impact on women's aspirations for their children, one of the aspects that emerged was that of dominance of gender bias in their childhood. More opportunities were provided to their brothers with respect to

schooling as well as extra-curricular activities. Reasons for this (as described above) are orthodox ideas and interference of other family members. Bedi and Bedi (2017, p.206) reported that “experiencing gendered restrictions and expectations were not only accepted, but also expected aspects of being a woman.” Participants in this study have explicitly mentioned that their parents provided private schooling only to their brothers while they (participants) were sent to government schools where the quality and standard of education is questionable (Agrawal 2014).

The intention was to ensure boys get a good quality “English medium” education while the girls were expected to settle for education in the local language which would render them unfit to pursue higher education. It is revealing when a participant says, “our environment is like that, boys get encouragement while girls don’t.”

As a result of having faced gender discrimination in their childhood, these women are highly encouraging of their children’s education and try hard not to distinguish between their sons and daughters. They have high expectations of their children and if given the emotional and financial support, will also ensure their daughters realise their dreams.

10.1.5 Encouragement to pursue ambitions:

It would be wrong to only discuss the negative childhood experiences of these women without highlighting those positive experiences which were evident in my data. Hence it is important to highlight the aspect of some women in this study who received encouragement in their childhood to pursue their academic and non-academic ambitions. Parents have begun encouraging their daughters towards higher education and aspire for better employment opportunities for them because girls themselves have begun rejecting traditional Indian customs and adopting Western influences. A case of particular interest here is of one of the participants in my study who is 49 years old and was supported by her father to pursue her ambitions to become a maxillofacial surgeon. Currently, she and her husband are supporting their children to pursue their dreams and be successful in life. However, though changes are taking place, traditional ideas are still persistent. Supporting this is an example of a 38-year-old participant who was encouraged to study but was not encouraged to pursue her ambition of

becoming a beautician. Neither was she encouraged to learn or speak in English and that seems to be a hindrance in her daily functioning. Gupta and Sharma (2003) have also indicated specifically that parents' approval and support of daughters' ambitions and aspirations contribute to the girls' sense of significance which in turn serves as a catalyst for her to have positive self-respect and self-fulfilment. Formal education is also very important for the improvement of the situation they are in. I agree with this opinion because when girls are subjected to a positive nurturing, they pass the same to their children thus creating a better sense of self-worth and satisfaction. In this finding, I only discuss the encouragement of girls completing graduation and not beyond that because transition into a higher education program would mean delayed marriage, which is not well accepted in the Devanga community. However, mothers who have had encouragement in their childhood have a more positive outlook towards their children when compared to women who were not encouraged to pursue their academic and non-academic dreams. Several women in my study attested to understanding the importance of education but they are unaware of how to provide equal educational opportunities for their children. They seem grateful to their families for having supported them and encouraged them to at least complete schooling till tenth or twelfth grade after which they were asked to get married. Gupta and Sharma (2003) also mentioned in their study that parents did not have any specific career path for their daughters and whatever they achieved was good enough as long as they could be self-sufficient and independent in the future. This has been substantiated in my research as well wherein mothers mentioned that they were not imposing any profession on their daughters. They want their daughters to opt for higher education only to render them independent. The positive nurturing that they received in their childhood has led them to be more positive and supportive of their children's education. Unfortunately, the education they received was not sufficient to enable them enough to get out of their traditional environments and hence they expect better opportunities for their daughters.

Early marriage and domestic responsibilities have proven to be a major hindrance in allowing women to realise their dreams irrespective of the support and encouragement they received in their childhood. Adversely affecting their encouragement in childhood is women's social perception of themselves which

further inhibits them from participating in activities other than their domestic roles. In other words, cultural and societal stereotypes overplay the impact of education. This has been substantiated by Khalid and Noreen (2012) where they conducted a study in Pakistan to explore the possibilities for empowering women in Pakistan. In this study too, some women pointed out that since they live in an Islamic, patriarchal society, women must pursue higher education only by acknowledging the support they receive from their male counterparts so that men feel they are always in control. Education means that a woman will begin to understand her rights as an individual and if someone begins overruling her rights, she can raise her voice. In my understanding this is what men of the Devanga community are fearful of and hence prefer to discourage girls from pursuing higher education. A 56-year-old participant (Participant 3) in my research mentioned that her parents did not permit her to attend school after Grade VII but that did not deter her from pursuing her ambitions of being an independent woman after marriage. She chose to be a self-empowered and self-driven woman and has nothing to be afraid of. She too worked as a daily wage labourer to earn two square meals a day and be able to send her three children to school. She also said that she received support and encouragement from everyone except her family. These are all indicative of how dissuading members of the Devanga community can be with respect to matters concerning girls' education.

10.1.6 Lack of encouragement to pursue ambitions:

Having discussed the aspect of women having received encouragement in their childhood to pursue their ambitions, it is now necessary to highlight another aspect of the findings which is women who have had no support to pursue their academic and non-academic dreams in their childhood and how this impacts their aspirations for their children. 19 women out of the 63 interviewed in this study admitted to having had no encouragement in their childhood to pursue their academic and non-academic ambitions. They led restrictive lives and have had no encouragement in their childhood to pursue their ambitions. These women have several unfulfilled ambitions and wish to see them fulfilled by their children. Jayaweera (1997) suggests that a majority of girls and women in countries including India, Bangladesh, Laos, New Guinea, Pakistan, Nepal,

Bhutan and Afghanistan face disadvantages starting from birth and through their education, culminating in their life chances being limited. Girls are adversely affected by gender differences during the allocation of resources and finances within the family, due to associated negative perceptions of the importance of education in their lives. Furthermore, sending the girls for senior and higher education indicates a waste of money because the girl will eventually move away into another family after marriage. Such traditional and gendered norms blocks access to higher education, and in some cases even basic schooling.

Women who participated in my study were very eager to overcome adversities just to ensure that their children get the benefits they were deprived of, thus empowering them into becoming independent individuals. My understanding of their situation is that schooling would have probably put their otherwise secure future lives at risk, especially in situations where girls who could be perceived to be over educated fail to find a suitable groom. This has also been evidenced in Froerer (2012), where a study was conducted in Central India to map the relationship between aspirations, education and social mobility. Despite all the government rules and policies that have been in place to empower the women of India, parental perspectives continue to dominate. Due to these above reasons, education of women in India and some other Asian countries continues to be a widely debated topic because people have different opinions on how education must be accomplished and the importance of doing so. I believe that not receiving encouragement from family members, in some instances makes women aggressive thus enabling them to build their own support system through their resilience, which in very simple terms could mean planning alternatives to take care of the domestic responsibilities in her absence. A working mother does not get appreciated for managing her domestic and professional life, however when a man becomes a father, he gets lauded for being a good professional as well as a "good father". Working women are in fact asked if they can manage their profession with the domestic responsibilities and hence women learn to work under pressure arising from surrounding stereotypes which indicate that mothers cannot be serious professionals (Cuddy, Fiske and Glick, 2004). But these responsibilities and the desire to accomplish something outside the four walls comes with a lot of guilt because of the ideologies of "intensive motherhood" which means that women have an exclusive

responsibility towards their children (Deutsch, 2001). This ideology seems to drive mothers home cutting back to domestic work. Such ideologies or “myths” become self-fulfilling and self-satisfying prophecies thus making women go back to their domestic responsibilities. This is contradictory to my belief that women must become aggressive and stand up for what they want to do and not what society wants them to do. However, this is usually not feasible within families of the Devanga community because sending the “woman” out to earn within this population is considered “unacceptable” and “unnecessary”. Hence, even if a woman decides to raise her voice, she will be unheard.

The education of girls and related aspirations are almost always correlated with available chances of realizing them which is in turn influenced by social and economic constraints which are out of their control. For girls, acquiring domestic skills and know how alongwith learning the intricacies of weaving enables them to contribute to their families’ immediate needs which is seen to be the most important activity. As per Tilak (2002), gender differences exist as far as household expenses are concerned and they are usually against girls. It is a widely prevalent phenomenon in India and countries like China and Pakistan invest minimally on a girls’ education whether they are enrolled in a government school or a private school. Observations across different states in India have revealed that many households prefer incurring expenses for male members rather than females. In order to put an end to this kind of discrimination, the Prime Minister of India launched a nationwide scheme called Beti Bachao Beti Padhao in 2015, the main motive being “Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child). This scheme aims at rendering girls independent, both, socially and financially by improving the services provided to women (Ministry of Women and Child Development,2019, pg.6). The main reason for launching this scheme was the decline in the sex ratio in the age group of 0 to 6 years. In 2001 the sex ratio was 927 girls to every 1000 males, but the latest census of 2011 revealed the figure to be 918 girls to every 1000 males. This was indicative of the process of elimination continuing for girls even after birth in the form of nutritional, health and educational needs of the girls. The main goals of this scheme are:

- Preventing gender-based sex selection
- Ensuring survival and protection of the girl child
- Ensuring education and participation of the girl child

One of the main objectives of this scheme was to lower the economic burden on the parents to ensure that all girls get educational opportunities and so far, this scheme has been successful in Bangalore also. However, there are no reports or evidence of members of the Devanga community utilising the benefits of this and hence it becomes difficult for me to conclude how effective such Government directives are in ensuring girls are treated at par with boys in terms of educational opportunities.

Several women in my study attested the dominance of gender bias faced by them in their childhood. Their parents provided more opportunities to the sons and not to the daughters with the intention of getting their girls married at a young age. Reasons for this (as described above) are that girls are temporary members in their natal homes while boys take care of their parents till their last breath. This amalgamated with the preference of boys over girls intensifies the need for understanding the reasons behind it. Bedi and Bedi (2017) stated that according to traditional practices and beliefs, Indian women are expected to exercise self-sacrifice and maintain the home whereas men are more superior to women. This could be one of the reasons for them having faced gender discrimination in educational and co-curricular opportunities in their childhood.

As mentioned above, Bedi and Bedi (2017) attest the feeling of subordination and submission that women in the Devanga community experience and express. Though women have attained fame in certain streams, they undergo harassment in various aspects of life, thus placing them in a restrictive role in society. Bedi & Bedi (2017) demonstrated that studies from developed nations indicate the representation of women as homemakers and dependent on men while men are portrayed as being authoritative and dominant. Women within the Devanga community have an image of the "new" woman which has begun questioning the existing stereotypes, however it takes courage and support from families to be able to stand up for what they believe in.

Several women in my study expressed that due to lack of educational opportunities they feel a sense of dissatisfaction in their lives. This could be attributed to low self-esteem, being unable to converse with other educated women and the inability to take family related decisions. Kakar (1988, cited in Rastogi and Therly, 2006), explained the reason for the low self-esteem women

in Indian society face. He said that due to the differential treatment girls and women face, they tend to turn that aggression into a feeling of worthlessness and inferiority. Despite understanding the importance of girls' education, there still are reasons for hindering opportunities owing to the patriarchal culture in India as well as the thought that education will not contribute to a girl's future life (Demiray, 2014). In my opinion, the problem does not just lie in providing equal educational opportunities but also in including them equally in society. Patriarchal Indian society tends to ignore women's' needs and thus, obviously, will not provide the above-mentioned equal opportunities. Added to all these above reasons for the lack of educational opportunities for girls is also the aspect of limited family resources thus having lesser finances to devote to each child's education. If the first born is a girl, it has been observed that most patriarchal families in India and within the Devanga community too, would continue to have children till they have a son. Making things more difficult, parents encourage their sons to study and achieve their ambitions even when they are not interested, in the process, snatching away opportunities from their daughters.

10.1.7 Over-protective parenting:

Since the first research question is focused upon surrounding women's childhood experiences and its impact on their aspirations for their children, I consider it important to discuss the aspect of over-protective parenting as well as women not being given the freedom to make their own decisions as these have been highlighted in my interview transcripts. Based on the interviews conducted with women of the Devanga community, over-protective parenting is defined "as girls being bound within the house and not being allowed to attend school or any outdoor activities once they attain puberty because it is only socially acceptable to discontinue her education and get her married early." These aspects of childhood experiences may seem repetitive, but they are important issues to be considered when talking about how the childhood experiences of women impact their parenting styles and aspirations for their children. Because parents believed that once girls attain puberty, it is socially acceptable to discontinue her education and get her married early (Bhagavatheeswaran *et al.*, 2016). Initially I came with a preconceived idea that this situation did not exist anymore but after having obtained all my data, I realized that it still is a common occurrence within

the Devanga community. I believe that to a large extent, parenting in India is bound by cultural norms and hence different issues are viewed very differently across the country. Superstitious beliefs also play a pivotal role in determining the level of schooling of girls because though there are specific family patterns that decide how much a girl must study, there are also cultural and traditional norms that parents find difficult to delineate themselves from.

Stereotyped roles are manifested in various ways, one of them being the denial of making decisions within the family. For women in the Devanga community, this is a right that is taken away from them, be it before marriage or after. Individual freedom is limited, and they are tied to predetermined rights and duties (Hussain *et al.*, 2015). Lack of education often leads to a lack in decision making abilities and freedom to do so because education gives an opportunity to women to invest in their personal lives (Demiray, 2014). Stereotyped notions at times get exaggerated when they live with extended family members such as grandparents, aunts and uncles who choose to impose their values and beliefs on the girl child thus hampering her opportunities for the future. I find it extremely hard to believe that in today's times, women are still being taught to be fearful and maintain low profiles. There is evidence in my data to validate this as well.

This chapter on women's childhood experiences has been a roadmap to trace a woman's journey from her childhood to motherhood and has given me intricate details of her life with evidences to validate her experiences. Throughout this research and my literature review I have attempted to highlight the aspect of women empowerment and freedom. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, Empowerment may be defined as "the process of gaining freedom and power to do what you want or to control what happens to you." It enables women to become more aware, active, be capable of making intelligent decisions and productive. However, all this comes with education and some exposure to the outside world. Unfortunately, women within the Devanga community have been, and in some cases are still refrained from interacting with people and get restricted within the four walls of the house thus shutting off any opportunities that might occur. A lack of opportunities makes them incapable of taking decisions. If in a situation they feel capable of decision making, the stereotyped

norms pull them down and render them incapable of anything else but taking care of the family and children.

10.2 Expectations from children:

A significant number of women in the research sample expressed egalitarian views on the education of boys and girls. Out of the 96 women who were given questionnaires, 80 of them said their son's educational attainment was very important while 76 women stated the importance of education for their daughters. Though there is a small difference in numbers, the scenario which appeared quite positive from the quantitative data seemed a little different upon interviewing these mothers. Despite having egalitarian views on educating their children, they have been unsuccessful in creating extra opportunities for their daughters to ensure they achieve their educational ambitions, the main reasons for this being attributed to societal pressures. When compared to boys, girls faced a higher chance of being expected to take responsibility for domestic chores even though they are outperforming boys in academics. This finding is similar to that reported by Hannum and Zhang (2007) who conducted a survey in rural China to investigate gender gaps in education. The findings from this study state that though girls' education and fulfillment of ambitions has been a focus of several discussions, their disadvantaged position in the society has not yet been established. I too drew parallels from this study because though several women spoke about discrimination and bias in their childhood, none of them were able to clearly establish their positions in society. Also, the access to education is expanding subtly which is in turn challenging traditional aspects of family relationships, stereotypes and patriarchy. In this study too, women have begun to realize the magnitude of the impact of education and that is in turn challenging their stereotyped roles within the society and Devanga community. Being a member of the community, I too was viewed as a potential threat to their orthodox ideas and notions.

10.2.1 Higher aspirations for sons:

The interpretation of my data pertaining to this research question indicates that some mothers within the Devanga community aspire more for their sons thus placing minimal investment on their daughters' education. In some instances,

they are even against their daughter's education primarily because they feel it is a "waste of money to educate a "temporary member" of the family. In an attempt to understand this belief system, I realized that because girls marry out of households and leave their natal homes, parents hesitate before investing on her education. Due to the co-residence that sons hold, there is a stronger motive to invest on their education as also evidenced by the data. This finding is similar to that reported by Gutman and Akerman (2008) who identified this as a common occurrence in Pakistan and Bangladesh as well as in India, suggesting that this might be a factor that is dependent on the race and ethnicity. Aspirations may vary for different households both in terms of parental aspirations as well as the children's ambitions. My findings here support those of Froerer (2012) who states that education leads to social mobility, however opportunities for social mobility for girls are restricted to acquiring a good marriage proposal which requires training in household management. This is evidenced even in the data reported in this thesis where women have directly mentioned that education is not required after they attain puberty because they need to begin training for managing the domestic front and educating their own children with similar priorities. The possibility of their daughters leading an independent life does not seem to occur to them. Hence, more importance is placed on their sons' education rather than that of their daughters. However, this was explicitly expressed only by two participants and of them, one participant (Participant 15) said that education for girls is harmful to the community because nobody wants an educated daughter in law. Very interestingly, her interview data reveals that she wanted her daughters to be well educated and pursue their interests but when it involves the female members of the Devanga community she is slightly resistant to girls opting for higher education as that renders them financially and emotionally independent and not being dependent on the male members of the Devanga community. Being a part of the matrimonial department within the community she considers this as a huge day to day challenge because educated girls "do not follow the traditional norms of the society and hence ruin the reputation of the entire community."

In my opinion, when mothers have lower aspirations for their daughters as compared to their sons, it also hampers the girls' self-esteem and self-worth.

She begins to feel that she is incapable of achieving anything outside the four walls of her house. Having obtained a fair understanding of how the Devanga community functions, I deduce that though many women in this sample have spoken of women's equality and giving their children equal opportunities this is not evident in the outcomes for the daughters of the women in the research sample because they eventually do succumb to societal pressures. According to Gutman and Akerman (2008), as children grow and mature, their aspirations decline, partly owing to the understanding of the world as well as having been conditioned by the environment they live in. During the process of developing aspirations, parents, especially mothers fail to realise the negative effect it has on the child's self-esteem. This was explicitly stated by one participant in this study who was raised in a way that put her at a more disadvantaged position when compared to her brothers. By the time she got married her confidence levels were really low because of her own perception that she was worthless. Hence, I believe that a mother's educational levels are extremely important in deciding her aspirations for her children as well as shaping them. However, I also found a contradictory excerpt from one of my interviews in which a 32-year-old woman mentioned about having more hopes for her son than for her daughter. Her situation was concerning because she was married at a young age of 13 years and was discouraged from pursuing any of her ambitions. Hence, I had presumed that she would be more encouraging and supportive of her daughter's education. But I was proven wrong in this instance probably due to societal pressures and the fear of disobeying the rules of society. This was important with respect to my interpretation that attitudes can act as an obstacle to ambition, though they are usually enveloped in practical issues as evidenced within the Devanga community. However, high aspirations do not guarantee better outcomes which has also been demonstrated in the data reported in this thesis. In instances where women placed a lot of hopes on their sons, they were sometimes met with disappointment because their sons were not interested in education. But in this imbalance of expectation, opportunities were snatched away from the girls and given to the sons. This has been discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

Though there is no major distinction within the obtained data between aspirations for boys and girls, a small percentage of women admitted to having

higher aspirations for their sons when compared to their daughters. This does not necessarily mean that women of the Devanga community do not favour girls' education. They are in the process of developing egalitarian attitudes but owing to societal pressures, this process will be rather slow and time consuming to achieve.

10.2.2 Equal aspirations for sons and daughters:

Having looked at the aspirations women have for their sons, I came across a slightly contradictory finding of women understanding the importance of education and hence placing equal importance on educating their sons and daughters. Some women within the Devanga community have admitted to understanding the importance of educating their sons and daughters because in their view, education is the best asset they can provide their children with. Some of them mentioned that their parents made the mistake of not allowing them to study and become independent and hence they do not want to repeat the same mistake with their daughters. I made connections between this finding and the views expressed by the economist Amartya Sen who said in 2003: "*Illiteracy is a significant barrier for underprivileged women since this can lead to their failure to make use even of the rather unlimited rights they may legally have (say to own land, or other property, or to appeal against unfair judgement and unjust treatment)*" (cited in Costa,2008, p.283-284). Sen similarly acknowledges that it is necessary to understand why the education of girls has been given low priority in some Indian communities and suggests that it is wrong to put the blame upon parents when they themselves are often subject to long held belief and cultural systems which have established and perpetuated stereotyped roles for boys and girls (Sen,2016, p.2) Drawing from this ethnographic research, I believe that there are different ways in which people, especially women in this situation, construct the meanings given to schooling and education. For several of them, education is a means of being able to work outside of home and be financially independent, whereas for some others it is a means of gaining literacy to be able to help their children in the future. But they fail to see "education as a person's freedom and power to act as well as the freedom to question and reassess the prevailing norms and values." (Echavarri and Escurra, 2010, p. 250). While analysing this finding, I also felt that probably people in different

social strata of society have different perceptions of the importance of education as well as a focus that enables them to evaluate aspirations accordingly. To support this, I can return to the transcript of an interview from a 44-year-old woman who told me:

"I have same aspirations for both my children. I want my daughter to study well and join the Indian Administrative Service, but she wants to join the Police Forces. My husband wants her to get married at a young age and I agree with that because girls must get married at the right age, they can study whenever they want. Age is more important than studying."

She further went on to say that:

"Today's generation children need education only to teach their children, but I would not want her to go and earn her livelihood. What is the need for her to work so hard and earn her money? Her husband is there for that because men are supposed to work, and women are supposed to remain at home and take care."

In interpreting this excerpt, I suggest that we may currently have limited understanding about how much these women really understand about the importance of education because clearly this indicates, that in this instance the respondent was more concerned with getting her daughters married at a young age. This was not an isolated incident within the data and indicates how traditional and cultural practices continue to influence family decision making in respect of educational aspirations. It could of course be the case that when an insider researcher like myself approaches women from the same community to talk about sensitive topics such as the importance of education with respect to their own lives and their children, members of the community prefer giving false information just to ensure that they aren't pursued further. This was my experience too when I interviewed members of the Devanga community. Some participants whom I knew very closely and personally tried giving false information in their interviews while in some cases, the responses were prompted by the husbands to ensure the truth remains hidden. I fail to conclusively state that women of the Devanga community are well aware of the role of education and its importance, but at the same time, I cannot say that they are completely unaware of it either because eventually everything depends

on their roles in their families as well as educational opportunities provided to them. Though I have only interviewed women of the Devanga community in this study, and cannot therefore generalise to a much wider Indian community, decisions regarding their children's education are taken either by them and their husbands or the in laws or only by the husband. These decisions are also usually dependent on the degree to which a child may be able to take advantage of educational opportunities. As Stash and Hannum (2001) stated, parents with more than one child would usually like to focus their finances on the child who shows the maximum promise in terms of maximising returns on investment. This has already been discussed in detail in the previous chapter on restricting finances for daughters while investing on the son's education.

10.2.3 Higher aspirations for daughters:

There is inevitably some overlap with the above finding which needs to be acknowledged whilst discussing a further finding that some women of the Devanga community have higher aspirations for their daughters than their sons. This seems refreshing because having now understood the societal positions of the women of the Devanga community, it becomes very difficult to believe that they are able to go against current trends and have higher expectations from their daughters. Reasons for this could be attributed to being given fewer opportunities in the past, a situation that has resulted in some of the present generation mothers feeling that they must provide their daughters with a better future. As stated above, women within the Devanga community have begun to understand the importance of education and whether they place more importance on girls' education or not, at least they are striving to provide equal opportunities for their children. The reasons for women aspiring more for their daughters could be possibly attributed to being given fewer opportunities in the past and recognising the negative impact that this has had on their life chances. As a result of this the present generation of mothers feel they should be able to provide better for their daughters. Some women also feel that their daughters are a stronger emotional support to their parents when compared to their sons. In some instances, they recognise that increased formal education contributes to an increase in the number of years their children will be schooled and have richer learning experiences. This would in turn empower them to take

independent decisions without any male impact, which is the immediate necessity within the Devanga community, primarily because the patriarchal nature of the community places the girls and women of the community at risk of not being allowed to pursue their ambitions and give in to the demands of the male members of the society. Very recently, I came across one of the participants' getting her daughter engaged to be married after having just completed her graduation in engineering purely because her father did not want her to take up a job and become financially independent. I could not help but ask myself why they even got her educated? Quite contradictory to my research but this is the thought that crosses my mind occasionally. If the final intention of parents, especially male members is to get girls married then why do they spend on their education and talk about gender equality and equal educational rights? Murphy and Carr (2007) demonstrated the link between education and fertility patterns and said that girls attaining secondary education exhibit a desire to shape their own lives rather than have it shaped by their husbands or fathers. This could be attributed to the fact that secondary education gives girls a sense of responsibility, empowerment and a feeling that they have more to contribute to the world rather than simply take care of domestic roles. In support of these findings, Amartya Sen also indicated that there is a lot of evidence now to illustrate that female employment, education, property rights and other social changes play a strong role in reducing fertility. My belief that ensuring girls are better educated will in many instances make them more empowered to execute decisions concerning their own future without any male input from their husbands and fathers. This could also be one of the reasons why the male members of the Devanga community oppose the education of girls. With a few women in my sample aspiring more for their daughters there is evidence of a positive step forward. However, on looking at the quantitative data from the questionnaires, I observed that 7% of women said their husbands and in laws make decisions regarding the son's education whereas only 2% women said their husband and in laws take decisions for the daughter's education. This is also clearly indicative of the existent culture in the Devanga community about families not being inclined towards getting their daughters educated. It is finally left only to the mothers to decide but when it comes to decision making, women have no freedom to do so. Having said all the above, a focus on mothers is appropriate because they are the primary care givers and play a significant role

in socializing the child into gender specific roles. Her educational aspirations may have an impact on the child's persistence at school as well their perception of themselves. A mother has a great influence on her child's schooling and emotional moulding through her silent support and encouragement. Therefore, it can be stated that while mothers in this sample have expressed egalitarian attitudes and encouragement of their daughters' education, they eventually have to face the reality of limited economic resources and concerns for their future and this leads them to succumb to pressure.

10.2.4 Independent decision making:

A positive finding that emerged during the analysis of this research question was that of women allowing their children to decide their career paths independently. This might easily have been ignored as it may not be considered as an important finding or something that requires discussion. But I consider this worthy of discussing because understanding children's needs and supporting them gives rise to the potential for an increase in independent decision making (Rose and Shevlin, 2006). I consider this to be a positive finding because many women within the Devanga community have been subjected to suppression in their childhood and have had their ambitions denied. Hence, allowing their children to decide their career paths independently and supporting them towards achieving their ambitions is a way of marking their own empowerment and freedom from suppression. Aikman and Unterhalter (2007, p. 64) demonstrated that women occupy fewer positions of authority, presumably because their needs are not met, or they are considered to be home managers. This opinion was also supported by Goheer (2003). It is probably because of these stereotyped ideas that women within the Devanga community have realized it is best to let their daughters choose their career paths independently and have the satisfaction of experiencing the world rather than being cocooned to their four walls. Complex social movements like the equal opportunities movement as well as the feminist movement have probably contributed to this significant change such as understanding the importance of equal opportunities and expansion of the service sector with its abundant increase in employment opportunities (Ramaswamy and Murthy, 2017). Their study has only indicated that women are supportive and encourage their daughters to take up various professions, but

what happens beyond that remains to be investigated. It also demonstrated that the most important reason for women to discontinue their jobs after their mid-thirties is either marriage or motherhood. It will require further research to understand whether, girls are permitted to pursue careers and ambitions of their choice. In the research reported in this thesis, one participant has explicitly mentioned that women within the Devanga community are cornered and looked down upon and are still very backward in terms of education. Being aware of these harsh realities, the extent to which she will be able to fight the system and support her daughter's dreams continues to be a concern. Consequently, though these women see their ambitions being achieved through their children, they are quite sceptical of pressuring their children to achieve those ambitions because it would be wrong to impose their dreams on their children.

However hard I try to draw positive conclusions from this study and its findings, I still find it extremely challenging to do so because having understood the minute cultural nuances of the Devanga community, I have now begun to realise that irrespective of any situation, women have to abide by the rules of the society and community. Disrespecting these rules can bring dishonour and contempt by other members which would in turn be perceived as causing harm to the children's' and especially daughters' future. Hence most of the women choose to remain quiet and go with the rules laid down rather than stand up and fight for their rights and for their children's education, as evidenced several times in this thesis.

10.3 Role of Women:

While trying to understand the intricacies of the Devanga community and the roles played by the women in my sample, I was very curious to understand their perceptions of the roles of women in Indian society.

To a large extent, women in the research sample believe they have been neglected in the past and continue to feel so particularly because of their lack of participation in household decisions, limited educational opportunities, inability to obtain the freedom to do as they please and similar overlapping issues. The main reason for the continuous non-recognition of women in general aspects may be because women are seen just as "housewives", "care givers" and "caretakers". There have been several studies conducted into the lives of women

in rural India, but no study has previously comprehensively and conclusively focused on the role of women in urban India. By maintaining a focus upon a specific sample, I have made a unique study of women within such a population.

10.3.1 Resilience leading to independence:

My intention as a researcher was to understand the barriers to women's education and the portrayal of this group as being members of the "weaker sex." Substantiating this with evidence from the obtained data as well as literature, I found that some participants in my study have fought against all odds in order to become self-reliant and independent. Several families in India, even today, prefer the birth of a son over a daughter, the major consequence of which is seen as selective discrimination made in nutrition, education and healthcare (Bose, 2012). Three participants stated that they were an unwanted child in the family because they were born as girls and that this in turn led to a lot of resentment as they grew up. There was already a feeling of rejection and despair as these women grew from young girls into women. Having had no formal schooling or higher education, they had to find ways in order to sustain themselves, and in some cases even their families. Time and again, research has demonstrated that girls have been at a disadvantage compared to boys in India and with the help of the data I can endorse the belief that the Devanga community is in a similar situation. This has led to these women striving hard to stand on their own feet and make themselves independent, irrespective of whether they were educated or not. Some of them do odd jobs, while others have developed contacts with people who could help them earn some money. Therefore, I must conclude that though these women had no education, they have survived through their own determination. Literacy in part means the ability to read and write and does not necessarily require formal education (Mukherjee, 2013). Despite many obstacles these women have carved a niche for themselves within their own systems and serve as a strong example to all the other women who choose or are forced into situations where they feel they can do nothing to improve their situations. The point I wish to iterate here is that, it is not just formal education that renders an individual empowered. It is also the attitude and mindset of empowering oneself that matters. An important factor that contributes to gender discrimination is a woman's status and that is in turn

determined to a substantial degree by her level of education. Women with a higher level of education tend to discriminate less amongst their children than when compared to women with minimal or no education. However, in some instances in my study this has been proven otherwise too wherein women from the outskirts of the Urban population have indicated a strong inclination to encourage their daughter's schooling, higher studies and employment opportunities. This is very well supported by their husbands as well.

Along with lack of educational opportunities, community norms and attitudes also impact gender discrimination. Women in this study have understood this aspect of societal norms and believe that they need to stand up for themselves in order to survive.

10.3.2 Equal rights as men:

As discussed in the first research question, women within the Devanga community feel they must be treated with respect and dignity and must be given equal opportunities as men. 21 women in this study stated that not only are women better equipped than men to function independently but if they are given equal opportunities as men, they can even perform better. This has also been summed up in the previous finding where I have illustrated with excerpts from the data that women have fought against all odds just to empower themselves and be independent. Unfortunately, a patriarchal society like the Devanga community believes in suppressing women and not providing them with educational opportunities. Nath(2000), said that women are becoming more aware of their personal needs and hence are demanding greater status and equality within the home as well as outside. Gender equality means a "society in which men and women enjoy equal opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations in all spheres of life." (Chowdhury and Patnaik, 2010, p.455). They also went on to say that equality exists when both the sexes are able to share all aspects of their life such as the distribution of power and influence, scope for equal access to education and resources of all types which could provide opportunity for achieving personal ambitions. Having said this, the history of women has been extremely contradictory and chequered in India. Though women have had excessive opportunities in professions such as medicine, and politics, there is also a long history of them being oppressed and playing

subordinate roles. Ancient texts state that a woman is “God”. Yet the birth of a girl is perceived to bring misery to the family whereas the birth of a son is celebrated as he is considered the saviour of the family (Nath,2000). However, the middle-class women (Devanga community) have realized this and seem to be attempting to change the norm of subordination into equality. From the data obtained, it can be observed that there is a strong urge to rise beyond just the role of a wife and mother to a more economically and intellectually independent being. Nath (2000) also proposes that professional women must manage the domestic front as well as their professions, which is a commendable task. Unfortunately, in India, women do not get credit for this, instead they are termed as being inefficient on the domestic front. It is this thought that can also be seen reverberating in some of the Devanga women’s responses. They crave for an equal status within the society to prove themselves. In fact, Beard (2017) mentions that at the beginning of Western culture, an example was recorded of a man telling a woman to “shut up”, because a woman’s voice is not to be heard in public. Though it sounds like a thing of the past, it is not so. Even to this date, women of the Devanga community are told to stay quiet and not have their voices heard because talking in the public sphere is a man’s domain. The observations made in this research resonate closely with Beard’s examples too. Chowdhary and Patnaik (2010) mention that women’s subordination and oppression are reflected in almost every aspect of society and to promote gender equality in such a strongly patriarchal society such as India requires the mindset and consent of the male population.

10.3.3 Marriage and Power:

Having spoken of the treatment of women, I must not forget to mention here, that some of the women interviewed in my study have supportive partners, encouraging the education of their daughters as well as insisting on them getting respect and equal opportunities even after they are married. This can be considered as a positive impetus to women of the Devanga community being given fair and equal rights and opportunities. Due to the unavailability of literature, this aspect cannot be discussed much in detail. On the other hand, several communities in India as well as the Devanga community expect women to be subservient to their husbands because men’s views on family matters take

the upper hand over those of women indicating a lack of support from their spouse as well as being ill-treated by them. Most families prefer withdrawing girls from school once they attain puberty to get them married, as a result of which the girls' education remains incomplete. As mentioned before, Indian culture, places a lot of emphasis on gender specific roles such as the man being the dictator and bread winner while the woman must be subservient and subordinate to her husband (Ragavan and Iyengar, 2017). In this study, when women were asked if they would be allowed to go to work, a majority of them said "NO" because though their husbands were encouraging of education and freedom, becoming financially independent was not seen within the permissible boundaries. Commitment for Indian women is critical for the development of self, but in the process of self- development, they would be violating a set of "Indian" values. Women are perpetually hanging on the hinges of their husband's and in laws' decisions. A traditional Indian marriage expects the husband to bear responsibilities of being an emotional provider who works towards a stable marriage. In some traditional Indian families, women are a victim of domestic abuse, either at the hands of the husband or the in laws. This could be interpreted either as physical or psychological abuse. Ragavan & Iyengar (2017) in their study illustrated that in some Indian households, men support their mothers rather than their wives. Women feel their husbands should act as a mediator to resolve conflicts rather than inflict violence themselves. Unfortunately, in India, marriage is considered essential for a woman to maintain her social status in society (Jeyaseelan, *et al.*, 2015). The societal expectations from her are that she must devote her life to taking care of her husband, children and her husband's parents, thus becoming totally submissive to their will (Tichy *et al.*, 2009). Also, in several Indian households a daughter-in-law is considered to be an outsider and not treated the way a daughter would be treated. This can be considered as psychological abuse amalgamated with a lack of education and independence. In this research, women have admitted having developed a feeling of fear, guilt, submission and inadequacy despite having the husband's support because their mothers-in laws play a significant role in creating conflict and violence. Having evidence of this in my study, it has also been validated in Jeyaseelan *et al.* (2015). Reasons for this could be many ranging from unhappiness with the daughter-in-law, failure of having brought enough dowry, getting in the way of her relationship with her son or the failure

to have given birth to a son. There is evidence of this in one of my interviews with a 33-year-old woman who was initially harassed by her husband and in laws because of having not brought sufficient dowry. Closely following this was her inability to have a son after having given birth to two daughters. Her interview excerpt clearly mentions that she was forced to have a third child despite her financial instability to support three children primarily because her husband's parents wanted her to bear a son. In the case mentioned above, harassment took various forms such as not being allowed to visit her parents' home and being treated like a servant. In most of the cases, women bear the abuse silently as it creates an uncomfortable feeling discussing this with an outsider. However, almost all the participants in my research were frank and gave honest answers to my questions because they seemed to find some solace discussing these matters with another woman. Though the dowry system is not predominantly followed within the Devanga community, it is considered an unspoken rule where the girl's family gifts the groom and his family and this could also be one of the reasons a daughter's birth is considered to be a misery. Lot of wealth needs to be amassed for a girl's marriage and families in India begin allocating finances right from when the girl is born.

Thus, I strongly reiterate that there is a strong and urgent need for educational interventions which would involve families of the Devanga community to educate them of the prevailing situation thus encouraging them to motivate their daughters to be independent and self-reliant. It is important to stress the value of education and the importance of women in our society rather than treating them as mere domestic care takers. It is also equally important that our society gets involved proactively and not just passively by following orthodox ideas of male superiority and women oppression. Members of other communities as well as those of the Devanga community as well must resolve to bring about a change in its functioning and not remain silent bystanders to the execution of prejudiced ideas.

11. Further Thoughts

There is no doubt that the women of the Devanga community are bounded by strict traditional norms and rules, proving my initial thoughts right. However, I cannot deny the fact that there is a positive change and a step towards improvement that the members of the community are progressing towards, though it is quite slow. When I spoke to the women about aspects surrounding their daughters' education, it did not seem to be a significant issue. They seemed to be more concerned about changing the attitudes of the men of the Devanga community as well as improving the standards of living for the girls and women of the Devanga community. I am unsure of whether this was led by the questions I asked or if the sample population was seeking an opportunity to have their stories heard. In all situations, I, as a researcher have tried to maintain honesty and forthrightness in my interview schedules without being too enquiring or inquisitive in anything but the research topic. However, as a feminist researcher my aim was also at making the process of interviewing more interactive and that of sharing experiences. Finch (1984,p.72) states that "Women are almost always enthusiastic about talking to a woman researcher, even if they have some initial anxieties about the purpose of the research or their own "performance" in the interview situation."

I realised during the pilot study itself that if I focused purely on theoretical concepts, I would not have obtained the quality of data that I eventually obtained. Personal experiences within the Devanga community, social dialogues with some women of the Devanga community and my interest in understanding the existence of gender bias and stereotypes influenced my decision not just to adopt the methods I used but also my analysis.

Several times during the process of collecting data, I could not help but reflect on the number of social injustices inflicted on the women of the Devanga community. Being denied simple things like going out with friends or a visit to their natal homes makes me realise my "advantageous" position when compared to theirs. Several situations that seem so natural and "taken for granted" by most of the women in India can seem so difficult for women of the Devanga community as well as other communities that follow stereotyped notions.

At the end of the interviews, when the women were asked about their experience, most of them responded saying "It was wonderful talking and having our stories and journeys heard." This provided a lot of reassurance and relief to me as a researcher because all along I had a thought at the back of my mind if I was being intrusive and putting them at discomfort. This positive feedback gave me the required impetus to continue interviewing more and more women because somewhere along I was getting emotionally withdrawn after having listened to these women's' experiences as opposed to how a researcher must act: objectively. There is no doubt however that the results and analysis of data reported in this thesis could have been different if another researcher from outside of the Devanga community had reported it. Being a member of the Devanga community as well as a female researcher added more advantage to my research, but having said that, it does not make this research generalisable to the entire women population of India. What does add credibility to it, it is the amount of data collected from a significant percentage of the Devanga community residing in Bangalore. It is very important for researchers to be honest and reflexive about their research and not just be objective about it. Through this research process, I have made an honest attempt at telling the truth just as I have seen it as well as how it is reported in the data.

During the course of data collection, I had become slightly pessimistic about not knowing how to help these women in their respective life journeys. What was I going to do with all the collected data? I was getting answers to questions I already knew, so what recommendations could I make? One of the questions I asked during the interview was "what are your views on the role of a woman in Indian society and where do you see yourself in this role?". This harboured a lot of interest as several women wished they could say something other than being just a housewife or having some independence. I felt the need to send out strong messages to help them overcome this "disadvantaged" position but what messages could I send out that would make a difference? How much of the participants' information could I share to make their lives better? And with whom? So, though I realised that my research was a novel and important piece, I still required evidence and knowledge to say it the right way. The most important thing for me is to make the men of the Devanga community more sensitive and aware of the rights of women and the need to give them more

freedom and education than what they are already being given. I constantly feel I have not been able to interview the “most” vulnerable and needy group of women from the Devanga community because of their fear to participate in a research of this nature. “Hard to reach” population is the term given to *“those sub-groups of population that are difficult to reach or involve in research or public health programmes due to their physical or geographical location or their social and economic situation.”* (Shaghaghi, Bhopal and Sheikh,2011). It was my desire to include all strata of the Devanga community in this research but due to the strict rules of gender stereotyping and fear of facing people from outside, a significant population of women of the same community did not consent to participating in this research.

12. Conclusions

In this chapter I have drawn conclusions from the research and have made recommendations to take this forward by building on the data collated through the research. Future work in this area will require care and a sense of responsibility to the members of the Devanga community, especially the women who have been the focus of this research.

The participants in this research chose to be a part of this study only because they had an intrinsic desire to have their stories heard and try and see what a research of this nature could do to make their lives better. Women are becoming more and more aware of their selves and personal needs and hence are trying to demand equality within the household as well as outside. However, in India women's status continues to remain paradoxical and contradictory. In some social situations, women are very powerful, but in other cultural communities such as the Devangas they continue to face oppression by men and are delegated to play the subordinate roles of a "wife" and "care-taker". It can be rightly said that despite the progress made by Indian women, they are still considered to be the country's "single largest group of backward citizens." (Bumiller,1990, p.10). The evidence collected from the Devanga community is a strong validation for the above statement by Bumiller.

Poverty has been a strong determinant in prioritizing educational opportunities for girls of the Devanga community and this was substantiated by the data wherein 19% women interviewed said their parents gave more educational opportunities to their brothers because their financial status allowed them to only send the boys to school. There are several socio-cultural norms followed by the Devanga community members which necessitates that once girls attain puberty or there are an increasing number of children in the family, the girls are made to discontinue their education in order to equip them with domestic skills. In some cases, the reasons for discontinuing their daughters' education citing poverty as a reason can be termed as valid but in the other cases where it is followed purely as a stereotypical norm requires some attention by the community leaders in helping these women get access to their basic rights and education. In addition to poverty, another alarming finding in my research was that being born as a girl is often cited as a reason for parents restricting

allocating finances for her education because they need to start saving up for her wedding. The data also revealed that if parents get their daughter educated, it becomes problematic to find a suitable match for her as nobody within the Devanga community wants an educated daughter in law. When women are faced with a situation of investing limited funds either for their daughters' dowry or education, they usually choose dowry because of poverty as well as the idea of getting a groom at a young age (Sharma,2019). This was in turn substantiated by the concept of getting girls married as young as 18 years of age, which is evidenced by the fact that 50% of the women interviewed were married before they attained the legal age for marriage. Ambitions are discouraged and these women, rather young girls, are forced to get married with the hopes that they will have a better life ahead. However, a majority of them end up just working as primary care givers and care takers in their husbands' homes rather than expecting a better life.

The resultant effect of getting girls married at such a young age is that these women's aspirations remain unfulfilled and they aspire to see these aspirations fulfilled by their children. Very closely comes the aspect of poverty and aspirations and while making connections between my data and the available literature, I came across the findings of Appadurai (2004) and Ray (2006) who said that people living in poverty have a limitation to aspire because they perceive themselves to have a very limited range of possibilities for their children and themselves. I have evidence of the above statement wherein women stated that "*what dreams can poor people like us have?*" Marriage seems to be the primary aspiration and it usually comes at the cost of education, but that has not deterred these women from having high aspirations for their daughters because after having seen several hardships in their lives, they do not want their daughters to go through the same. Hence, in the pursuit of a comfortable life, women of the Devanga community want their daughters to be educated just enough so they can get married into a household that provides them such comfort. However, there is evidence of one participant stating that it is always better to get girls married young to prevent their minds from getting polluted or they are choosing someone to get married to. This has been evidenced in the state of West Bengal as well wherein fathers and elders of the community prevent girls from getting married at a young age because of the

laws surrounding early marriage. But the girls' mothers are fearful of the security of the unmarried girl child and hence push the girl into it (Ghosh, 2011).

Though we have evidence of how women belonging to the Devanga community choose to get their daughters married young, these women aspire higher for their sons and delay their marriage with the hopes of enabling their sons with the ability to keep his "family" comfortable at a later stage. From the data I have obtained, six women have implied that they have more aspirations for their sons because daughters are considered to be temporary members in their natal homes and it is only sensible to invest on their sons' education.

Additionally, there is also evidence from my data wherein women understand their children's' needs and support them to achieve their ambitions thus enabling them to grow into independent beings. This is reflective of the fact that their end goal for their daughters is getting a job and becoming emotionally and financially independent rather than considering education as merely a tool to ensure a comfortable life. Although they have high aspirations for their daughters, these women of the Devanga community eventually succumb to societal pressures and the social norms surrounding a girls' marriage (Amin,1998). In my opinion, a woman's educational status is a key determinant to deciding how much she aspires for her children. This has been evidenced in my data as well, wherein 13 women out of the 96 have either begun their graduation or completed it and they have equal and high aspirations for their sons and daughters. 33 women have either completed tenth or twelfth grade but have equal aspirations for their children in terms of educational ambitions. This has also been substantiated by Afridi (2010), who says that women who have a higher educational status may be less inclined to discriminate against their daughters because they have more knowledge and control over resources. But this does not give any clear information on the educational status of a woman and the community to which she belongs. The prevalence of gender bias, mother's educational status and children's educational opportunities may be different across different families belonging to the same community. Hence the question arises: do community norms take greater precedence over individual preferences?

While trying to understand the above question, I make a humble attempt at understanding the multiple roles that the women of the Devanga community

play in their daily lives. Several women have realised that their families prefer the birth of sons rather than daughters, primarily because, girls are an additional cost to the family because of the marriage costs. This has led to these women striving very hard to make themselves independent and self-equipped to be able to raise their children, irrespective of education. Three women have been explicit enough to mention that they were unwanted girls and the struggles they had to go through while growing up because of neglect especially because they were not allowed to participate in family decisions and had limited educational opportunities. With the existent patriarchal norms of the Devanga community, there is an increased prevalence of inequality and gender discrimination against women, which is a direct consequence of son preference (Bose,2012). Another woman mentioned that she had three daughters consecutively and that ensured mental torture at the hands of her husband's family because they wanted her to have a boy. She went on to say that "it was very difficult to raise three girls". Though the numbers of women who believe they were an unwanted child is very small i.e. three women out of the 96 women in my sample, it still cannot be ignored because this practise continues to persist in the Devanga community. Another young participant also mentioned that she was compelled by her husband and in laws to have a male child after having borne two girls only because boys carry the family's lineage forward which has been attested as: "*Women are victims of a dominant family ideology based on preference for male children.*" (Karlekar, 1995). The prevalence of such dominant ideologies confines women and girls to stereotyped roles which in turn leads to their devaluation and discrimination in several areas. There has been considerable focus on the girl child in the last few years in terms of education, nutrition and health care but ground realities in different communities, such as the Devanga community paint a very different picture. Oppressive structures such as early marriage and confining women to domestic roles are only a means of restricting their mobility and independence (Karlekar,1995). This again draws me to the finding of poverty and getting girls married at a young age. It would be interesting to interview these women's male siblings and enquire of poverty had a similar impact on their childhood and education as it seems to have had on the women participants. According to a study conducted by Anandalakshmy (1994), girls are entitled to equal access to all the available resources in society, but this entitlement is almost always denied thus causing a cumulative effect on their

helplessness. The aim of my research is to create awareness about women's rights and ensure the women of the Devanga community are empowered enough to stand up for their rights and education. I am unsure of how many women would make use of this thesis and platform to understand that they need to rise above the stereotyped rules laid down by members of the Devanga community and should be able to articulate their concerns appropriately rather than be mute spectators. In order to be able to address any concern, especially in an ethnographic study like this one, it is important to identify the causes of the underlying issue followed by the recognition of the communities' capacity to solve those problems. The Devanga community members have a fair understanding of their problems but the women lack the confidence to stand together and voice their dissatisfaction. In order to establish the value of a female child requires a holistic and integrated approach is needed for which the first step is gender balanced environment at home and the society. A supportive spouse can be the initial step in crossing this hurdle who encourages the education of the girl child as well as insists on them getting respect and equal opportunities after they get married.

12.1 Limitations of the study

This study has a number of limitations with the first one being related to its nature. Ethnographic research means the observation takes place in the natural setting but owing to various societal pressures and fear of family members, I was requested not to visit all the participants' homes and make observations of their natural cultural set up which would enable me to see the data "holistically". This would have enabled me to obtain a basis for explanation of the observed fact.

Another limitation is that of relatability. An ethnographic research cannot be replicated because a naturally observed event cannot be reproduced or replicated (Nurani, 2008). In Phase 2 of this research, in order to interview the participants, I would have ideally liked to visit their homes and conduct all the interviews personally. However, some of these women were extremely fearful of having me over and hence requested me to conduct the interviews telephonically. Because of my inability to conduct the interviews in their cultural

setting as may have been favoured in a purely ethnographic study, I had to abstract it from the questionnaires and telephonic interviews.

Another limitation of this study was the language barrier I faced with almost all my participants. While designing the research instruments, I overlooked the fact that most of the women of the Devanga community may not be comfortable or fluent in reading and speaking in English. It was during the piloting of the questionnaire that the participant on whom I conducted the pilot raised this concern. I was very thankful to her that she brought this up in time and I was able to get all the questionnaires translated and printed into the local language, Kannada. But this was not all. The bigger challenge came when I had to interview the participants in the local language since I am not very fluent in it. The data had to be collected and so I went ahead and interviewed them in Kannada but during the transcription process I required help from an interpreter. I believe that the quality of my data would have been better had I been able to ask and interpret the questions in English.

A third limitation in my study was me being an insider researcher. Women were worried about sharing their information with me because I too belong to the Devanga community, but my family is very liberal and forward in their thinking. This seemed to be viewed as a disadvantage by some of the participants because they mentioned "*you will not understand what we go through because your husband and in laws don't think like this,*" Some of them even told me "*I am so jealous of you.*"

I presume that had I been an outsider researcher, the participants might have been franker with me. But this too is an assumption because some of the women were glad to share their experiences with me only because I was an insider. That makes me believe that qualitative research rests on minute nuances and the researcher's position and experiences may be viewed very differently by each participant thus steering the course of the research process accordingly.

12.2 Recommendations

Based on these conclusions, I would like to do further research in the same area because there are several other socio-cultural aspects to be investigated and

understood within the Devanga community. It would prove helpful if I could discuss the findings of this research with the members of the Devanga community, especially the male members holding positions of authority. They proved helpful in gaining access to the sample population but were unaware of the research findings. However, if any help and support need to be extended to the women of the community, it would be beneficial if the community leaders are made aware of the existing norms and practices.

I also feel developing a support group would help to address the existing issues surrounding stereotyping and other orthodox ideas. This research was centred around the Devanga community members in Urban Bangalore. However, as mentioned earlier in this thesis, the members of this community are spread across several states in India and it would be helpful to collect cross-sectional data in order to see if there is a connection between the practices followed by the Devanga community members in Bangalore and those spread in other states. Further research is needed to determine the underlying causes for the practices followed by these members.

12.3 Final Thoughts

This research journey has been a tremendous learning experience for me and has taught me a great deal about the Devanga culture and community, its intricacies and practices, the numerous roles women play and why, as well the research methods and the process of writing. But above all, the biggest teaching for me has been the ability to introspect and be thankful for all the support I have received as a woman researcher from my family and most importantly the participants. They placed a lot of faith and confidence in me to be able to share such personal information about themselves.

I started this journey with a lot of apprehension and self-doubt because I realised that I had to develop the perseverance and the emotional stability to think rationally and objectively during the entire process. Today, I am undoubtedly a more confident and better researcher and am extremely proud to say that I have upheld all the ethical practices throughout this journey. The reason I say this is because of the numerous ethical hurdles I faced and the number of times I felt challenged by the process and might have ceased my

work on the project. But this journey taught me to think out-of-the box and look for solutions rather than merely giving up on myself. It has taught me to prioritise my work and family life accordingly as well as discipline myself with regards to timelines. All valid research of this nature is based on a question: What impact will this piece of research have on the society? And the only thing I tell myself is that: If I can change the life of even one person through this research, it will be a significant contribution to society. So, this has in some ways been a journey of discovery: of myself, the people around me and the meaning of several things we take for granted.

References

- Afridi, F. (2010) Women's empowerment and the goal of parity between the sexes in schooling in India. *Population Studies*. **64** (2), pp. 131-145.
- Agars, M., D. (2004) Reconsidering the impact of gender stereotypes on the advancement of women in organizations. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. **28**(2), pp.103-111.
- Agarwal, B., (1994) A field of one's own: gender and land rights in South Asia. *Cambridge South Asian studies*. United States of America: Cambridge University Press.
- Aggarwal, J. C. (1987) *Indian women: Education and status*. New Delhi: Arya.
- Agrawal, T. (2014) Educational inequality in rural and urban India. *International Journal of Educational Development*.**34** (1), pp. 11-19.
- Ahmed Ghosh, H. (2004) Chattels of society: Domestic violence in India. *Violence Against Women*, **10**(1), pp. 94-118.
- Aikman, S., & Unterhalter, E. (2007) *Practising gender equality in education*. UK: Oxfam.
- Aikman, S., Halai, A., Rubagiza, J (2011) Conceptualising gender equality in research on education quality. *Comparative Education* .**47**(1), pp.45-60.
- Amin, S. (1996) "Female Education and Fertility in Bangladesh: The Influence of Marriage and the Family." Pp. 184–204 in R. Jeffery & A. M. Basu (eds.) *Girl's Schooling, Women's Autonomy and Fertility Change in South Asia*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Amin, S. (1998) Family structure and change in rural Bangladesh. *Population Studies*. **52**(2), pp. 201-213.
- Anand, M. (2009) Gender in Social Work Education and Practice in India. *Social Work Education*. **28** (1), pp.96-105.

Anandalakshmy, S. (1994) *The girl child and the family: An action research study.* New Delhi: Government of India, Department of Women and Child.

Appadurai, A. (2004) *The Capacity to Aspire: Culture and the Terms of Recognition.*In: Held, D., Moore, H.L., and Young, K. (eds). *Cultural Politics in a Global Age Uncertainty, Solidarity and Innovation.* England: Oneworld Publications.

Aravamudan, G. (2007) *Disappearing Daughters: The Tragedy of Female Foeticide.* New Delhi: Penguin

Armstrong, D. (2003) *Experiences of special education: re-evaluating policy and practice through life stories.* 1st ed. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Arokiasamy, P. (2002) Gender Preference, Contraceptive Use and Fertility in India: Regional and Development Influences. *International Journal of Population Geography.* **8**(1), pp.49-67.

Artino, A.R. et al. (2014) Developing questionnaires for educational research: AMEE Guide No. 87. *Medical Teacher.* **36**(6), pp.463–474.

Asselin, M.E. (2003) Insider Research: Issues to consider when doing qualitative research in your own setting. *Journal for Nurses in Staff Development.* **19**(2), pp.99-103.

Atkinson, P, & Hammersley, M. (2007) (3rd edition) *Ethnography Principles in practice.* London: Routledge.

Azam, M, & Kingdon, G.G. (2013) Are Girls the Fairer Sex in India? Revisiting Intra-Household Allocation of Education Expenditure. *World Development* 42 (3), pp. 143-164.

Baehr, A.R. (2013) "Liberal Feminism: Political and Comprehensive." In R. Abbey (Ed.) *Feminist Interpretations of John Rawls,* 150–166. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Baehr, A.R. (2017). "A Capacious Account of Liberal Feminism". *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly.* 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.5206/fpq/2016.3.4>.

Balatchandirane, G. (2003). Gender Discrimination in Education and Economic Development: A Study of South Korea, China and India. *International Studies*. **40**(4), pp.349-378.

Banaji, M. R, & Greenwald, A, G. (2013) Implicit stereotyping and prejudice. In M, Zanna and J, Olsen (eds.) *The Psychology of Prejudice*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp.55-76.

Barot, S. (2012) A Problem-and-Solution Mismatch: Son Preference and Sex-Selective Abortion Bans. *Guttmacher Policy Review*. **15**(2), pp. 18-22.

Baruch, Y. (1999) Response Rate in Academic Studies-A Comparative Analysis. *Human Relations*.**52** (4), pp.421-438.

Basit, T.(2003) Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. *Educational Research*. 45(2), pp.143-154.

Basu, A. M. (1992) *Culture, the Status of Women, and Demographic Behaviour, Illustrated with the Case of India*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press.

Batool, S.A. and Batool, S.S. (2018) Individual, Familial, and Socio-Cultural Determinants of Women's Empowerment. *Paradigms*. **12**(1), pp. 82-87.

Baxi, P. (2019) *Governing India's Daughters*. In N.G. Jayal (Ed.) *Reforming India: The Nation Today*. Gurgaon: Penguins.

Beard, M. (2017) *Women and Power*. London: Profile.

Beckman, L.J. (2014) Training in Feminist Research Methodology: Doing Research on the Margins. *Women & Therapy*.**37** (1-2), pp. 164-177.

Bedi, A, & Bedi, S. (2017) Indian woman representation: The male eye and the media lens. *Indian Journal of Health and Wellbeing*. **8**(3), pp. 206-210.

Beetham, G. & Demetriades, J. (2007) Feminist research methodologies and development: overview and practical application, *Gender and Development*.**15** (2), pp.199-216

Bernard, H., R. (2002) Purposive or Judgement Sampling. In: Roberts, N.E & Manzano, M(eds.) *Research Methods in Anthropology Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 6th ed. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, pp.1-577.

Bhagavatheeswaran, L., Nair,S., Stone,H., Isac, S., Hiremath,T., T,R., Vadde,K.,Doddamane,M., Srikantamurthy, H.S., Heise, L., Watts, C., Schweisfurth,M., Bhattacharjee, P., & Beattie, T.S. (2016) The barriers and enablers to education among scheduled caste and scheduled tribe adolescent girls in northern Karnataka, South India: A qualitative study. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 49, pp.262-270.

Bhat, P.N.M. & Zavier, A.J.F. (2003) Fertility Decline and Gender Bias in Northern India: *Demography*. **40**(4), pp. 637–657.

Bhat, R.L. & Sharma, N. (2006) Missing Girls: Evidence from Some North Indian States. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*. **13** (3), pp. 351 – 374.

Bhopal, K. (2019) *Gender, 'Race' and Patriarchy A Study of South Asian Women*. London: Routledge.

Biswas, C., S (2017) Spousal Violence against Working Women in India. *Journal of Family Violence*. **32**(1), pp. 55-67.

Blakeley, K. (2007) Reflections on the Role of Emotion in Feminist Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.**5**(2), pp. 59 - 68

Bose, S. (2012) A Contextual Analysis of Gender Disparity in Education in India: The Relative Effects of Son Preference, Women's Status, and Community. *Sociological Perspectives*. **55**(1), pp. 67-91.

Bridges,D.(2001) The Ethics of Outsider Research. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*. **35**(3), pp.371-386

Brooks, A. (2007) Feminist standpoint epistemology: Building knowledge and empowerment through women's lived experience. In S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. L.

Leavy (eds.). *Feminist Research Practice: A primer*. Thousand Oaks,CA: Sage, pp. 53–81.

Brooks, R., Riele, K. and Maguire, M. (2014) *Ethics and Education Research*. London: SAGE

Bumiller, E. (1990) *May You be The Mother of a Hundred Sons: A Journey among the Women of India*. New Delhi: Penguin Group.

Calman, L.J. (2019) *Toward Empowerment: Women and Movement Politics in India*. London: Routledge

Cameron, W.B. (1963) *Informal Sociology: A Casual Introduction to Sociological Thinking*. New York: Random House.

Cassell, J., and Young, A. (2002) Why we should not seek individual informed consent for participation in health services research. *Journal of Medical Ethics*. **28**(5), pp.313-317.

Castañeda, Q, E. (2006). Social Thought & Commentary: The Invisible Theatre of Ethnography: Performative Principles of Fieldwork. *Anthropological Quarterly*. **79** (1), pp. 75 - 104

Chanana, K. (1990) The Dialectics of Tradition and Modernity and Women's Education in India. *Sociological Bulletin*. **39** (1&2), pp. 75-91.

Chanana, K. (2006) Educate girls; prepare them for life? In R. Kumar (Ed.) *The Crisis of Elementary Education in India*. New Delhi: Sage

Chao, R., and Tseng, V. (2002) Parenting of Asians. In: Bornstein, M.H. (ed) *Handbook of Parenting Volume 4 Social Conditions and Applied Parenting*. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, pp. 59-93.

Chatterjee, S. (1988) *The Working Wife vis-à-vis the Indian Husband: The Indian Woman's Search for Identity*. New Delhi: Vikas.

Chaudhri, D. and Jha, R. (2013) India's gender bias in child population, female education and growing prosperity: 1951-2011. *International Review of Applied Economics*. **27**(1), pp. 23-43.

Chowdhury, A., and Patnaik, M., M. (2010) Empowering Boys and Men to Achieve Gender Inequality in India. *Journal of Developing Societies*. **26**(4), pp. 455-471.

Chowdhury, M., F. (2015) Coding, sorting and sifting of qualitative data analysis: debates and discussion. *Quality and Quantity*. **49**(3), pp.1135-1143.

Cicourel, A. V. (1979) Field research: The need for stronger theory and more control over the data base. In W. E. Snizek, E. R. Fahrman, & M. K. Miller (eds.), *Contemporary issues in theory and research* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, pp. 161-176.

Clots-Figueras, I. (2011) Women in politics: Evidence from the Indian States. *Journal of Public Economics*. **95** (7-8), pp. 664-690.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2007) (6th ed.) *Research Methods in Education*. London and New York: Routledge.

Cohen, M. (1998). "A Habit of Healthy Idleness: Boys Underachievement in Historical Perspective." In D. Epstein, J. Elwood, V. Hey, and J. Maw. (eds.) *Failing Boys? Issues in Gender and Achievement*, edited by Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Coolican, H. (2009). *Research methods and statistics in psychology*. London: Hodder Education.

Corrigan, P. & Matthews, A. (2003) Stigma and disclosure: Implications for coming out of the closet. *Journal of Mental health*. **12**(3), pp.235-248.

Costa, D. (2008). "Spoiled Sons" and "Sincere Daughters": Schooling, Security, and Empowerment in Rural West Bengal, India. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. **33**(2), pp. 283-308.

Coyne, I.T. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. **26**(3), pp.623–630.

Crenshaw, K. (1989) Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A *Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. University of Chicago Legal Forum, 139-167.

Crespi, I., (2004). Socialization and Gender Roles within The Family: A study on Adolescents and their Parents in Great Britain. *MCFA Annals*. 3, pp 1-8.

Creswell, J. W. (2002) *Educational Research*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson.

Creswell, J (2012) *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill

Creswell, J. (2008) *Educational Research* (3rd Edition) London: Pearson

Croll, E.J. (2006) From the Girl child to Girls' rights. *Third World Quarterly: The politics of Rights: dilemmas for feminist praxis*. **27**(7), pp. 1285-1297.

Crow, G., Wiles, R., Heath, S. & Charles, V. (2006) Research Ethics and Data Quality: The Implications of Informed Consent. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Quality in Social Research*. **9**(2), pp.83–95.

Cuddy, A., Fiske, S.T and Glick, P. (2004) When Professionals Become Mothers, Warmth Doesn't Cut the Ice. *Journal of Social Issues*. **60**(4), pp.701-718.

Das, M. (2001) Changing family system among a matrilineal group in India. In: *24th proceedings of the General Conference of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), Salvador, Brazil 18th -24th August*. Retrieved from http://www.iussp.org/Brazil2001/s10/S12_04_Das Pdf Accessed on 21/5/2020

De Tona, C. (2006)" But what is interesting Is the Story of Why and How Migration Happened." *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*. **7**(3), pp.22-27.

Dean, N., B. (2017) *Women's Education: An International Perspective*. University Honors Program Theses. Georgia Southern University.

Demiray, E. (2014) Education of Women and Women's Expectations from Distance Education on the Issues Concerning Them. *Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*. **15**(4), pp. 332-349.

Dempsey, L., Dowling, M., Larkin, P, & Murphy, K. (2016) Sensitive interviewing in qualitative research. *Research in Nursing and Health*. **39** (6), pp. 480-490

Deolalikar, A., B. (1993) "Gender Differences in Returns to Schooling and in School Enrolment Rates in Indonesia." *Journal of Human Resources*.**28**(4), pp. 899-932.

Dreze, J., & Kingdon, G., G. (2001) School Participation in Rural India. *Review of Development Economics*. **5** (1), pp. 1 - 24.

Dreze, J., and Sen, A. (1995) *Economic Development and Social Opportunity*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Dreze, J. (2017) *Sense & Solidarity. Jholawala Economics for Everyone*. United States of America: Oxford University Press.

Dung, D., J. (2019) Education reform, open education and closed society, the status of women in India and social stratification in Orissa. *International Journal of Physical and Social Sciences*.**9** (9), pp. 1-9.

Dunn, J., Bretherton, I., & Munn, P. (1987) Conversations about feeling states between mothers and their young children. *Developmental Psychology*.**23**(1), pp. 132-139.

Dworkin, A. (2007) *Heartbreak: The Political Memoir of a Feminist Militant*. London: Continuum.

Eagly, A. H., & Mladinic, A. (1989) Gender Stereotypes and Attitudes toward Women and Men. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*. **15**(4), pp.543-558.

Eastmond, M. (2007) Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research. *Journal of Refugee Studies*. **20**(2), pp. 248–264.

Eccles, J. (2011) Gendered educational and occupational choices: Applying the Eccles et al. model of achievement-related choices. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*. **35**(3), pp.195–201.

Echavarri, R. & Ezcurra, R. (2010) Education and gender bias in the sex ratio at birth: Evidence from India. *Demography*. **47**(1), pp.249-268.

Ellemers, N. (2018). Gender Stereotypes. *Annual Review of Psychology*. **69**, pp.275-98.

Elo, S., Kääriäinen, M., Kanste, O., Pölkki, T., Utriainen, K, & Kyngäs, H. (2014) Qualitative Content Analysis: A Focus on Trustworthiness. *Sage Open*. 4 (1) 1-10.

Epstein, D. (1998) "Real Boys Don't Work: Underachievement, Masculinity and the Harassment of Sissies." In: Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V. and Maw, J. M. (eds.) *Failing Boys? Issues in Gender and Achievement*. (1st ed.). Buckingham, UK: Open University Press, pp. 96-108.

Esteve-Volart, B, (2004) *Gender Discrimination and Growth: Theory and Evidence from India*. LSE STICERD Research Paper No. DEDPS 42. London: Suntory and Toyota International Centres for Economics and Related Disciplines. Available at <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/de/dedps42.pdf> { Last Accessed 11/11/2019}

Filmer, D. (1999) *The Structure of Social Disparities in Education: Gender and Wealth*. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper no. 2268*, New York: World Bank.

Finch, J. (1984) 'It's great to have someone to talk to': The ethics and politics of interviewing women. In: Bell,C. and Roberts, H. (eds.) *Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, pp.70–87.

Flax, J. (1996). Women do theory. In M. F. Rogers (Ed.), *Multicultural experiences, multicultural theories* (pp. 17–20). New York: McGraw-Hill. (Originally published 1979).

Frassanito, P. & Pettorini, B. (2008) Pink and blue: the colour of gender. *Childs Nervous System*. **24**(8), pp. 881 – 882.

Froerer, P. (2012) Learning, livelihoods, and social mobility: valuing girls' education in Central India. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*. **43**(4), pp. 344-357.

Gallagher, S., E and Savage, T. (2013) Cross-cultural analysis in online community research: A literature review. *Computers in Human behaviour*. **29** (3), pp.1028-1038.

Gangoli, G., & Rew, M. (2011) Mothers-in-law against daughters-in-law: Domestic violence and legal discourses around mother-in-law violence against daughters-in-law in India. *Women's Studies International Forum*. **34**(5), pp. 420-429.

Garg, H., S. (2018) A review on scenario of rural women in India. *Advance research Journal of Social Science*. **9**(1), pp. 97-104.

Ghose, S. (2018) *Why I am a Liberal: A Manifesto for Indians who Believe in Individual Freedom*. Gurgaon: Random House

Ghosh, B., (2011) Early Marriage of Girls in Contemporary Bengal: A Field View. *Social Change*. **41**(1), pp.41–6.

Glick, P., Mladinic, S.T., Saiz, J.L., Abrams, D., Masser, B., Adetoun, B., Osagie, J.E., Akande, A., Alao, A., Annetje, B., Willemsen, T.M., Chipeta, K., Dardenne, B., Dijksterhuis, A., Wigboldus, D., Eckes, T., Six-Materna, I., Exposito, F., ... Lopez, W.L. (2000) Beyond prejudice as simple antipathy: hostile and benevolent sexism across cultures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. **79**(5), pp.763–775.

Goel, R. (2005) Sita's trousseau: Restorative justice, domestic violence, and south Asian culture. *Violence Against Women*. **11**(5), pp. 639-655.

Goheer, N., A. (2003) *Women entrepreneurs in Pakistan: how to improve their bargaining power*. Geneva, InFocus Programme on Boosting Employment through Small Enterprise Development, International Labour Office.

Goodenough, W.H. (1976) Multiculturalism as the normal human experience. *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*. **7**(4), pp.4-7.

Government of India (1986) *National Policy on Education*. New Delhi: Ministry of Human Resource Development

Government of India (2018) Area and Population. New Delhi: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

Government of India. Human Resource Development. (2019) *National Education Policy (Draft)*. (Chairman: K Kasturirangan). New Delhi: Human Resource Development.

Government of Karnataka(2020) SSA Framework: BASIC FEATURES OF SARVA SHIKSHA ABHIYAN {Accessed December 2019}
URL: http://ssakarnataka.gov.in/pdfs/aboutus/ssa_framework%20.pdf

Gregory, S. (2009) Changing family structure in India Impact and Implications. *Journal of the Institute for Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*. **4**(1), pp.77-93.

Grossman, M. (1998) Out of the salon and into the streets: contextualising Australian indigenous women's writing. *Women's Writing*. **5** (2), pp.169-192.

Gupta, K, and Yesudian P. (2006) Evidence of women's empowerment in India: a study of socio-spatial disparities. *Geo Journal* **65** (4), pp.365-380.

Gupta, N, & Sharma, A.K. (2003) Patrifocal concerns in the lives of women in academic sciences: Continuity of tradition and emerging challenges. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*. **10**(2), pp. 279-305.

Gutman, L. & Akerman, R. (2008) *Determinants of aspirations [Wider Benefits of Learning Research Report No. 27]*. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning.

Haniff, N.Z., (1985) Toward a native anthropology: Methodological notes on a study of successful Caribbean women by an insider. *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly*. **10**(4), pp.107-113.

Hannum, E., Kong, P. & Zhang, Y. (2009) Family sources of educational gender inequality in rural China: A critical assessment. *International Journal of Educational Development*. **29**(5), pp. 474-486.

Haridarshan, P. (2015) The impact of differing maternal expectations on the academic achievements of primary school children in Urban Bangalore, South: a comparison between boys and girls. *Support for Learning*. **30**(3), pp. 192-204.

Hart, C. (2018) *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Research Imagination*. 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Hasan, Z. (2019) *Forging Identities: Gender, Communities, and the State in India*. London: Routledge.

Herz, B, Knapp Herz, G, & Sperling, G. (2004) *What Works in Girls' Education: Evidence and Policies from the Developing World*. New York: Council on Foreign Relations.

Hesse-Biber, S. (2012) Feminist Approaches to Triangulation: Uncovering Subjugated Knowledge and Fostering Social Change in Mixed Methods Research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*. **6** (2), pp. 137-146.

Hiller, H., H. & Diluzio, L. (2004) The Interviewee and the Research Interview: Analysing a Neglected Dimension in Research*. *Canadian Review of Sociology/Revue canadienne de sociologie*. **41**(1), pp.1-26.

Himaz, R., (2009) Is there a boy bias in household education expenditure: the case of Andhra Pradesh in India. *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, pp. IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc, 2009.

- Hossain, M., A. & Tisdell, C., A. (2005) "Closing the gender gap in Bangladesh: Inequality in education, employment and earnings." *International Journal of Social Economics*. **32**(5), pp. 439–53.
- Huilman, R., R. & Winters, K.T., (2011) Feminist Research in Higher Education. *The Journal of Higher Education*. **82**(6), pp.667–690.
- Husain, Z., (2010). Gender disparities in completing school education in India: Analyzing regional variations. *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*, pp. IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc
- Hussain, B., & Zada Asad, A. (2012). A Critique on Feminist Research Methodology. *Journal of Politics and Law*. **5** (4), pp. 202 – 207
- Hussain, M., Naz, A. & Khan, W. (2015) Gender Stereotyping in Family: An Institutionalized and Normative Mechanism in Pakhtun Society of Pakistan. *SAGE Open*. **5**(3), pp.1-11.
- Iyengar, K & Ragavan, M. (2017) Violence Perpetrated by Mothers-in-Law in Northern India: Perceived Frequency, Acceptability, and Options for Survivors. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. Pp.1-23.
- Jacobs, J. E., & Eccles, J. S. (1992) The impact of mothers' gender-role stereotypic beliefs on mothers' and children's ability perceptions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. **63**(6), pp.932-944.
- Jaggar, A. (2015) *Just Methods: An Interdisciplinary Feminist Reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Jayachandran, S. (2015) The Roots of Gender Inequality in Developing Countries. *Annual Review of Economics*. **7**(1),pp. 63-88.
- Jayarathne, T. E., & Stewart, A. J. (2008) Quantitative and qualitative issues in the social sciences: Current feminist issues and practical strategies. In A. M. Jaggar (Ed.), *Just methods: An interdisciplinary feminist reader*, (pp. 44 – 57). Boulder, CO: Paradigm Press.

Jayaweera, S (1997) Higher Education and the Economic and Social Empowerment of Women—the Asian experience, *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. **27**(3), pp. 245-261.

Jeffrey, R. (2004/2005) Legacies of Matriliny: The Place of Women and the “Kerala Model”. *Pacific Affairs*. **77**(4), pp.647-664.

Jejeebhoy, S, J., and Sathar, Z.A (2001) Women’s Autonomy in India and Pakistan: The Influence of Religion and Region. *Population and Development Review*. **27**(4), pp.687-712.

Jeyaseelan, V., Kumar, S., Jeyaseelan, L., Shankar, V., Yadav, B.K. & Bangdiwala, S.I. (2015) Dowry Demand and Harassment: Prevalence and Risk Factors in India. *Journal of Biosocial Science*. **47**(6), pp.727-745.

Jha, J., Ghatak, N., Menon, N., Dutta, P, & Mahendiran, S. (2019) *Women’s Education and Empowerment in Rural India*. London: Routledge.

Jha, P and Nagar, N. (2015) A Study of Gender Inequality in India. *The International Journal of Indian Psychology*. **2**(3), pp.46-53.

Kacen, L, & Chaitin, J. (2006) “The Times They are a Changing”: Undertaking Qualitative Research in Ambiguous, Conflictual, and Changing Contexts. *The Qualitative Report*. **11** (2), pp. 209-228.

Kakar, S. (1988) Feminine identity in India. In R. Ghadially (Ed.), *Women in Indian Society*. New Delhi, India: Sage, pp. 44-68.

Karlekar, M. (1995) The girl child in India: does she have any rights? *Canadian Woman Studies*. **15**(2), pp.55.

Katiyar, S.P. (2016) Gender Disparity in Literacy in India. *Social Change***46** (1), pp. 46 – 69.

Khan, M. T., & Maan, A. A. (2008) The socio-cultural milieu of women’s empowerment in district Faisalabad. Pakistan. *Journal of Agricultural Science*. **45**(3), pp. 78-90.

Kingdon, G. (2002) The gender gap in educational attainment in India: How much can be explained? *Journal of Developmental Studies*. **39**(2), pp. 25–53.

Kingdon, G. (2005) Where has all the bias gone? Detecting gender bias in the household allocation of educational expenditure in India. *Economic Development and Cultural Change*. **53**(2), pp. 409–51.

Kingdon, G.G. (2002) The Gender Gap in Educational Attainment in India: How Much Can Be Explained? *The Journal of Development Studies*. **39** (2), pp. 25-53.

Klasen, S., and C. Wink. (2002) "A Turning Point in Gender Bias in Mortality? An Update on the Number of Missing Women." *Population and Development Review*. **28**(2), pp.285–312.

Kohli, S (2017) Gender Inequality in India. *International Journal of Humanities & Social Science Studies*. **3** (4), pp. 178-185.

Kotwal, N., Kotwal, N, & Rani, S. (2007) Causes of School Dropouts among Rural Girls in Kathua District, *Journal of Human Ecology*. **22** (1), pp. 57-59.

Kruger, R. L. M. (1997) The influence of gender stereotypes and roles on managerial performance of women education leaders (Unpublished thesis). Bloemfentein. South Africa: University of the Free State.

Kumari, D. (2015) Autonomy of educated urban women and their attitude towards female foeticide in India. *Human Geographies- Journal of Studies and Research in Human Geography*. **9**(1), pp.1843-6587.

Kuruvilla, M. (2007) *Discrimination against the Girl Child: The Trajectory of Missing Girls*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House

Lancaster, G., Maitra, P and Ray, R. (2008) Household Expenditure Patterns and Gender Bias: Evidence from Selected Indian States. *Oxford Development Studies*. **36**(2), pp.133-157.

Lather, P. (1991) *Getting smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Lau, L. (2010) Literary Representations of the 'New Indian Woman': The Single, Working, Urban, Middle Class Indian Woman Seeking Personal Autonomy. *Journal of South Asian Development*. **5**(2), pp.271-292.

Le, M. T. H., Tran, D. T., Nguyen, T.N and Fisher, J. (2013) Early Marriage and Intimate Partner Violence among Adolescents and Young Adults in Vietnam. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*. **29**(5), pp.889-910.

Lee, M., H. (2012) The One-Child Policy and Gender Equality in Education in China: Evidence from Household Data. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*. **33**(1), pp.41-52.

Legewie, J., and DiPrete, T.A. (2012). School Context and the Gender Gap in Educational Achievement. *American Sociological Review*. **77**(3), pp.463-485.

Leslie, S.J., Cimiano, A., Meyer, M., and Freeland, E (2015) Expectations of brilliance underlie gender distributions across academic disciplines. *Science*. **347** (6219), pp. 262-265.

Levtov, R. G., Barker, G., Contreras-Urbina, M., Heilman, B. & Verma, R. (2014) Pathways to Gender-equitable Men: Findings from the International Men and Gender Equality survey in eight countries. *Men and Masculinities*. **17** (5), pp. 467-501.

Lodha, N (2003) *Status of Tribal Women: Work Participation and Decision-Making Role in Tribal Society*. Jaipur: Mangal Deep Publications.

Lykes, M. B., & Hershberg, R. M. (2012) Participatory action research and feminisms: Social inequalities and transformative praxis. In S. N. Hesse-Biber (Ed.), *The handbook of feminist research: Theory and praxis*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 331-367.

Mac An Ghail, M. (1994) *The Making of Men: Masculinities, Sexualities and Schooling*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.

Madigan, J.C. (2009) "The education of women and girls in the United States: A historical perspective" *Advances in Gender and Education*. **1**(1), pp. 11-13.

Maertens, A. (2013) Social Norms and Aspirations: Age of Marriage and Education in Rural India. *World Development*. 47, pp.1-15.

Maheswari, K & Rajeswari, E. (2018) Mental health among early married women. *International Journal of Applied Research*. **4** (4), pp.249-251.

Maity, S. (2016) An Inquiry into the Literacy Status of Women in West Bengal and India. *Women's Studies*, **45** (5), pp. 475-493.

Majumdar, R. (2010) Marriage, family, and property in India: the Hindu Succession Act of 1956. *South Asian History and Culture*. **1**(3), pp. 397-415.

Malkani, R. (2017) *Investigating the Opportunities Provided for First Generation Learners in Rural Maharashtra, India*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Northampton, UK

Malmqvist, J., Hellberg, K., Möllås, G., Rose, R, & Shevlin, M. (2019) Conducting the Pilot Study: A Neglected Part of the Research Process? Methodological Findings Supporting the Importance of Piloting in Qualitative Research Studies. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. **18**(1), pp. 1-11

Mane, P., N. (1991) Socialization of Hindu women in their childhood: An analysis of literature. *Indian Journal of Social Work*. 11, pp.81-95.

Mason, J. (1998) Sampling and selecting (Chapter 5 pages 83 - 106) in J, Mason (Ed) *Qualitative Researching*. London: Sage.

Mather, S., Greene, M, & Malhotra, A. (2003) *Too Young to Wed: The Lives, Rights, and Health of Young Married Girls*. Washington, DC: International Center for Research on Women of Human Resource Development.

Maxwell, J., A. (1992) Understanding and validity in qualitative research. *Harvard Educational Review*. **62**(3), pp.279-300.

Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds) (1994) *Researching Women's Lives from a Feminist Perspective*. London: Taylor and Francis.

McCauley, C., Stitt, C. L, & Segal, M. (1980) Stereotyping: From prejudice to prediction. *Psychological Bulletin*. **87**(1), pp. 195-208.

McHale, S, M., Crouter, A.C., and Whiteman, S, D. (2003) The Family Contexts of gender Development in Childhood and Adolescence. *Social Development*. **12**(1), pp.125-148.

McKittrick, J. (2006) Liberty, Gender, and the Family. *In: Machan, T. (ed.) Liberty And Justice. Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, pp.83-103.*

Miles, M. B. and Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, Second edn. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Miller, C., & Swift, K. (1991) *Words and women: New language in new times (Rev. ed.)*. New York: Harper Collins.

Miller, T. & Boulton, M. (2007) Changing constructions of informed consent: Qualitative research and complex social worlds. *Social Science & Medicine*. **65**(11), pp.2199-2211.

Ministry of Home Affairs. Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India. (2001) *Literacy and level of education*. New Delhi, India. Available as: <https://censusindia.gov.in/Census And You/literacy and level of education.aspx> {Last accessed on 9th Feb 2020}.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (2007) National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC Act), 1993: An extraordinary resolution. New Delhi: India

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Social Statistics Division (2018) *Women and Men in India: A Statistical Compilation of gender related indicators in India*. New Delhi: Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Ministry of Women & Child Development. (2019) *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme: Implementation guidelines For State Governments/ UT Administrations*. New Delhi: Ministry of Women & Child Development.

Mitra, A. (2015) Son Preference in India: Implications for Gender Development. *Journal of Economic Issues*. **48**(4), pp. 1021-1037.

Mitra, A., & Singh, P. (2007). Human capital attainment and gender empowerment: The Kerala paradox. *Social Science Quarterly*. **88**(5), pp. 1227-1242.

Morgan, D.L. & Scannell, A. U. (1998) *Planning focus groups*. London: SAGE.

Morse, J.,M. (1991) Strategies for Sampling. In: Morse, J.M (ed.) *Qualitative Nursing Research: A Contemporary Dialogue*. Newbury Park, California: SAGE, pp.127-145.

Mukherjee, S. (2013) Women's empowerment and gender bias in the birth and survival of girls in urban India. *Feminist Economics*. **19**(1), pp. 1-28.

Murphy, E. & Carr, D. (2007) *Powerful Partners: Adolescent Girls' Education and Delayed Childbearing*. Washington DC: Population reference Bureau.

Murthy, S.& Ramaswamy, S (2017) Impact of Social Changes on the Roles Played By Women in an Organisation. *Phonix- International Journal for Psychology and Social Sciences (Online)*. **1**(1), pp.1-49.

Nabar, V. (1995). *Caste as Woman*. India: Penguin Books.

Najar, M.A., Sofi, M.A., Dar, A.A, & Yousuf, S. (2017) A study on issues and challenges of women empowerment in India. *International Journal of Applied Research*. **3** (9), pp.378-381.

Nanda, B, & Ray, N. (2018) *Discourse on Rights in India: Debates and Dilemmas*. London: Routledge.

Nath,D. (2000) "Gently shattering the glass ceiling: experiences of Indian women managers". *Women in Management Review*. **15**(1), pp.44-52.

Naz, A., & Rehman, H. (2012) The relational analyses of Pakhtun social organization (Pakhtunwali) and women's Islamic rights relegation in Malakand

Division, KPK Pakistan. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. **4**(3), pp. 63-73.

NDTV (2020) Maharashtra College Girls Made to Take Oath Against Love Marriage, ndtvonline. February 15,2020. Available online as <https://www.ndtv.com/cities/maharashtra-college-girls-made-to-takr-oath-against-love-marriage-2180510>

Newby, P. (2010) *Research Methods for Education*. London: Longman

Nguyen, T.Q, T. (2015) Conducting semi-structured interviews with the Vietnamese. *Qualitative Research Journal*. **15**(1), pp.35-46.

Nkoane, M. M. (2012) Critical emancipatory research for social justice and democratic citizenship. *Perspectives in Education*. **30** (4), pp. 98-104

Noddings, N. (2010) *The Maternal Factor: Two Paths to Morality*. California: University of California Press

Noreen, G., & Khalid, H. (2012) Gender Empowerment through Women's Higher Education: Opportunities and Possibilities. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education*. **6**(1), pp. 50-60.

Nurani, L.M., (2008) Critical review of ethnographic approach. *Jurnal sosioteknologi*. **7**(14), pp.441-447.

Obasi, E. (1997) Structural adjustment and gender access to education in Nigeria. *Gender and Education* **9**(2), pp. 161-178.

Okin, S. (1989) *Justice, Gender and the Family*. New York: Basic Books.

Onwuegbuzie, A, J. & Collins, K. M.T. (2007) A typology of mixed methods sampling designs in social science research. (Report). *The Qualitative Report*. **12**(2), pp.281-316.

Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L. & Wynaden, D. (2001) Ethics in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*.**33**(1), pp.93–96.

Orminston, M. E. (2014) Explaining the link between objective and perceived differences in groups: The role of the belonging and distinctiveness motives. *Journal of Applied Psychology*.**101**(2),pp.222-236.

Osadan, N. (2014) Gender Equality in Primary Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa: Review and Analysis. *A Journal of Transnational Women's and Gender Studies*. 12, pp. 215-231.

Oxaal, Z. (1997). Education and Poverty: A Gender Analysis.*Report prepared for the Gender Equality Unit, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida)*. Available from [http://www.eif.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/genderequality.nsf/All/12D2A22FAC60DA74C22579A6002D950A/\\$file/education_and_poverty.pdf](http://www.eif.gov.cy/mlsi/dl/genderequality.nsf/All/12D2A22FAC60DA74C22579A6002D950A/$file/education_and_poverty.pdf) {Accessed on 22 May 2020}.

Parveen, A., Noor-UL-Amin, S., & Nazir, S.K. (2013) Comparative study of the academic achievement of 10th class boys and girls studying in different high schools of District Pulwama of Jammu and Kashmir. *Journal of Education Research and Behavioural Sciences*.**2**(2), pp. 20-27.

Patkar, A. (1995) Socio-Economic Status and Female Literacy in India. *International Journal of Educational Development*. **15**(4), pp. 401-409.

Patton, M. (1990) *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Paul, P. (2019) Effects of education and poverty on the prevalence of girl child marriage in India: A district-level analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review*. 100, pp.16-21.

Pelto, J. P and Pelto, G.H. (1978) *Anthropological Research The Structure of Inquiry*. (2nd ed.). United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

Pierre, E, A., & Jackson, A.Y. (2014) Qualitative Data Analysis after Coding. *Qualitative Inquiry*. **20**(6), pp.715-719.

Poonacha, V. (2016) Framing gender identities in education philosophy: Jean Jacques Rousseau and Mary Wollstonecraft. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*. **23**(3), pp. 415-436.

Power, S., Geoff, W., Edwards, T., & Wigfall, V (1998) "Schoolboys and Schoolwork: Gender Identification and Academic Achievement." *International Journal of Inclusive Education*. **2**(2),pp.135-53.

Prakash, R., Beattie,T., Javalkar,P., Bhattacharjee, P., Ramanaik, S., Thalinja, R., Murthy, S., Davey,C., Blanchard,J., Watts,C., Collumbien, M., Moses, S., Heise, L. & Isac,S.(2017) Correlates of school dropout and absenteeism among adolescent girls from marginalized community in north Karnataka, south India. *Journal of Adolescence*.**61** (1), pp. 64-76.

Preece, D., Murray, J., Rose, R., Zhao, Y, & Garner, P. (2020) Public knowledge and attitudes regarding children with disabilities, their experience and support in Bhutan: a national survey. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*. DOI: 10.1080/03004430.2020.1730432

Psaki, S. (2019) *Delivering results in girls' education: How to evaluate what works, what doesn't, and what we don't know*. GIRL Center Research Brief no. 4. New York: Population Council

Punch, K. F. (2005) *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Puri, J. (1999) *Woman, Body, Desire in Post-Colonial India: Narratives of Gender and Sexuality*. London: Taylor & Francis Group.

Quaglia, R. J., and Casey, C. D. (1996) Toward a Theory of Student Aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education*. **12**(3), pp. 127-132.

Quisumbing, A. & Maluccio, J. (2003) Resources at marriage and intra-household allocation: evidence from Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Indonesia, and South Africa. *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics***65**(3), pp.283-327.

Rahman, M., I. (2014) Distance learning education for improving women's status and their rights: a review. *International Journal of Education and Management Studies*. **4**(1), pp.70-74.

Raj, A. (2010) "When the Mother Is a Child: The Impact of Child Marriage on the Health and Human Rights of Girls." *Archives of Disease in Childhood*.**95**(11), pp. 931-935.

Ramachandran, V. (2019) The politics of gender, caste and education in India. *Teacher*.**13** (4), pp. 16 – 20.

Ramanaik, S., Collumbien, M., Prakash,R., Howard-Merrill, L., Thalinja,R., Javalkar,P., Murthy,S., Cislighi,B., Beattie,T., Isac,S., Moses,S., Heise,L. & Bhattacharjee,P. (2018) Education, poverty and "purity" in the context of adolescent girls' secondary school retention and dropout: A qualitative study from Karnataka, Southern India. *PLoS ONE*.13(9), p.e0202470

Ramanujam, B.K., (1972). The Indian family in transition. *Family Life Center of the Indian Social Institute (Ed.), The Indian Family in the Change and Challenge of the Seventies*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Ltd. pp.22-34.

Ramegowda, A., and Reshma. (2012) "Socio Legal Perspective of Dowry": A Study (With Special reference to Shivamogga District). *International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research*.**3**(7), pp. 1-5.

Rankin, B.& Aytac, A. (2006) Gender inequality in schooling: The case of Turkey. *Sociology of Education*. **79** (1), pp. 25-43.

Rao, N. (2018) "Good Women do not Inherit Land": *Politics of Land and Gender in India*. New Delhi: Social Science Press and Orient Blackswan.

Rao, V. (1997) Wife-beating in rural South India: A qualitative and econometric analysis. *Social Science & Medicine*. **44**(8), pp.1169-1180.

Rao, V. & Ban, R. (2007) The political construction of caste in South India. *Processed*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Rastogi, M. & Therly, P. (2006) Dowry and its Link to Violence Against Women in India: Feminist psychological perspectives. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*. **7**(1), pp.66-77.

Ray, D. (2006). Aspirations, poverty, and economic change. In: Banerjee, A.V., Benabou, B. and Mookherjee, D (eds.) *Understanding Poverty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 409-421.

Razvi, M., & Roth, G. (2004) Socio-economic development and gender inequality in India. In T. M. Egan, M. L. Morris, & V. Inbakumar (eds.) *Proceedings of the Academy of Human Resource Development*. Bowling Green, OH: Academy of Human Resource Development, pp. 168-175.

Rogers, E.E., Hansman, C.A. & Martin, Larry G. (2004) Social and cultural issues in urban communities. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*. 101 (Spring) 17 -28.

Rogers, J & Kelly, U.A. (2011) Feminist Intersectionality: Bringing Social Justice to Health Disparities Research. *Nursing Ethics*. **18**(3), pp. 397-407.

Rolin, K. (2006) The Bias Paradox in Feminist Standpoint Epistemology. *Episteme: A Journal of Social Epistemology*. **3** (1-2), pp. 125-136.

Rose, R, & Shevlin, M. (2006) Written in the margins. *Prospero: A Journal of New Thinking in Philosophy for Education*. **12** (2), pp. 3 – 5.

Rose, R, & Shevlin, M. (2017). A sense of belonging: children's' views of acceptance in "inclusive" mainstream schools. *International Journal of Whole Schooling*. **13** (1), pp. 65 – 80.

Roy, S. (2010) 'A Miserable Sham': Flora Annie Steel's Short Fictions and the Question of Indian Women's Reform. *Feminist Review*. **94**(1), pp.55-74.

Rubin, H.J. & Rubin, I.S. (2012) *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*. (3rd ed.) London: SAGE.

Saha, A. (2013) An assessment of gender discrimination in household expenditure on education in India. *Oxford Development Studies*. **41**(2), pp. 220-238.

Salvi, V. (2009) Child marriage in India: a tradition with alarming implications. *The Lancet*. **373** (1678), pp.1826-1827.

Sapkal, R, S. (2017) From Mother to Daughter: Does Equal Inheritance Property Laws Reform Improve Female Labour Supply and Educational Attainments in India? *Asian Journal of Law and Economics***8**(1), pp.1-37.

Saraswathi, T. S. (1999) Adult-child continuity in India: Is adolescence a myth or an emerging reality? In T.S. Saraswathi (Ed.), *Culture, socialization and human development: Theory, research and applications in India*. CA: Sage Publications, pp. 213-232.

Segran, G., (2010) *Gender discrimination in India: a reality check*. Fountainebleau: INSEAD.

Seguino, S. (2007) Plus Ca Change? Evidence on Global Trends in Gender Norms and Stereotypes. *Feminist Economics*. **13** (2), pp.1-28.

Sen, A, (2003) cited in Costa, D. (2008). "Spoiled Sons" and "Sincere Daughters": Schooling, Security, and Empowerment in Rural West Bengal, India. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. **33**(2), pp. 283-308.

Sen, A. (2016) *The Country of First Boys and other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sen, A., (2001) The many faces of gender inequality. *The New Republic*. **225**(12), pp.35-40.

Serrant-Green, L. (2007) Ethnographic research. *Nurse Researcher (through 2013)*. **14**(3), pp.4-6.

Shaghghi, A., Bhopal, R, S. & Sheikh, A. (2011) Approaches to Recruiting 'Hard-To-Reach' Populations into Research: A review of the Literature. *Health Promotion Perspectives*. **1**(2), pp.86-94.

Sharma, G., & Wotipka, C., M. (2019) Mothers' gendered aspirations for their children: a case study of Forbesganj, Bihar. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*. **49**(3), pp.358–374.

Shastri, A. (2014) Gender Inequality and Woman Discrimination. *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science*. **19**(11), pp.27-30.

Shenton, A.K. (2004) Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*. **22**(2), pp.63-75.

[Shepard](#), M., [Orsi](#), J., [Mahon](#), M, & [Carroll](#), R. (2002) Mixed-Methods Research with Vulnerable Families. *Journal of Family Nursing*.**8**(4),pp. 334 – 352.

Shukla, A. (2015) Attitudes towards Role and Status of Women in India: A Comparison of Three Generations of Men and Women. *Psychological Studies*. **60**(1), pp. 119-128.

Shukla, A., & Kapoor, M. (1990) 'Sex-role identity, marital power and marital satisfaction among middle class couples in India'. *Sex Roles*. 22, pp.693–706.

Shuy, R. W. (2003) In-person versus telephone interviewing. In: Holstein J. A. and Gubrium J.F. (eds) *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 175–193.

Siddique, H. M (2004) *Distance Learning Technologies in Education*. New Delhi: APH Publishing Corporation.

Sime, D. (2008) Ethical and methodological issues in engaging young people living in poverty with participatory research methods.*Children's Geographies*. **6** (1), pp. 63-67.

Simister, J. & Makowiec, J. (2008) Domestic Violence in India: effects of Education. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*. **15**(3), pp.507-518.

Singh, R. & Vennam, U. (2016) *Factors shaping trajectories to child and early marriage: Evidence from young lives in India*, Working paper. Young Lives, UK: Oxford Department.

Singh, S., (2018) Status of Women's in Higher Education. *Multidisciplinary Higher Education, Research, Dynamics & Concepts: Opportunities & Challenges for Sustainable Development*. **1**(1), pp.377-380.

Singhal, G. & Maslak, M. (2008). The identity of educated women in India: confluence or divergence? *Gender and Education*. **20**(5), pp. 481-493.

Sivakumar, M. (2008). Gender Discrimination and Women's Development in India. *IDEAS Working Paper Series from RePEc*. Chikkaiah Naicker College, Erode, Tamil Nadu: India.

Smith, L.J. (2008) How ethical is ethical research? Recruiting marginalized, vulnerable groups into health services research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. **62**(2), pp.248-257

Somashekhar, G. (1992) (ed.) *Hemakuta*. Hampi: Sri Gayathri Peetha. 3-4.

Srivastava, N, & Srivastava, R. (2010) Women, Work, and Employment Outcomes in Rural India. *Economic and Political Weekly*. **45** (28), pp. 49-63.

Stack, C.B. (2018) Writing Ethnography: Feminist Critical Practice. In D. Wolf (Ed.) *Feminist Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. (2nd edition) New York: Routledge

Standing, K. (1998) Writing the Voices of the Less Powerful: Research on Lone Mothers. In: Ribbens, J & Edwards, R. (ed.) *Feminist Dilemmas in Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE, pp.186-202.

Standing, K. (1998) Writing the voices of the less powerful. In: J. Ribbens & R. Edwards (eds.) *Feminist dilemmas in qualitative research*. London: SAGE, pp.186-202.

Stanley, L. & Wise, S. (1983) Breaking out: Feminist consciousness and feminist research. *Sociology*. **17**(3), pp. 450-451.

Stash, S. & Hannum, E. (2001) "Who Goes to School? Educational Stratification by Gender, Caste, and Ethnicity in Nepal." *Comparative Education Review*. **45** (3), pp. 354-78.

Stromquist, N. P. (1989) Determinants of Educational Participation and Achievement of Women in the Third World: A Review of the Evidence and a Theoretical Critique. *Review of Educational Research*. **59**(2), pp.143–183.

Sturges, J.E, & Hanrahan, K.J. (2004) Comparing telephone and face-to-face qualitative interviewing: a research note. *Qualitative Research*.**4**(1), pp.107-118.

Subrahmanian, R. (2005) Gender equality in education: Definitions and measurements. *International Journal of Educational Development*. **1** (1), pp.395-407.

Tarabini, A. (2010) Education and poverty in the global development agenda: Emergence, evolution and consolidation. *International Journal of Educational Development*. **30** (2), pp.204-212

Tembon, M & Fort, L. (2008) *Girl's Education in the 21st Century: Gender Equality, Empowerment and Growth*. Herndon: World Bank Publications.

Tesch, R. (1990) *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools*. London: Falmer

Thakur, P. (2017) Status of Hindu women in Modern India. *International Journal of Engineering Technology Science and Research*. **4**(4), pp. 66-70.

Thapar, R. (2014) *The Past as Present: Forging Contemporary Identities through History*. 1st edn. New Delhi: Aleph Book Company.

The myths of origin. Source [online]. Available from: <https://www.devangaloka.com> (Accessed on 28th October 2018)

Thornton, R and Jensen, R (2003) Early female marriage in the developing world. *Gender & Development*. **11**(2), pp.9-19.

Tichy, L. L., Becker, J. V., & Sisco, M. M. (2009) The downside of patriarchal benevolence: Ambivalence in addressing domestic violence and socio-economic considerations for women of Tamil Nadu, India. *Journal of Family Violence*. **24**(8), pp. 547-558.

Tijani, S. A., & Yano, I. (2007) The direct farmer's market: A tool for rural female empowerment. *Direct Marketing: An International Journal*. **1**(4),pp. 195-210.

Tilak, B.G (2002) Education and Poverty. *Journal of Human Development*, **3**(2), pp. 191-207.

Tilak, J. B. G. (2002) 'Elasticity of Household Expenditure on Education in Rural India'.*South Asia Economic Journal*. **3**(2), pp. 217–226.

Tilak, J., B., G. (2009) *Household Expenditure on Education and Implications for Redefining the Poverty Line in India*. Background Paper, prepared for the Expert Group on the Review of the Methodology for Estimation of Poverty, 2009.

Available online at <http://planningcommission.nic.in/reports/genrep/tilak.pdf>
New Delhi: Planning Commission.{Last Accessed on 21/6/2020}.

Tipandjan, A., Klaus, D. (2015) Son Preference in India: Shedding light on the North-South Gradient. *Comparative Population Studies*. **40**(1), pp.77-102.

UNICEF (2006) *Handbook on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act*. New York: United Nations.

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, (2000) *The Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments*. Paris: UNESCO

Velan, N., Tripathy, S. & Bhaskaran, P.V. (2012) Gender Discrimination in Household Budgets in South India: A Case Study. *Hemispheres*. **27**, pp.91-107,221.

Wahlang, J. (2015) *Social Status and Role of Women among the Khasi Tribe of Meghalaya*. Conference paper presented at the second international gathering [Indigenous Terra Madre \(ITM\)](#) 3rd - 7th November, Shillong: India. DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.1.1160.4564](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.1160.4564)

Warren, S & Vincent, C. (2001) "This won't take long...": Interviewing, ethics and diversity. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*. **14**(1), pp.39-53.

White, D., Oelke, N, & Friesen, S. (2012) Management of a Large Qualitative Data Set: Establishing Trustworthiness of the Data. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. **11**(3), pp.244-258.

White, J.W., Felipe, R.,N. & Brown T, C.(2001) Feminism and the Decade of Behavior. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*. **25**(4), pp.267-279.

Wicks, A. & Whiteford, G. (2006) Conceptual and practical issues in qualitative research: Reflections on a life-history study. *Scandinavian Journal of Occupational Therapy*. **13**(2), pp. 94-100.

Willmore, L. (2004) Basic Education as a Human Right. *Economic Affairs*. **24**(4), pp.17-21.

Wolcott, H. (1999) *Ethnography: A Way of Seeing*. Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield

Wolcott, H.F. (1997) Ethnographic Research in Education. In: Jaeger, R.M. (ed.) *Qualitative Research in Higher Education: Expanding Perspectives*. American Educational Research Association, pp. 155-172.

Wolfe, G, E. (2014) Does Educating Girls Really Change the World? *Sex Roles*. **71**(5),pp.278-281.

Wolgemuth, J.R, & Donohue, R. (2006) Toward an Inquiry of Discomfort: Guiding Transformation in "Emancipatory" Narrative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*.**12**(5), pp.1012-1021.

Wollstonecraft, M. (1972) (Revised 2000 edition), *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Boston: Peter Edes for Thomas and Andrews.

Worku, Y. (2001) "Ethiopia: From bottom to top in higher education-gender role problems." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*.**21** (1/2),pp. 98-104.

World Bank (1993) *Atlas Method for Measuring Gross National Income*. Washington DC.: World Bank.

World Bank (2019) *World Development Indicators*. Washington DC.: World Bank.

World Bank. 2012. *Women, Business and the Law*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Xu, H., Zhang, Z., Wu, L., & Wang, C (2019) The Cinderella Complex: Word embeddings reveal gender stereotypes in movies and books. *PLOS ONE*.**14**(11), p.e0225385.

Zhang, Y., Kao, G. & Hannum, E. (2007) Do mothers in rural China practice gender equality in educational aspirations for their children? *Gansu Survey of Children and Families Papers*. **51**(2) pp.131–157.

Zhu, W., X. & Kesketh, T. (2009) China's excess males, sex selective abortion, and one child policy: analysis of data from 2005 national intercensus survey. *British Medical Journal(online)*.**338**(7700), pp.920-923.

Appendix I - Covering Letter

I, Pooja Haridarshan, am a Post Graduate Research student at the University of Northampton, United Kingdom and am pursuing my PhD. My research interest lies in understanding “The influence of the childhood experiences of women in Bangalore, India, upon their aspirations for their children: socio-cultural and academic perspectives”, within the Devanga community. This is a qualitative, ethnographic study which will be conducted to determine whether the woman’s childhood experiences have impacted or will impact the expectations from her children and if there is a difference in expectations from her son and daughter. The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons behind mothers’ childhood experiences, expectations and pressures. Because of their secondary status in the society, girls suffer from low self- esteem and this is a significant issue that affects a large population of India. Research studies in India have not investigated the nature and prevalence of this problem. This prompted me to investigate this further.

Late Dr. Rajalakshamma is my father -in-law Dr. Janardhan’s mother and a huge inspiration to all of us. It is with her blessings as well as Sri Dayananda Puri Mahaswamiji’s support and encouragement as well as Mr. Thimmashetty’s help and guidance that I have decided to take up this research and thus make a small yet worthy contribution to our community.

I am hopeful of your voluntary participation that would enable me to obtain rich data about our community.

Appendix II - Information Sheet

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Pooja Haridarshan, am a Post Graduate Research student at the University of Northampton, United Kingdom and am pursuing my PhD. I work as a Special Educator at Brindavan Education Trust, Jayanagar, Bangalore in the After School Remedial program.

I would like to request you to be a part of my study as a research participant. Please find attached an Information Sheet that contains all the information pertaining to this research such as the reasons for doing this research, what your participation would mean to this study, how it would be conducted, its risks and benefits. I would be greatly obliged if you could go through this Information Sheet and feel free to revert with any clarifications whatsoever.

Your acceptance to participate in this study would further require you to sign the Informed Consent form which is attached in the last page of this document. A copy of the Information Sheet as well as the Informed Consent form will be given to you for you to be able to discuss it with your friends and family.

Thanking you

Yours Sincerely

Pooja Haridarshan

+91-9611254845

Pujapadki@gmail.com

Information Sheet for Participants

Study Title: The influence of the childhood experiences of women in Bangalore, India, upon their aspirations for their children: socio-cultural and academic perspectives.

Purpose of the research: The main purpose of this research is to understand:

- a) How have the childhood experiences of a sample of women in Bangalore impacted upon their aspirations for their children?
- b) Do mothers in this Bangalore sample have differing expectations in respect of the educational outcomes for their sons and daughters?
- c) How do the expectations of mothers in this Bangalore sample impact upon the educational opportunities provided to their daughters?

Who will conduct this research: This research will primarily be conducted by myself and will be overlooked and supervised by my 2 supervisors: Prof. Richard Rose and Dr. Johnson Jament.

How will it be conducted: This will be a complete, widespread study that shall entail filling out questionnaires followed by interviews with women who fall into the inclusion criteria of this study.

Do you need to participate: Your participation is voluntary. At no point during the study will you be unduly coerced into continuing to participate if you do not wish to do so. Also, if you do decide to participate and divulge information about yourselves, please be assured that it will be kept strictly confidential and anonymous.

Your role as a participant: Once you read and understand the purpose of this research and give your consent, you will be given a questionnaire to fill with very basic information. Based on your willingness to participate further, I will ask you a few questions which you may answer to the best of your ability.

Are there any risks involved? There are absolutely no foreseen risks in this research. Anything and everything you say will be kept anonymous and confidential and may be discussed only with my supervisors for which I will require your written consent.

What will be done with the Information? All the information provided by you will be kept in a locked cabinet for which only I will have access. Data stored in the computer will be password protected and hence kept confidential. None of the participants' names or personal details will be disclosed to maintain a high degree of anonymity and confidentiality. While publishing the final thesis, your permission will be sought to go ahead and publish the work.

Researcher's information: Please feel free to contact me for any clarifications related to this research.

Pooja Haridarshan (Research Student)

76-1-1, V.R Layout, J.P Nagar Ist Phase, Bangalore-78

+91-9611254845

pujapadki@gmail.com

[If any further clarifications are needed, you can also contact my supervisor](#)

[Prof. Richard Rose](#)

Director, Centre for Education and Research

The School of Education, University of Northampton

Park Campus, Boughton Green Road, Northampton, NN27AL

Richard.rose@northampton.ac.uk

I thank you for taking time out and reading this Information Sheet. If you are willing to participate, please go through the Informed Consent form on the following page and sign it.

If you do not wish to participate, your decision is respected.

Thank you once again.

Appendix III - Informed Consent

Consent to Participate in Research

The influence of the childhood experiences of women in Bangalore, India, upon their aspirations for their children: socio-cultural and academic perspectives

Dear Participant

I, Pooja Haridarshan, would like to seek your permission to work with you in order to determine the influence of the childhood experiences of women in Bangalore, India, upon their aspirations for their children: socio-cultural and academic perspectives. This is a qualitative, ethnographic study which will be conducted to determine whether the woman's childhood experiences have impacted or will impact her expectations from her children and if there is a difference in expectations from the son and daughter. This research is in partial fulfilment in completion of a PhD from the University of Northampton.

The purpose of this study is to explore the reasons behind childhood maternal experiences, expectations and pressures. Because of their secondary status in the society, girls suffer from low self-esteem and this is a significant issue that affects a large population of India. Research studies in India have not investigated the nature and prevalence of this problem. This prompted the researcher, who is a woman, that this matter needed serious investigation.

My sample would comprise of mothers having 2 children of opposite genders. The research would begin with me handing out questionnaires (after having obtained consent) to the participants. Based on the responses and willingness of the participants, I will further be interviewing a few mothers, and these will be audio taped and transcribed later, for which I seek your permission.

You can be assured that all the data disclosed will be kept strictly confidential and unnamed (as per your wish) and will only be accessed by myself and my supervisor, Prof. Richard Rose.

If any audiotape recordings are used for educational purposes, your identity will be protected.

If at any time during the course of the study you wish to discontinue, or feel uncomfortable, you will not be coerced into continuing. Your participation in this research is purely voluntary.

This research is not focused on any particular cultural group/sect of the society. It is only a small-scale research project which would help me gain insight to this issue.

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact:

Pooja Haridarshan (pujapadki@gmail.com)

Prof. Richard Rose (Richard.rose@northampton.ac.uk)

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

I Have read and understood all of the information given above. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and all of them have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

(Name of participant)

(Signature)

(Date)

(Address and contact number)

12. Till when did your sisters study?

- a) Completed graduation b) Completed 10th Grade c) Completed 12th Grade

13. Were you encouraged to attend school and achieve what you wanted to academically?

- a) Yes b) No

14. Did you have any other ambitions?

15. How important was education to you in achieving your ambitions?

16. Were you encouraged to participate in other activities at school?

- a) Yes b) No

17. If No, then why?

18. How old were you when you got married?

19. How many years have you been married for?

20. What kind of a family setup do you live in?

- a) Joint family b) Nuclear family c) With your in laws

21. How many children do you have?

- a) 2 children b) 3 children c) More than 3

22. Please list how many boys and how many girls and also mention their age.

23. Do all your children attend school?

24. What are your expectations from your son in terms of academic achievements?

25. How important is it for your son to perform academically?

- a) Very important b) Important c) Not important at all

26. What are your expectations from your daughter in terms of academic achievements?

27. How important is it for your daughter to perform academically?

- a) Very important b) Important c) Not important at all

28. Who makes decisions regarding your son's education in your family?

- a) Only you b) You and your husband c) Your husband and in laws

Appendix V - Interview Questions

1. Tell me something about your childhood and that of your siblings.
2. Did you have the same educational opportunities as your siblings?
3. Did you have any kind of ambitions in your childhood? Were you encouraged to fulfil them? If not, why?
4. Did you see a difference in attitudes of people in the family towards you when you got married? If so, what were these?
5. What kind of a relationship do you share with your in laws and husband?
6. What are your views on the currently expected role of a woman in the Indian society?
7. Where do you see yourself in this role? Are you satisfied? If not, why?
8. From what you have described about your childhood, has this influenced your parenting styles/ aspirations for your children? In what way has this happened?
9. What career would you like your daughter to pursue? Why? What are her interests?
10. What career would you like your son to pursue and why? Is he also interested in it?
11. Do you think that the requirements of education have changed significantly since you were in school? (prompt – if yes in what ways? prompt 2 has this had an impact upon both boys and girls?)
12. Reflecting on your own education, what might you have changed about this?
13. Since you live in a joint family, how important is it for you to take other family members' opinions in your decisions regarding your children?
14. Is there anything else you would like to share with me?

Appendix VI - Field Notes

The interviews were conducted one-to-one and some were done telephonically. Attached below are field notes observations during two such interviews.

Case 1: Face to face interviews.

After filling out the questionnaire, Participant 45 consented to being interviewed at the same place where she had filled out the questionnaire. I explained the process of audio-recording her interview and proceeded to the interview. She seemed quite comfortable answering the questions and did not feel I was being over intrusive or sensitive. The interview was suddenly interrupted by her young son who came into the room out of curiosity to see what was going on. I noticed a sense of unease and discomfort on the participant's face and I presume it was because she feared her son would go and convey the information being given by her to her family members (husband and in laws). Her husband was aware of her participation in this research but did not know the sensitive questions I was planning on asking her during the interview. The interview had to be paused till she convinced her son to leave the room as we were having an "important meeting" and "children could not be a part of it". Her son left the room rather disapprovingly following which the participant just wanted to finish the interview because of the underlying fears of her information being disclosed. This caused a disruption in the flow of the interview, but it was an anticipated challenge and I had to be satisfied with whatever information was disclosed.

Case 2: Telephonic interview.

Participant 33 consented to being interviewed telephonically as she was not comfortable leaving her house and coming to a neutral place, nor did she want me to visit her residence. A convenient time was fixed for the interview. When I called, her telephone was answered by her husband

which surprised me because I had assumed her husband would be away at work and hence, she had fixed that particular time for the interview. After having followed the necessary ethical procedures of explaining the process of audio recording the telephonic conversation, I proceeded to begin questioning her. The first two questions were answered by her but by the time I began the third question, responses were being prompted by her husband. I waited for a minute and then asked the same question again, hoping that the response would be different but that was not so. She repeated saying "I just told you what my husband said." There was no way of telling her that I was looking for her responses and not those prompted by her husband. The next question was answered by her, but she was interrupted by her husband who told her to change the response. This kind of interference can be quite detrimental to the entire process as well as demotivating for the researcher and unfortunately this data could not be considered for this thesis.

Appendix VII - List of Codes

1. **AE:** Against education: Society/ family's opposition against education, either of the son or the daughter. Not understanding the importance of education
2. **AGE:** Against girls' education: Society/ family/ father being against educating girls in Indian society
3. **CC:** Content childhood: mothers who had happy childhood experiences
4. **CE:** Childhood experiences: Maternal experiences of her childhood, good or bad
5. **CEP:** childhood experience of poverty: Women who have been through extreme situations of poverty in their childhood, some even to the point of not having 2 square meals a day
6. **DSL:** Dissatisfied with life: Making more than required compromises and adjustments in life.
7. **ECE:** Extracurricular encouragement: Encouragement to participate in extracurricular activities.
8. **EE:** Equal expectations from children: mothers who have equal expectations from their children and have made no extra provisions for their girls' education
9. **EfG:** Education for girls
10. **ENM:** Expectations not met
11. **FE:** Freedom to express
12. **FRGE:** Financial restrictions on girls' education: Not allocating equal funds on a girl's education as compared to the boys in the family
13. **GBCE:** Gender bias in childhood education: Providing differing educational opportunities in their childhood (maternal experiences)
14. **CE:** Childhood encouragement: Mothers having been encouraged in their childhood to study.
15. **GES:** gender equality amongst siblings: Maternal experiences of equality in their childhood with their siblings
16. **GS:** Gender stereotypes: sticking to gender specific roles such as cooking, cleaning and not having the freedom to even wear clothes of one's choice.

- 17.**IDM**: Independent decision making: Decisions related to careers and professions are left to the children instead of their mothers deciding for them
- 18.**IGE**: Importance of girls' education
- 19.**IoE**: Importance of education: Why is education so important in today's world?
- 20.**ITW**: Ill treatment of women: physical and psychological abuse against women
- 21.**LE**: Lack of encouragement: Women who have not had the encouragement/ opportunity of going to school/ completing education
- 22.**LEO**: Lack of educational opportunities: not providing educational opportunities either for the sake of marriage or finances
- 23.**LOF**: Mothers not being given the freedom to do as they wished in their childhood
- 24.**LOEC**: Lack of educational opportunities in childhood: the mothers in this research who were not given educational opportunities in their childhood
- 25.**LSC**: Lack of self confidence
- 26.**LSS**: Lack of support from spouse
- 27.**MAE**: Met Academic expectations: Maternal expectations from her children have been fulfilled
- 28.**NE**: No expectations
- 29.**NFE**: need for education: Women understanding the need for education for her children and women particularly
- 30.**OPP**: Over-protective parenting: Not permitting girls/ boys to cross certain boundaries laid down by the parents/ family
- 31.**PAEC**: Positive Academic expectations from children (mother's): Maternal expectations from her children in terms of academics
- 32.**RLB**: regional language barrier: mothers who are unable to speak English find their regional language to be a barrier
- 33.**SE**: Societal expectations: Society's expectations from a woman/her child/ her family in terms of education, behavior, marriage.
- 34.**SS**: Self sufficiency
- 35.**UAA**: Unaccomplished academic ambitions: maternal experiences of unaccomplished academic ambitions of becoming a doctor/ fashion designer

36. **UAE:** Unmet academic expectations (maternal): Mother's expectations from her children are not met
37. **UECA:** Unaccomplished extracurricular ambitions: maternal experiences of unaccomplished ambitions such as pursuing dance/ music in their childhood
38. **UMA:** Unaccomplished maternal ambitions: Women who were unable to fulfill their ambitions in their childhood