RESULTS

AND

INTERPRETATIONS

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This chapter is divided into the following five sections:

Section 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of the participants.

Section 2 describes the reasons for pursuing higher education, milieu of higher education and the changes in identity of women with higher education.

Section 3 provides an account of the changes in identity after marriage as perceived by the women, in the context of the socialization process, the ideas associated with marriage and the adjustments made by the women to fulfill the expectations of husband and in-laws. Some other emerging factors that mediated the identity after marriage have also been discussed here.

Section 4 illustrates the emerging linkages between higher education, marriage and identity of women.

Section 5 portrays the different types of identity formed by highly educated and married women exemplified with case profiles.

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants

Table 2 provides the socio-demographic profile of the participants including the age,

educational qualifications, place of stay during higher education, employment status, age

at marriage, duration of marriage and mode of partner selection.

Table 2

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Participants (N=35)

Age (in years)	No. of women
23-24	5
25-26	17
27-28	6
29-30	7
Educational qualification	
Business Management (MBA)	10
Journalism, Cinema (MJMC)	5
Computer Applications (MCA)	2
Chartered Accountancy (CA)	2
Medicine (MD)	2
Liberal Arts (MA), Education (BEd)	14
Place of stay while pursuing higher education	
At hostel	10
At home with parents	25

(table continues)

Employment status	No. of women
Employed	25
Currently not employed	10
Age at marriage (in years)	
22-23	8
24-25	12
26-27	12
28	3
Duration of marriage (in years)	
1-2	23
2-3	12
Mode of partner selection	
Self-selection	17
Arranged	18

The age of women ranged from 23 to 30 years with almost half of the women (17 women) being 25-26 years of age. All the women were postgraduates. Some had professional degrees in journalism, business management, medicine, chartered accountancy, and media; while others had second degree in languages, education, arts and social sciences.

Of the 35 women, 25 were employed outside home and ten were housewives. Seven out of these ten women were employed earlier. During the time of interview, they were either

waiting to apply for a new job, or settle in a new city after marriage or were just "taking a break" from work. Only three women had never been employed.

Majority (24 women) of the women got married between the ages of 24-27 years. Almost one third of the women (eight women) got married at the age of 22-23 years. Three women got married late, when they were 28 years old. Literature reveals that with higher education, the age at marriage for women also increases (Gupta & Sharma, 2003; Banerjee, 1999; Seymour, 1999)

All the women stayed in joint families after marriage. However the composition of family varied. Some households consisted of only the mother-in-law and father-in-law; while other extended families also had brother-in-law and sister-in-law staying together. In certain households either mother-in-law or father-in-law was present.

Section 2

Higher Education and Identity of Women

This section deals with the changes in the identity of women with higher education, as perceived by the women themselves, in the context of the meaning attributed to higher education, reasons for pursuing higher education and the milieu in which the women pursued their higher education.

Almost half of the women were professionally qualified in the fields of business administration, journalism, advertising, media, medicine, computer software and chartered accountancy. Others were holding graduate degrees in language and literature, education and tourism. Five women got married in the midst of their graduate education and completed their education after marriage.

Reasons for Pursuing Higher Education

The reasons for pursuing higher education can be categorized into two: aspirations of self and parents, and education as a means to better job and promotion. The responses varied depending on the course pursued. The women in professional courses often referred to the motive of self-aspiration, whereas women from liberal arts pursued higher education more often for improving their career chart.

Aspirations of self and parents

Women often expressed aspirations of self and parents as the primary reason for pursuing a graduate degree.

In case of Business Administration, the women manifested self-motivation and inclination to study further. The fact that their parents were educated and valued education helped them to pursue courses of their interest. Though the education of

parents was not specifically asked in the interview, however, the analysis revealed that five of the women in professional courses attributed their educational aspirations to the educational background of their parents. For instance, Parul, a software professional said, "My father has been into software, so we always had a computer at home. He was always doing programming and I picked a lot of it myself." Similarly, Ritu received a lot of support to pursue medical field from her parents who were both doctors themselves. Most of the women felt that it was important to seek permission from parents about the course that they wished to study. In the Indian context children take academic decisions in concurrence with the parents. Academic decisions are family matters that are guided by considerations of family welfare, family resources and gender roles for girls (Mukhopadhyay, 2004; Chanana, 2003; Mukhopadhyay, 2001). For example, Ritu, a graduate in Export Management said, "I told you I did whatever I thought was right. In the sense I did ask my parents, but I finally decided. I thought that this course was good. I wanted to do my PG (post graduate), so I did it. I don't care about others, so I asked only my parents."

Mothers' aspiration to make their daughters financially independent was frequently mentioned by many women. Shweta said, "My mother was always keen that I should pursue as high as I could. Further education was not a problem, but the kind of education was a problem as it needed a lot of convincing. It was only because it (MBA) was something new and by that time not many people had done it. So it needed some convincing in the family."

Parul who was brought up in a single-parent family by her mother said, "My mother was a firewall for me. She struggled to make me something. She said that if my daughter feels

that this is the right break for her career then I will tell everyone that she has done right thing and that I will support you. She always said that because you are born a girl does not mean that you will remain financially dependent. You will get educated, earn your bread." Similar findings were reflected in Gupta and Sharma's (2003) study with women in IITs (Indian Institute of Technology) and in Seymour's (1994) study with the students of three Asian Women's Institute (AWI) in India, where mothers' motivation and employment had a significant influence on the daughter's aspirations for higher education and work outside home.

It was interesting to see that women were conscious of their need for becoming autonomous which in turn led them to pursue higher education. Punam exclaimed, "That was the time when I also realized that I am not like my cousins or my own brother. I really wanted my own space; I wanted to be on my own." Similarly Radhika said, "I am not a kind of person who would just stay a graduate. I am a kind of person who would always do something in life. Even now I want to do more, rise in life." This is corroborated by Seymour's study (1994) where women attended college for personal goals such as 'self improvement' and 'self fulfillment' more than familial goals. Surabhi and Parul were cognizant of their skills and not only wanted to enhance those, but also turn them into a career. For example, Surabhi said, "I was good at writing and languages. I applied for advertising and got through."

Some women opted for courses which their parents, other elders and siblings had pursued. For example, Puja said, "I wanted to do something, so did CA. My sister was doing CA and father is a CA." On the other hand Shweta had a clear career path mapped since her high school and struggled to pursue it. She said, "I passed 10th standard and said

I want to take commerce, MBA, probably want to get into something called advertising. This basically came to me because I was a voracious reader right from beginning. We are a family of doctors and judges. They said that ok! Shweta can also become a doctor. She has an advantage of having a lineage of doctors, plus it's a good profession for women because domesticated life is also there. There was always a lot of resistance for management but then they said fine! Do whatever you want to."

It is interesting to note that these women were given an opportunity to study courses of their own interest. They negotiated with parents about the college where they wanted to study, the courses they wanted to opt for and if they wanted to stay away from the family (such as in a hostel in a different city), but none of them had to really struggle to puruse higher studies. Increasingly parents have started to support the aspirations of their daughters. Parents encourage their daughters towards academic achievement and economic independence in order to prepare them for any 'future uncertainties' (Chanana, 2001; Seymour, 1999; Subrahmanyam, 1998).

Education as a means to promotion and better job

Education was also considered a means to get promotion in employment. Women in languages and literature pursued graduate courses to get better jobs and promotions. Shalu, a school teacher pursued her graduate degree in arts because, "It gives you a chance to get promotions in career." A similar reason was cited by another school teacher, Surabhi when she said, "I love literature. So after doing English honors I wanted to do M.A.I was interested in this subject. I just appeared for B.Ed and I got through. It was a good institute so I decided to do it. Anyway I was interested in teaching. And B.Ed helped me to get job in school."

Tanu joined airlines after completing her under graduate studies and did a graduate degree in tourism so as to progress in that field. At the time of interview Archana was in the final semester of her MCA. She decided to do this course as it might provide her with a better job.

Abhilasha, after completing her M.A., experimented with different courses. She did diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication followed by a computer course and a course in interior decoration that she finally pursued as her career. Abhilasha had started to work soon after her B.A. She completed all the other courses while employed. She was interested in pursuing Journalism as her career but her family discouraged by saying that 'this career was not preferable for girls' (especially in *Baniya* caste which is considered to be a conservative community). So she decided to become an interior decorator. Women viewed it crucial to get a graduate degree, be it for self-satisfaction or better employment opportunities.

Milieu during Higher Education

Of the 35 women, 25 pursued higher education by staying in the same city with parents, while ten women moved out of their homes and stayed in a hostel. Of the 25, two women obtained graduate degrees in liberal arts through correspondence.

Many women in professional courses found the learning atmosphere enriching as they met people with similar backgrounds, mindset and ambitions. Since their courses were performance oriented they had to work hard. They made good friends. Women who had stayed in a hostel talked more enthusiastically about their educational period in comparison to the ones who stayed at home. They found the environment different from

their homes. They learnt to stay independently, made their own decisions and felt responsible towards themselves.

Hostel life was an amazing time for Shweta who said, "Staying in hostel was a process for me to acclimatize to staying on your own, meeting strangers, finding for self whether this person is fine or not. It was a process to get me where I thought one can be."

Radhika was away from home for the first time when she went to Ahmedabad for her graduate degree. She shared, "In the beginning hostel was a shock, specially being away from home. At home we were always as a group. You do something for others, somebody is doing something for you but hostel was not that way. You have to do your own stuff. Secondly being on your own. See I had friends but friends can't have that selfless attitude which your parents have. But still it was also a lot of fun because you could completely do whatever you wanted to."

At home, girls are brought up with certain restrictions on time, space, friends and clothes (Dube, 2001) which get relaxed when they stay away from family, in hostels, where they develop different ideas, values and life skills. Parikh and Garg (1989) made similar conclusions in their study which indicated that girls studying management courses formed networks of relationships that established new behaviors related to autonomy and social-psychological independence.

Some women who stayed with parents also had fond memories of their educational period. Ritu exuberantly shared, "In Pune all the colleges are maddening. The other person is not bothered about what you are doing. Professors are not stuck to only their subjects. They would attend our parties. They were very approachable. We would have dinners at their place. It was really fun, party time. I feel everyone should have an

experience like this. I was staying at home and still away from home. Home was more like a hotel for me."

The educational period was not as pleasant for everyone. For Monika the educational period was not as exciting as she was not interested in the course. She said, "I slogged in B.Ed. Everyday I used to regret taking admission. I told you I don't like to study. We were a good group of friends. So that was fun but I used to dread exams, assignments."

Purnima was traumatized as her brother had passed away when she was pursuing her MBA. She shared, "I did not take my MBA seriously. There was a trauma that happened at my place. My brother had expired. So my thinking was different. I thought how it matters what you do in life. Things that will happen will happen. That was the time when I had started with MBA. I was de-motivated."

Stay in hostel emerged as a significant variable influencing the identity of women. Hostel life not only enhanced the personal identity where women developed autonomy and felt more responsible towards their own life, but also contributed to the social identity as they learnt to cope with people from different cultural backgrounds.

Impact of Higher Education on the Identity of Women

Out of the 35 women interviewed, 25 were gainfully employed. Identity development was a combined effect of the process of socialization, the kind of course they pursued during higher education, stay in hostel and their employment status. The identity of women with higher education was expressed in terms of cognitive development, becoming independent and pursuing a career of interest. Figure 3 provides some responses of women relating identity development and higher education:
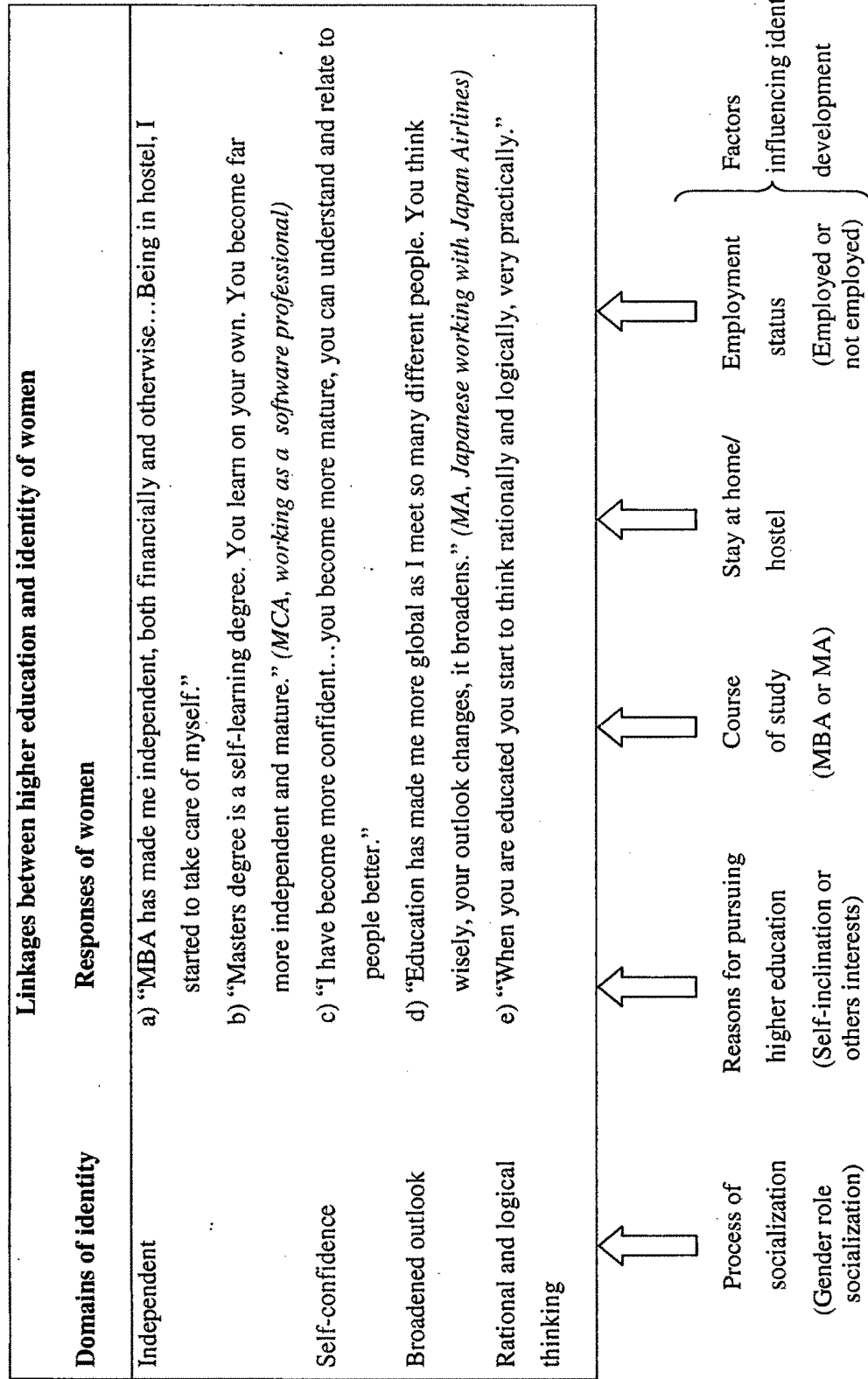
Linkages between higher education and identity of women

Domains of identity	Responses of women
Independent	a) "MBA has made me independent, both financially and otherwise...Being in hostel, I started to take care of myself."
	b) "Masters degree is a self-learning degree. You learn on your own. You become far more independent and mature." *(MCA, working as a software professional)*
Self-confidence	c) "I have become more confident...you become more mature, you can understand and relate to people better."
Broadened outlook	d) "Education has made me more global as I meet so many different people. You think wisely, your outlook changes, it broadens." *(MA, Japanese working with Japan Airlines)*
Rational and logical thinking	e) "When you are educated you start to think rationally and logically, very practically."

Process of socialization	Course of study	Stay at home/ hostel	Employment status
(Gender role socialization)	(MBA or MA)		(Employed or not employed)
Reasons for pursuing higher education			
(Self-inclination or others interests)			

Factors influencing identity development

Figure 3. Linkages between higher education and the identity of women.

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One theme that emerged during analysis was feeling **independent and changes in thinking** of women with higher education.

Independence was unanimously reported by almost all the women. They talked about feeling independent with higher education in terms of their thinking, taking decisions, minding their own life, and financially for those who were employed.

All women reported that the graduate degree contributed to their intellect in terms of the subject matter they studied. Women experienced changes in their thought processes in terms of thinking broadly, wisely, objectively and visualizing aspects from different perspectives. Women said that with higher education they had become 'broad minded', 'global', 'smart', developed 'broad outlook' and 'an open mind'.

Some women developed a questioning mind, and skills of problem solving and time management. Women, who were yet not currently employed, felt secure after their graduate degrees as they were confident that if necessary, they could earn a living.

An interesting observation is that women pursuing professional courses like business administration, media, advertising, mass communication and those who also stayed in hostel experienced a significant impact of their education on their thinking process as compared to women who studied language and literature. For example, on being asked about the changes in her after pursuing higher education, Surabhi, a post graduate in liberal arts said, "Education might have brought about some changes but I think it is my family which has influenced me more. That is how I feel. Your education may change your outlook but practical things I have learnt by staying in the semi joint family." This finding supports the work of Mukhopadhyay (2004) who found academic independence and self-confidence amongst women studying in the professional fields. Early work in the

field (Khatri, 1970; Parikh & Garg, 1989) and more current research perspectives (Gupta & Sharma, 2003; Mukhopadhyay, 2004) reflect similar findings. Formally educated women, especially women in professional courses, get exposed to new ideas, making them challenge the existing norms and approach behavioral changes more openly than less educated women. These findings are corroborated by Sudha (2000) who conducted a study in Karnataka, one of the southern states of India, where women with formal education expressed that schooling not only created awareness of their rights, facilitating the development of individuality and rationality, but also encouraged them to challenge traditionally constructed gender roles.

Provided in the text boxes below are comments by two women about their specific courses:

Mass Communication: Becoming a 'Firebrand' Activist

Rashmi did her Masters degree in Mass Communication at Mumbai and stayed in a hostel. She felt that Mass Communication was an eye opener for her. She said, "The kind of study I did is an activist oriented one. It teaches you to live like a firebrand activist. So there is a dissonance. I try not to think a lot about it. If something is happening in this house, then I say. For example, I have a niece; my *bhabhi (sister-in-law)* has a daughter. She is very attached to us. She is a very intelligent kid. Her mother is a very caring one but she is not exposed to lot of things. For e.g., the toys that she would buy are those typical ones like barbie doll....very boring. So Pankaj and I started buying her those cognitive ones like scrabble so she also got hooked to it. She would make words. Now they have realized that its good to buy such things. That's the thing. I would never ever give any child a Barbie doll. I think its largely because of my course that I think like that. I feel Barbie doll propagates that stereotype. Now that you are asking me I realize that it is because of my education".

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> ### *Cinema: Understanding Relationships*
>
> With Gauri who did her graduation in Cinema at Pune and stayed in a hostel, the institute and hostel changed her understanding of relationships. Excitedly she shared, "The moment I entered into this institute my whole logic of life changed. There were no bars on sleeping with anyone, drinking, smoking, *charas, ganja*….you name it….you are watching adult films. So your whole perception to relationship changes. Earlier I had childish aspirations. Then I got interested towards a mature relation where I wanted a *samazdar banda (understanding person)* with practical relation. Because in Indian society you can't as a child understand the relationship between a husband and wife. Then when you watch six films on what are relationships, what is good, bad, physicality….Then that physical curiosity is not there because you go one level up. So during my post grad I understood what relationships were about".

Another common theme that emerged was the **feeling of maturity, confidence, ambitiousness**, and **focused actions or behaviors**, generated by higher education. Puja noted that the change in her behavior was a combined effect of education and stay in hostel. She said, "I had lived such a sheltered life with my parents that in those two years I grew up very fast. In the first three months I realized lot of things. You have to manage things on your own. In life you meet many people and some of them you like and some don't. Earlier the people whom you didn't like, you can just ignore. But now you can't do that. You have to be mature enough to deal with a situation like that. You learn to be more diplomatic."

Ritu expressed, "Education has made me more acceptable. In the sense, I don't get scandalized, don't pass judgments on what I see or hear from others. It has made me more patient before I say anything. It has made me correct all my information before I say that this is right or wrong. That is what my college has taught me."

Contrarily some women felt that graduate degree did not bring any change in them. These were women who studied liberal arts and did their courses through correspondence or were staying with parents. There was lack of self-interest and motivation among women who pursued their graduate degree to fulfill the aspirations of parents. Also, women who completed their graduation with an intention to seek better job or promotion, reflected limited self-growth due to higher education.

For Shalu, "M.A. is just a degree in your name. There are no changes after doing post graduation except intellectually." Similar comments were made by Puja who said, "See I am not a professional. My sister is a professional, an MBA. I can see that after education and job her skills have got enhanced. I don't think in my case education has contributed so much."

Even for Anita and Anamika, their education in liberal arts did not bring any noticeable change in them. Though they agreed that education brought maturity in thinking, nevertheless they believed that maturity comes with age. Also, these women were not currently employed and did not express any inclination to take a job in future. They were happy being homemakers.

For most of the women, especially with professional degrees, it was important to be gainfully employed. All the MBAs and women in journalism and advertising were struggling hard to pursue a career. Women in management in Parikh and Garg's study

(1989) wanted to pursue their profession that gave them a sense of autonomy, self-respect, mental alertness and feeling of self-worth in life.

For some women it was important to be employed, but opted for professions to suit their married life. This is clearly reflected in Surabhi's statement, a professional in advertising, when she told me, "If you sit idle, you feel that your education is being wasted. If you are not much educated, then it does not make a difference even if you are at home. You don't feel that your education is being wasted. Once you have put in so many years of hard work, you just don't want to let it go wasted."

Tanu shifted from working in the airlines to her husband's business because she was interested in working and wanted to do something that was convenient to her schedule after marriage. She said, "I want to work. If I don't go to work then I think I will be a mad person. Because sitting at home is not my cup of tea. Before marriage I was working with airlines and now I am working with my husband. I can't dream of a day when I am not going out. If there is someone who has come at home then it is different. I love to work outside. I get tired when I go to shop but then I like going there. I try to balance. It is a toll on me. After marriage I thought that I want to discontinue and join my husband. Because in business I can finish my house work and go."

Higher education among women also brings in a desire to be gainfully employed. Having self-inclination and motivation some women continue with demanding professions for 'self-fulfillment', while others opt for professions that suit their married life.

Summary

Summarizing this section, in the present study, higher education shaped the personal identity of most of the professional women. Women's individual educational and professional achievements developed many distinctive characteristics and behaviors such as becoming 'independent', 'confident', 'mature', 'logical', 'analytical' and 'broadened outlook'. With higher education, establishment and attainment of one's career goals is an important source of 'self-satisfaction' and 'self-fulfillment' for professional women. The articulation of personal characteristics and goals by these women reflects knowledge about oneself which is an important component of personal identity.

Contrarily women in liberal arts did not observe a significant impact of higher education on their identity. The process of identity development due to higher education needs to be viewed in a context in which it is provided (Kabeer, 2005). Multiple interlinked factors influencing the identity of women with higher education emerged, such as the socialization process where the emphasis on traditional gender roles may be prevalent; reasons for pursuing higher education that may be marked by lack of self-interest of women; and the courses pursued that may not be so challenging and fail to develop 'self-reliance' in women unlike most of the professional courses (such as management, journalism, advertising, medicine).

Section 3

Marriage and Identity

This section describes the changes in identity of women after marriage, as perceived by the women themselves. It begins with a description of the emerging factors that have influenced the identity of women and the adjustments made by the women in response to the expectations associated with her new marital roles.

1. Factors influencing the identity of women are:

- Socialization for marriage

- Perceptions about 'marriage' before and after getting married

- Courtship period

- Age and duration of marriage

- Role expectations of husband and family members

2. Adjustments in marriage

- Life style of the affinal family

- Composition of the affinal family

- Career of women

The synergistic impact of the above aspects on the identity of women is dealt with at the end of the section.

1. Factors Influencing the Identity of Women

Socialization for marriage

With regard to the socialization of women, all of them were provided with some information about adjustments after marriage by the family members, mostly mothers. In case of families where mother was not available, either father or other elder women

played a role. Though most of the women were socialized towards enhancement of their career where there was little or no mention of demands of a married life, yet they received 'last minute tips' just a few days before their wedding. Only three women were clearly socialized to perform gender roles wherein the women were expected to assume more household responsibilities. As Parul said, "She (mother) always emphasized that she can't predict in what way the (affinal) family will be different, so I must be totally flexible in everything. For example, I told her that I want to be a working woman so she said that in that case don't think that you can escape from your house hold duties. And suppose you get a husband who is least interested in kitchen or in helping you out so don't think that you can create an issue out of it. You have to do both. The household work can't be compromised because it is ultimately the woman who carries the house on her shoulders. You should not neglect the household in any way."

Puja received intensive training from her mother for cooking, developing acceptable behaviors (such as getting up early in the morning, making beds, speaking softly), tolerance and adjusting to a new environment. This was typical of the socialization pattern followed in India where girls are expected to establish a 'feminine' identity by developing proficiency in household tasks and learning self-denial and modesty (Dube, 2001).

Many women who stayed in a different city for higher education or employment neither gave any serious thought to marriage nor got an opportunity for any formal training from parents to prepare them for a married life. However, upon returning home just before marriage, their mothers gave advice on how to make adjustments with different family members after marriage.

Ritu was staying away from parents during her MD. She said, "Actually I didn't know

about changes that take place after marriage. I was staying in hostel, so I was quite

unaware of it. I used to think what problems can come after marriage? Since I have

always been academically oriented, I never paid attention to all these things."

Radhika's parents encouraged her to pursue her career. She said, "See I was working

before marriage. If you stay at home, probably you have time to think about such things. I

never thought about such aspects. I was completely unprepared. My entire family is

oriented towards education, success in your chosen field. So this marriage, in-laws was

never important in our scheme of ideas. I never thought about in-laws before marriage,

whether I will stay together... I know people who spend a lot of time thinking about these

things. I feel they are the ones who spend more time at home and are home oriented. I

never had time."

Even though career oriented women were not socialized from early years for a married

life, parents, and especially mother, provided lot of valuable information to their

daughters just before their marriage in terms of adjustment to a new family. Most of the

women did not take those advices seriously at that time but realized later when faced with

certain situations after marriage where those tips proved useful. Almost half of the

women were prepared that marriage called for changes in oneself.

Rashmi remembered some precious advice that her mother gave, " 'Don't let everyone

walk over you. If there is something which is not affecting you too much, then give in. It

is not that you are giving in your personality. As long as it keeps peace in the family,

keep quiet and eventually people will respect you for that.' I think it works. When she

told me, I was not listening to it much. She would give all lectures about life after

marriage. That's the reason I don't make issue of things like changing my name, eating non-veg food. My mom said that if you can avoid creating frictions, just avoid it. In the process if you are getting killed, then don't. So I think that helped."

Women who selected their partner by themselves made conscious efforts to understand their family members before marriage. Shweta said, "He (husband) would tell me about his family. So I was kind of prepared for it, but to experience it by yourself, has taken me by surprise completely."

Women who got married late had observed different kinds of marriages in the society and felt equipped to handle different situations. After being married, women did not think that any kind of preparation could help to deal with the changes after marriage. They felt that a woman needed to be spontaneous, change according to the demands of the situation and develop strategies to handle situations.

Evidently, the socialization process indicates that marriage is inevitable for these women. However, there is a shift in the socialization process where the parents no longer engage in providing intensive training to prepare their daughters for the marital roles; instead they encourage their daughters towards better educational opportunities and establishment of career goals.

Perceptions about 'marriage', before marriage

When asked about 'what ideas they associated with marriage' before marriage, more than half of the women shared that they had never wanted to get married. Moreover, when asked about the meaning of marriage, women often shared their ideas about the partner. Most women had not clearly thought of marriage per se as they were busy pursuing their careers. The following ideas about marriage emerged:

Marriage as 'risk' to independence: It was interesting to observe that many professional women considered marriage as a threat to their independence. Women pursuing a career wanted a partner who would let them continue their career after marriage.

For Puja, "I value my independence a lot. As I said, my family is fairly orthodox. So for me, to live on my own and do things on my own was a struggle. And all that meant a lot to me. So I said I won't get married. I will get stuck to someone who will again tell me what to do and what not to do. And I didn't want all that...so this is what I thought was a big risk."

Even for Shweta her independence was essential. She said, "See, I, kind of respect independence a lot. I myself, am a very kind of independent person so I always thought that once I am on my own, I start working and the person I get married to should essentially give me the freedom to be myself. Due to whatever constraints, I had stopped certain things from happening in me, the real me had not come out by that time. So my expectations out of marriage was that this person should accept me as I am, let me be what I want to, experience the freedom which I could not earlier. That was my only thought that who so ever I get married to, should be open to what I am."

Divya did not have a good opinion about marriage as she said, "I always thought that the independence of the girl is taken away after marriage. I am an ambitious person, and I was scared that I will not be able to fulfill my ambition after marriage."

Marriage is equivalent to housework, compromise, adjustments and increased responsibility: Some women said that they had "seen" marriages around them, good and bad marriages, some that worked well and some that did not. They knew that marriage

called for compromises, understanding between family members and ensuring happiness of family members.

Surabhi said, "Marriage was not a fairy tale for me. I had seen examples where people get married with high expectations and then they do not get anything out of it. They get much less than what they had expected. So I had never given serious thought to marriage."

For Parul, "Marriage means going away, adjusting to other family, trying to understand what makes your husband happy, trying to ensure that you have a happy household. Girls in our family are taught right from beginning that this is what is going to happen and then they show us examples." Parul felt that she had an edge over other women and she gave the credit to her belonging to the Mathur community that, according to her, had more advantages compared to other communities. She added, "We (Mathurs) are more educated, liberal minded, forward looking, western habits. This you don't get else where. We don't have dowry system in our community."

For Archana, marriage meant household work. She thought she would be a housewife after marriage. Pragati who got married at the age of 27 years, had a more 'experienced' opinion about marriage. According to her, "I never had set ideas of marriage. Also it comes from experience. I've seen so many marriages in my family- some are running well, some are not going good. So I had an idea that marriage is not just a bed of roses, it also calls for compromises. It was like a feeling of being prepared for anything that comes... if good comes, I will be happy. If bad comes, I am prepared to deal with it."

Marriage brings material gains: For Tanu and Ritu marriage meant new clothes, jewelry, dining out, more freedom, love, sex and fun. Tanu excitedly shared, "Marriage for me was new clothes, new jewelry, finding places to dine. That was all. We will have

more freedom then what we had at our parents place." Ritu had a more romantic perception of marriage when she said, "(Marriage meant) Lot of love, a good sex life, lots of fun, lots of going out, wearing nice clothes, having somebody whom I can say that I want this."

Women in single parent families felt more responsible towards their siblings and parent, so they did not think of getting married. For example, after her father passed away, Monika had to assume many responsibilities. Similarly Riddhi took over more responsibilities when her mother passed away. She had an elder and a younger sister. She had decided not to get married until her elder sister got married in a family where she was well taken care of. Then gradually she agreed to the idea of marriage, though she was always concerned about her father and younger sister.

Thus, the career aspirations of women, family background and their observations of married people appeared to influence the perceptions about 'marriage'. Barring a few women, others held more negative connotations to marriage such as 'compromise', 'adjustment', 'understanding', 'loss of independence'.

Perceptions of a "good marriage", after marriage

Women were asked about their perceptions of a 'good marriage' after getting married. Most of the women said that in a good marriage, there is good understanding between the couple. Other attributes of a 'good' marriage included adjustment, compromises, compatibility between husband and wife, friendship, equal respect, faith, honesty, resilience and openness to express oneself.

Surprisingly, none of the women referred to in-laws in their description of a good marriage. A divided response emerged when they were asked if they considered in-laws

to be a part of their married life. Some women said that one got married to an entire family and an understanding with in-laws was essential, especially in cases where husband was attached to the parents; whereas a few other women had an indifferent attitude towards in-laws.

Tanu said, "Of course! It (In-laws) comes in the package. You realize these things after marriage that you are not getting married to only one person but it is the entire family that you are getting married to." Similarly with specific regard to the Mathur community, Parul said, "In our community it is a saying that marriage is not a bond between two souls but it a union of two families. In most marriages a daughter-in-law goes and stays with in-laws for some time so that she gets full induction of how families stay together, what is their behavior, customs, traditions."

Puja drew a line for the extent to which in-laws could be a part of her married life. She said, "You are not marrying him (husband) alone. Because he is attached to his family therefore you are in contact with those people. You have to include them in your life. It depends how much you want to include them, how much they want to be included." These responses are antithetical to the traditional conception of marriage in Hindu culture where marriage is viewed as a union between the two families. Even those women who were socialized towards a successful married life and those who, before marriage, believed that marriage required understanding between family members and ensuring their happiness, did not actually include in-laws in their conception of a married life. This could also be because increasingly children are brought up in nuclear families where the conjugal bond is more significant.

Courtship period

In arranged marriages, courtship period played an important role in getting oriented to the family. Women also felt that this period helped them to establish a bond with the husband and gave an opportunity to understand mutual expectations after marriage. Women even talked to their prospective mothers-in-law to understand their way of living and thinking. For Shalu, the courtship period "…was an opportunity to talk about family, job, expectations, and wedding preparations. I also shared my anxieties related to marriage."

Monika was very well oriented with the family during the courtship period. She said, "On the day of wedding I was comfortable with the idea of getting married, going in a different set of people. I had prepared myself. I knew what changes I am going to make in myself. So it wasn't difficult for me." Though the courtship period provided an orientation of the prospective family to the women, yet that was considered insufficient to understand the nuances of the new family such as specific behavioral characteristics of their husband (short temperedness, lack of interest in managing household affairs or maintaining cleanliness in bathroom). This was also mentioned by women who knew their partners before marriage for more than two years also. Shweta who knew Manish when they both were doing MBA together said, "One thing, which I did not realize and it did not hit me (when we were going around), was he is extremely a lazy person. If he has to do something you have to remind him twenty times." Sharing similar experience Surabhi said, "I knew my husband long time back, so I knew a little about his family also. I knew the situation, but not the magnitude of it…… I don't think one can prepare

oneself for such things. You cannot come to know what you would go through after marriage."

Thus, courtship period seemed like a 'preparatory step' for these women to get oriented to the expectations of the prospective family members and their own new roles and relationships after marriage.

Age and duration of marriage

Women, who got married at the age of 22-23 years seemed more acceptable to changes in identity after marriage in comparison to those women who married at the age of 26-27 years. Reason for late marriage for some women was that they wanted to pursue their career after marriage and hence preferred to wait for an appropriate alliance where the husband's family would accept their career aspirations and plans. In her own words, Ritu shared, "I wanted to work after marriage. In *Marwaris* to get a family which would let you work, is difficult. So basically I was waiting for a right proposal for me." Moreover these women had 'realistic' conception of marriage as they had witnessed "good" and "bad" marriages around them.

Women married for three years shared fewer complexities in their identity with higher education and marriage, in comparison to those who were married for one to two years. This could be because over a period of time the women adjusted or developed strategies to deal with the changes expected after marriage. Rashmi spoke about the transition in the process of marital adjustments over three years, "Basically you get used to the other person and your expectations decrease. Initially they (in-laws) had lot of expectations from me, but then they realized that I can't fulfill these typical roles. They learnt to accept that. Initially I used to act according to her (mother-in-law) wishes. But it was not

my will but it was under pressure. All I was doing was to impress her to keep them happy. But I was not happy in whatever I did. Gradually I started to be but I wanted to do."

Higher education and associated career goals have delayed marriages of some women. In addition, these women seem to be conscious of the changes demanded in their identity after marriage and are able to negotiate these identities. Further linkages between higher education, marriage and identity have been dealt in section 4.

Role expectations of husband and family members

All women unanimously said that their husbands wanted them to take care of their parents which could include spending time with them, loving and respecting them and adjusting to their demands.

For the few women who were married through self-selection and the husband had appreciated the independence in women, the husband expected them to continue being independent in their thinking and making decisions after marriage. He expected the wife to provide support to him, whenever needed. In response to the process of adjustment by women after marriage and disagreements with the mother-in-law, the husband advised them to avoid 'over involvement' with affairs at home. Rashmi said, "He (husband) doesn't like that I get bothered with small things that happen at home with my in-laws. He always says that these things are not matters of life and death. So relax."

Some husbands wanted the women to perform household chores such as cleaning, laundry, cooking, attending guests and so on. Anamika's husband expected her to be an ideal daughter-in-law. She said, "He expects me to be an ideal daughter-in-law....which

means do more cooking, get up early, do household work, be polite, respect everyone, take care of (his) *papa* (father)..."

The expectations of in-laws (essentially the mother-in-law) were mostly in terms of performing household work efficiently and respecting them. Most of the women had assumed these expectations from the behavior of the in-laws as well as by the virtue of the gender role socialization. They admitted that the in-laws had not explicitly conveyed those expectations to them.

Shivani said, "She (mother-in-law) expects me to be a very conventional (daughter-in-law) which I am not, which was very clear right from the beginning. She expects me to talk of jewelry, gossip about relations." A lot of acquiescence was expected from Divya who said, "They (in-laws) like their *bahu* (daughter-in-law) to be polite, gentle and should have perseverance and patience. They demand for lot of patience. They want me to cook more, which I am not able to because of my tight schedule."

Surabhi's comments about the expectations of in-laws were interesting. "They (in-laws) want me to cook well, go out with them, give them time basically. They want my Sundays for them, for family, for going out. I think they expect many things. They want everything nice from me. They don't want the nastiest part of me."

Most of the women had adjusted well to the expected changes in behaviors such as being patient, polite, and respectful. Working women negotiated to hire paid help for cooking and household chores.

Women were expected by their mothers-in-law to wear Indian dresses (i.e., *salwar kameez* and *saree*) and symbolically represent their status of a married woman by wearing *bindi, sindoor* and jewelry. Some women willingly transformed themselves into

this new image. However, employed women disagreed to wear *bindi, sindoor,* jewelry to office. The mother-in-law did not appreciate that and in order to avoid any conflicts, the women agreed to dress well whenever they went out for social visits. Puja who was working in a multi national company shared, "I continued *bindi* and *sindoor* for 8-9 months after marriage. Then switched to only *bindi*. Now in last few months I don't find time to wear *bindi* also. She (mother-in-law) said initially (about my not wearing *bindi* and *sindoor*). But now she has got used to it. Sometimes I wear it when she says. But then I also forget. She says you must wear something in ears….something in neck. But you can't wear too much gold in office. I am okay with it and I guess she will be fine with it too."

The mothers-in-law of some women expected them to have a baby soon. Shivani shared, "She expects me to have a baby which I don't want. So whenever she comes to know from somewhere that someone had a baby so she will immediately tell me. I don't believe that you get married and start having kids."

Gauri appeared to have a deeper understanding of the expectations when she said, "They (in-laws) also expect me to understand that there are restrictions and please bear with us. It is always on their face and I really have respect for it. Because somehow they have a feeling that I was not born and brought up in a set up like this and it is talking me a great courage to like on. So the fact that they understand it makes me work towards it."

It was interesting to see how women made conscious efforts to bring about changes in their identity to 'fit' into the image of a daughter-in-law, which then gradually became a part of their personality. Furthermore, some women assumed that their in-laws expected them to engage in certain behaviors, irrespective of whether this was specifically

conveyed or not. For instance, Rashmi, while talking about restrictions imposed after marriage shared, "If I go out on Sunday then my mother-in-law will have to do everything (at home). You like to offer help, it is a natural thing. But in some way you get restricted also."

Gauri viewed this entire issue from a different perspective. She said, "You got to consciously tell yourself that I will not presume. Because there are certain relationships where presumptions become very negative, and that is very true with mother-in-law-daughter-in-law relationship. Even if she is doing something right, it is so much inherent that you feel *ki isme bhi koi chaal hai.* (laughs!*) (there is some trick in this also).* You got to tell yourself that 'listen don't do it'. And that's the greatest factor and that's the most important relationship. If you win over the mother of the husband, it will also help you to win over others."

Role expectations from women reflected the gender stereotypes where a daughter-in-law is expected to manage domestic responsibilities and aim at harmony and solidarity in the family that calls for affection, adjustments, understanding and observation of traditional norms and customs of the family.

2. Adjustments in Marriage

Women changed certain behaviors and thinking to accommodate the new roles of a wife and daughter-in-law as well as the associated expectations of husband and in-laws. In addition, women made adjustments in the process of orienting herself to the affinal family and understanding differences in the lifestyle of affinal and natal family.

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Lifestyle of the affinal family

After marriage women made efforts to adjust to the life style of the affinal family that included the rituals performed, physical space in the new home and differences in the lifestyle of their natal and affinal homes in terms of the communication between the family members, behavior and thinking of their mother and mother-in-law.

Geeta was a Punjabi and got married to a Bengali. Talking about the differences in the life style, she said, "In my house (parent's home), women drink, smoke and they do it in public. *Khulam khula (openly)*. But here (at in-law's home) it's a conventional Indian set up where nobody does it also and you are not expected to do it also."

Ruchi often compared her mother-in-law with her mother. She said, "My mother-in-law has been a 100% housewife, totally dependent on my father-in-law for everything in terms of going to market, shopping. Compared to her my mother is completely a non-interfering person. She doesn't care what you do. She is quite modern in her thinking. She is a very warm, friendly and independent person. She is not too educated. I mean after graduation she could not complete her graduation but she is very independent. She can travel all over the world alone. And then suddenly you see your mother-in-law who could not make her own decisions." Along similar lines, Surabhi shared, "My parents were very understanding. My mother is really good. My mother-in-law is not very educated. She is not very aware of things happening outside. My mother was very aware and she had that attitude also. She was a friend to me. But my mother-in-law is a typical Indian housewife kind."

Rituals: The women were asked if they followed the rituals of their in-laws' community. A divided response emerged. Some believed and followed. For instance, Monika said, "I

always do it (the rituals). I believe in them. Before marriage also I used to fast. If there is anything that I do not understand then I ask her (mother-in-law)."

In case of inter caste marriages, especially self-selection, women followed rituals of both the families. Excitedly Puja shared, "My husband is Bengali and I am Punjabi. We have *Holi, Diwali* and they have *Durga Puja*. So we end up celebrating festivals of both the sides."

Some did not believe, yet followed rituals, because they were expected to do so. The following excerpt from Parul's interview indicated that she religiously followed all the rituals only to conform to the expectations of the family and society:

Parul: For rituals, I am supposed to perform every ritual. And my mother-in-law is a 'new' mother-in-law because Vishal is her only son. So even she did not know all these rituals so she bought a book and religiously follows. She will ask all her elders that what is to be cooked, bought, given, gifted.

Interviewer: Do you believe in these rituals?

Parul: We believe....means there are certain things that have to be done and the community ensures that they are done. Many of these things have religious significance attached to it. For e.g. in the first year of marriage I am supposed to fast 4 times which is basically for my *suhag (husband)*, my happiness. Because she believes in it so strongly, so I do not like to disappoint her or throw a tantrum that I have a scientific background and I really don't believe in these things. I don't care whether I do the ritual or not, but I do care if she is hurt. So that takes precedence for me.

Interviewer: So you basically do it for her or...?

Parul: I do it for her because she should not hear anything bad from the community. Even

      my mother is involved in this. She has to do everything before hand and ensure

      that whatever has to be gifted to me, is with me before we start the ritual. All

      three of us are doing it because our elders say that it has to be done. And they

      believe that this will bring happiness so I do it for them. And I think I will do the

      same with my daughter-in-law, if I have one.

Some women neither believed in nor practiced rituals. For instance, Rashmi said, "For

big issues, I make my point. Like she (mother-in-law) goes to temple every morning. She

would like me to go. But I have told her that I am a religious person, but I am not a

ritualistic person. I don't do *karvachauth*. I don't believe that it will increase my love for

my husband or increase his life. I haven't grown up seeing my mother do it because in

Bengali it is not there. Had I seen my mother do it, probably it would have come in me.

Pankaj was also like don't do it. So last year I told my mom-in-law that I don't want to do

it. And if I do it, it will be only to please you. So if you are happy knowing that I really

don't want to do....I would still do but it will honestly not be from the heart."

Food: Food was an important area of adjustment for almost all the women. It varied from

eating different food to using different spices to differences in cooking styles. This was

more pronounced in inter caste marriages. For instance, Divya belonged to Southern

India and got married to a *Baniya* in Delhi who rarely consumed South Indian dishes.

Pragati loved garlic but her family did not eat garlic at all. So she decided to leave garlic

as well. With Rashmi, the issue about food was different. She liked Macroni but her

mother-in-law did not consider Macroni as food. Rashmi would often make *chapattis*

with Macroni.

Space: Women who stayed away from family for pursuing higher education before marriage, were more independent and used to their 'own space' (physical and mental space). After marriage, some women found it difficult to share a room and a bathroom with their husband. For instance, Puja and her husband stayed with parents-in-law for a year and then created a separated household because Puja was used to staying alone. In her words, "There wasn't any pressure to do anything (at in-law's home). At that level it was awesome but the fact was that I was not used to living with other people. For me it kind of intruded on my space. I wanted my own house because that's your own area. That was one problem we both (her husband and she) faced. Then I guess Vikram was also not used to the idea of being married. So it took a lot of adjustment. Both of us were extremely independent people. We don't like sharing bathrooms or our rooms. There is nothing common between the two of us. The kind of food he likes is very different, the kind of holidays he takes is very different, the kind of things he likes to do in evening is very different. The notion of doing and sharing things with him is difficult and to do it in an area which is bounded by his parents. It took a long time. We had terrible fights. So the things because of which I got married continued but there were other things that cropped up that I had never thought of before." Finally, they decided to shift to a new home in proximity to their parents-in-law's home. This way they could spend time with in-laws more often and also had their own space.

Gauri talked about her adjustment of space from a different angle. She said, "I had my personal bathroom (before marriage) which I don't (after marriage). I had a full room to myself (before marriage). I had my own space- physical, mental, spiritual. I could do

anything I wanted to anytime.... We actually postponed our baby because we don't have space."

Many women pointed that joint family laid restrictions on the physical and mental space of women. When women were asked whether they preferred to stay in joint or nuclear family, most of the women opted for a nuclear family, few were unsure and only two women wanted to continue being in a joint family. Women who preferred nuclear family said that joint family created restrictions on their personal life and increased probability of frictions between the family members. They confessed that an individual could not adjust throughout her life. For example, Priyanka who was staying with parents-in-law and brother-in-law's family said, "I am not mentally prepared for joint family. So that tolerance level, understanding and dynamics of having other people around.... I never wanted it. I had told my parents that never marry me into a joint family. They always agreed to it. Relations in a joint family do not remain healthy for a long time."

The advantages of joint families were considered in terms of sharing of responsibilities, care during illness and emotional support of the family members. Women who were unsure of their preference admitted that they were making lot of adjustments in joint family. However, when they thought of their own parents, they wanted their own brother and sister-in-law to stay with them so that they were well taken care of. This restrained them from moving away from their parents-in-law.

Thus, after marriage, women made attempts to adjust with the life style of the affinal family in many ways such as adopting their rituals, food habits and getting accustomed to the available space in the new home.

Composition of affinal family

Composition of family was another factor that appeared to have influenced the changes in identity that the women experienced after marriage and higher education. Women married in families with only father-in-law or husband's uncle and aunt experienced more freedom in their life to continue enhancing their personal identity in comparison to women staying with mother-in-law. For instance, Archana stayed with her husband's maternal uncle and aunt (*mamaji and mamiji*). She said, "*Mamiji* is cooperative. She does not put any restrictions on me. The situation would have been different if we were staying with my husband's own parents. Because *mami ka ghar to doosra hi hota hai (Mami's home is after all another person's home)*."

Mother-in-law seemed to be the person who demanded significant changes in a daughter-in-law's behavior to meet the image of an ideal one. According to Priyanka, who did not have parents-in-law, and stayed with brother-in-law (husband's elder brother) and sister-in-law, "It is different when you have mother-in-law. *Bhaiya and bhabhi (brother-in-law and sister-in-law)* do not interfere in what I do."

Husband's behavior: Pragati and Monika had to make major adjustments with their husband's temperament and behavior. Pragati said, "After marriage, in the first year you don't really come to know about certain things...not even during your courtship period.....you realize it only after marriage. You see another aspect of a person's nature like my husband, sometime is quite short tempered. In first year of marriage, I did have problem dealing with that. I realized that it is him, he is himself this way and I've to understand it and deal with it." Whenever her husband lost her temper, Pragati did not react and kept quiet. Later she would find a good time to speak to him about his behavior.

Ablilasha who knew her husband before marriage, found a transformation in her husband's behavior after marriage. She said, "After marriage he (husband) has changed. Earlier everything that I did was good. Now he puts restrictions on me. He thinks that now we are married so I should not call his name, give him more respect."

After marriage, establishing relationship with their husbands required understanding and patience for some women.

Career of women

Few women had to make adjustments in their profession in order to suit the family requirements. Gauri shared, "I am in media and you know the way media people work. Night outs....I had to curb that. This is the major adjustment that I made professionally. I am compromising on a job which suits my married life. Practically my job is 9 to 5, so that I can participate in a public function at home." Ruchi got married in a family where daughters-in-law had never worked outside home. She had to make mental adjustments about the perception of in-laws about her new role where she would often be confronted by her in-laws about her work. She said, "I was working. At my in-laws *khandan (family)* they never had a working *bahu (daughter-in-law)*. So I was the first working *bahu (daughter-in-law)*, post graduate, proper professional. They never had seen a professional working woman. So when I was in advertising, the job was very time demanding. I would reach home very late. Every time I would get scolded. Sometime my father-in-law or mother-in-law won't speak to me. It was mentally exhausting for me."

The gender role socialization of girls stresses on their capacity to 'adjust' to whatever situations may arise in the affinal home, resulting in gradual assimilation in the affinal family (Ganesh, 1999). In particular, girls in the north Indian patrilineal system are made

aware that they belong to another family after marriage and that their rights, responsibilities, duties and entitlements pertain to that family (Uberoi, 2000). Summarizing the factors influencing the identity of women after marriage, the data from the present study suggest that the socialization process, perceptions about 'marriage' before and after getting married, courtship period, age and duration of marriage, role related expectations of husband and family members, and the subsequent adjustments made by the women synergistically influenced the identity of women after marriage. Figure 4 summarizes the emerging factors related to marriage that influenced the identity of women after marriage.
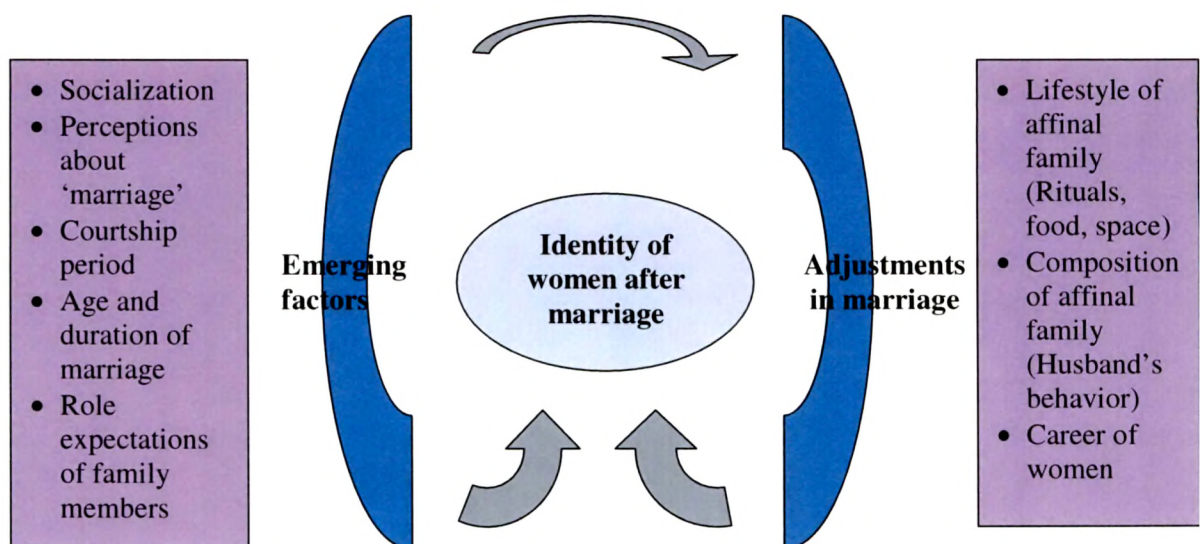

Figure 4. Emerging factors influencing the identity of women after marriage.

According to symbolic interactionism, it is argued that the meaning that the institution of marriage hold for individuals has implications on how they behave prior to and after marriage that relates to their marital functioning (Hall, 2006). A brief case profile in the text box below provides an example of the influence of socialization prior to marriage and the conception of 'marriage' on the married life of a woman.

Marriage: A 'risk' to independence

Puja was brought up in a fairly orthodox family with strict disciplinarian parents. Her parents encouraged her to pursue higher studies because they believed that 'education is the only asset that helps you to move forward in life'. Once she moved to a hostel for her MBA, she became independent in her thinking and actions. Because of the authoritativeness of parents, it was a struggle for her to live her life the way she wanted. And she began to consider marriage as a 'risk' to her independence. Gradually she started to like her classmate, Vikram and got married to him. Vikram expected her to continue being independent and manage things on her own. His parents expectations from Puja revolved around managing housework and maintaining social relations. The responsibilities for Puja increased after marriage. She became more subdued and accommodative. However, being independent, she was used to staying alone. It was a challenge for her to adjust and live with his parents as she was not used to living with people. After a year Puja and her husband shifted to a new house near his parent's home.

Thus, Puja's perception about marriage before getting married and her value for independence had a significant effect on her marital life.

Changes in Identity after Marriage

In the present study, women talked about the influence of marriage on their identity in terms of changes within self and self-in-relation with others. Table 3 presents some responses of the women related to these changes.

Table 3

Responses of Women Related to Changes in Identity after Marriage

Changes in identity after marriage	
Changes in identity	**Verbatim**
Within self	
Responsibility	a) "Important change is the responsibility. Now I have to run the entire house…you feel responsible towards people."
Role related behavior	b) "I have become more patient…Marriage per se has controlled a lot of me, has made me a *sabhya* creature."
Role associated thinking	c) "Earlier I was very outspoken but now I always think what should I say and how should I put it to avoid conflicts."
Self-in-relation with others	
Relationship with parents	a) "Relation with parents has become far deeper. Once you are away, a sense of responsibility develops, affection grows."
Social relations	b) "I have become social. Earlier I was not social. My in-laws enjoy socializing, so we visit people and invite guests often."

Changes within self

New roles of wife and daughter-in-law after marriage influence the identity of women as they shoulder newer responsibilities and perform role-related behaviors as well as changes in external appearance marked by insignia of a married woman in the Indian culture.

Responsibility: Increase in responsibilities after marriage was the most common theme. Responsibilities included performing routine household chores, rituals and maintaining family relations. Few women said that they were responsible before marriage as well so after marriage only the nature of responsibilities had changed. Most of the women were aware that after marriage they had to assume new roles. However, that awareness did not always prepare them for the same. Moreover, the husband and other family members also expected the women to assume more domestic responsibilities. Radhika who had a 'love' (inter-caste) marriage found that after marriage the in-laws including her husband expected her to perform 'women-like stuff'. Reacting to the expectations she said, "You start not as a wife but as a person."

Increased sense of responsibility was also expressed for financial aspects. Women became conscious of financial matters in terms of controlled expenditure and savings for future. Of the 35 women interviewed, 25 were working outside home. Before marriage, they would not plan their income. Rashmi said, "Earlier I would earn and live for the day. I wouldn't believe in future, but now I do. Now I am controlled in spending and realized that I need money for future."

Role-related behaviors: One theme that emerged throughout the interviews was the expectation of in-laws and society to be a typical daughter-in-law that called for changes in behavior, in terms of becoming more sober, quiet, patient, tolerant and mature. Becoming more mature and docile in their behaviors was a common behavioral change observed by many women, in order to fulfill the stereotypical portrayal of a daughter-in-law. For example, Gauri, a woman in media, exclaimed, "Amazingly I have become more patient compared to what I was …… Marriage per se has controlled a lot of me, has made me a *sabhya (cultured)*, a docile creature."

Rashmi spoke about the behavioral shift from another angle. She noted, "I used to be very short tempered which has really reduced. Automatically in front of in-laws you can't shout. You can tell your own mom if she is doing something which is irritating you. Initially if I was angry about something, I will control it or move away from that place. Over time, I have realized and even people tell me that I am no more short tempered."

Few women expressed being more sensitive and alert to the needs of the family members. Radhika commented, "At your own home you may be ignorant about a lot of things. But here (at in-law's place) you have to be far more alert to nuances as to what is this person saying? Do they need anything? In the sense that since you are at someone else's house you have to be more alert."

Another theme that emerged was *role associated thinking* wherein most of the women · said that after marriage one has to think carefully before saying something in front of in-laws to avoid any conflicts. Many-a-times, women did not express their opinions as they thought that they differed from the general perceptions in the family and could lead to disagreements. Rashmi said, "For example, if they (in-laws) talk about somebody's

marriage in family and if the girl has studied well but people are insisting that she should get married, then I would say that hey! She is doing so well in life, let her study. Why are you all looking for a guy? Now I realize that it does not really help. Because if you are sitting there and saying something, won't do any good to that girl. They (in-laws) look at things in a different way. They feel she (Rashmi) is not respecting our views. I only give my opinion when it is asked."

Moreover women expressed that they had started to think about others first. Shivani said, "Your way of thinking changes. You don't think for yourself only. You start thinking as a group. You think that if I do this, how it will affect the others."

This feeling of integration with the group was perceived differently by Gauri where she learnt to feel unimportant after marriage, as daughters-in-law are not treated special at in-laws place. She said, "In my parental home I was the central focus of family. Be it my brother's marriage or some function, any decision that had to be taken...I used to think that I am too important to be ignored. Now I have learnt to be unimportant."

Women developed increased self-control and self-confidence after marriage.

In line with the patrilineal system in India women are expected to adopt the last name of their husband after marriage (Chaterjee, 1988). With higher education and economic independence women are likely to retain their maiden name. Women in the present study expressed no issues about adopting the last name of their husband except Rashmi and Parul. For Rashmi, being a journalist, her last name was an important identity in her profession as her readers identified her with that name. Therefore, she was apprehensive of changing her last name. Similarly, Parul who considered name an important part of identity said, "From childhood I knew that I would be Parul Mathur throughout my life.

In our community we marry in the same 'Mathur' community. And knowing that your name is not going to change, it gives a great measure of stability. You know that nothing great is going to change."

External appearance: Some women had switched over to Indian dresses like *salwar kameez* or *sarees* comfortably, while few others continued with jeans and other western dresses, irrespective of the likes and dislikes of in-laws. The latter said that due to their work patterns they were comfortable in jeans and wore Indian dresses on certain occasions only. Many women changed their choices to accommodate the interests of family members, especially husband. For instance, women would buy clothes in colors that the husband liked.

Women said that more restrictions were imposed after marriage. For example, Poonam's parents-in-law did not allow her and the husband to go for outings late in the night. Concerns of Rashmi's parents-in-law about her safety in Delhi city which is comparatively considered 'unsafe' for women, restricted her from staying late at work. Restrictions were also observed in other areas such as the son was allowed to sleep late on a holiday but the daughter-in-law was expected to rise early; she was confined to her room for making any change in décor and she was not permitted to address her husband by name. Some women had changed their eating habits to accommodate the life style of in-law's household.

Thus, women consciously or naturally made changes within self to adjust to marital life.

Changes in self-in-relation with others

Women mentioned changes in relationship with their own parents, friends and developing new social networks after marriage.

After marriage, most women, inspite of sharing less time with their own parents, developed deeper and stronger relations with them. They started to realize the roles and sacrifice their parents had made for them, especially as they began to perform similar gender roles. Rashmi shared, "You start seeing your parents in a new light. You realize that you took so many things for granted with your own parents and that realization comes after you start staying with your in-laws. Because here (at in-law's house), you have to think twice or ask people before doing something." Women who were brought up in single parent families continued to provide support (financial and emotional) to their parent after marriage, even though they stayed in a different city.

Some women continued to regularly share daily experiences with the parents, while few other women purposively maintained a distance from the parents in order to avoid any interference from them that might not be appreciated by the in-laws.

It was interesting to see that the parents who were the priority for women before marriage were now replaced by the husband. This was a common response to the question, who is the most important person in your life? The main reason was that women were going to spend the entire life with the husband and also because the husband cared for them.

After marriage, women established new social relations and were expected to maintain them. For Parul, being social was not easy. She said, "I am quite introvert but now I force myself to socialize a lot, because my husband's family is very very social...I have leant to be far more collaborative."

Most of the women were not able to continue the same relations with friends after marriage. They maintained contacts but were unable to spend as much time with them as they used to earlier. In some cases since the woman had shifted to a new city, she was in the process of making new friends.

In the patrilineal Indian culture, marriage results in the transformation of identity of women after marriage (Ganesh, 1999). In the family, women's roles as caretaker, cleaner and cook require them to adapt certain behaviors to mold themselves in these roles after marriage. Women experience different affective sentiments that accompany these new identities.

Emotional Consequences of Changes in Identity after Marriage

There were mixed feelings associated with the changes that the women experienced. Women, who were deliberately socialized for these changes, appeared to be more willing to change. Yet they were not completely prepared for the same. For some women it was difficult, especially in cases where there were drastic differences in the life style and thinking of their own parents and what they experienced at the in-laws' place. Women felt sad, irritated, uncomfortable and became aggressive. This aggression was manifested in terms of frequent fights with the husband as the women restrained themselves from expressing negative emotions in front of the in-laws. Here the concept of 'compulsory emotions' seem relevant. According to Papanek (1999), women are socialized to learn 'compulsory emotions', which implies how one is supposed to feel towards specific others in a given situation. This learning is of tremendous importance to control her feelings of hostility in a new environment after marriage.

One factor that significantly influenced the extent of change in women was the willingness of others, especially husband, to change and/or accommodate interests of the women. Though not a pre-condition, it provided some comfort and motivation to women to change as well.

There were mixed perceptions about the changes mentioned by women. Some women who were married for more than one year, did not yet experience the feeling of complete belongingness at the in-laws' place. They felt that their relations were formal. For example, Tanu said, "I still tell my husband that *tumhare ghar mein yeh hota hai (in your home this happens.* He will say what do you mean by *tumhara (your)...*it is *hamara (our)* home. That feeling of belongingness is not there." Gradually women began to feel attached to the family members as they spent more time with them. Shalu said, "You do feel a little attached after some time. But I don't get a feeling of complete home...sometimes I feel that this is a temporary arrangement. Though we are staying here but we are not actually living here."

The process of assimilation in a new family and internalization of a new role is a more gradual process (Ganesh, 1999). Even though a girl is socialized for the changes associated with her identity after marriage, it does not always prepare her for the emotions she will experience (Skinner, 1989). Gradually women realized that a 'kind of formality' would remain with the in-laws and they would get habituated to it. Rashmi said, "See that formality in relationships is still there, (and) which will be there. I see that my *bhabhi* (sister-in-law) is married for 10 years and she also shares a formal relationship with in-laws. But then its ok. Initially I used to feel unhappy but now I am ok."

Contrarily, Monika had a feeling of complete belongingness within two months of marriage. She excitedly said, "I never felt that this is some other family. From day one in-laws have been very nice and treated me like their own daughter. They never say anything which has hurt me."

The socialization prior to marriage and the perceptions about marriage influenced the emotional experiences of women after marriage. The hierarchical relationships in the affinal family restrained women from expressing their negative emotions in front of the adult family members.

Coping Mechanisms and Support Systems

Women in the present study adopted multiple coping strategies to deal with the changes in identity and adjustment to a new environment after marriage. The strategy was selected depending on the situation and the women's need for prioritizing self-goals. Agency of a woman is expressed in situations that involve her personal goals and is manifested in 'self-assertion' and 'self-expression'. On the other hand, after marriage a woman is building new network of relationships and her new identity is embedded in a social context and is related to other persons. Under such circumstances, communion manifests itself in trying to control her emotions and motivations in order to align herself with the others in a family. However, as Marshall (1989) has rightly stated, communion is not being passive but a conscious choice of 'letting things happen' to adapt to a new environment.

Most of the women resorted to the strategy of 'avoid and move along' rather than confront the individuals involved, especially the mothers-in-law, directly. Some women kept quiet, ignored or walked away when any unpleasant situation arose. Some women

gradually learnt to tolerate the unpleasant words of their mothers-in-law. These strategies were their ways to 'fit into the new world' and manifest 'self-protection' and 'self-assertion'. For instance, women directly confronted the conflict in situations where their personal needs and goals were concerned. On the other hand, they often did not voice their opinions or 'kept away' from situations that did not involve them. Women also accepted the changes as a part of gender norms that govern the expression of emotional sentiments of a daughter-in-law. In the words of Surabhi, "All girls control their aggression, I also control." They believed that confronting the mothers-in-law will exaggerate the problem rather than solve it. In Indian culture, daughters-in-law are not expected to question or argue with the mothers-in-law.

Some women used 'white lie' to hide certain situations where mother-in-law might not readily approve of certain behaviors. To illustrate, Shalu was working in a school. Whenever she had to go to a beauty parlor, she would tell her mother-in-law that she had some work at school and would get late. Initially she was uncomfortable about lying but she also felt that her mother-in-law would not understand her need to go to the beauty parlor. This way Shalu could meet her personal goal of grooming, and yet peacefully conform to the differences with the mother-in-law.

Only two women explicitly made attempts to exert direct control over the situation wherein they tried to negotiate their roles within the family and made efforts to strike a balance between the expectations of self and the family members. Sweta reacted, "I have to get back to my life on my own terms despite the fact of whatever is expected out of me". Divya, a management graduate opined, "Marriage is a pure management lesson at every step. You have to be tactful; you have to be strategic when you deal with people."

For women who were employed, their work was a good avenue to escape from such situations. Shweta said, "Coping up means, I love my work. I am doing decently well there. Once you are out of home, you cut yourself off from home. Then all said and done, there are certain basic things which we have kept alive, like, we have not lost touch with friends; we go out for movies, which we have done earlier. We are out on weekends. That's what releases us from all this."

For Ritu, her MD was a way to escape from any tussles with mother-in-law. In her words, "Studies is my biggest camouflage. If anything happens, I just say that I need to study."

In certain cases women would end up fighting with their husbands to vent their feelings. Few women discussed the issues with the husband. However, they were not comfortable to talk about matters that involved in-laws with the husband as it may hurt their feelings. In some cases, the husband provided support to the women. As Rashmi shared, "A lot of things become easier if your husband is supportive. If I talk about these things to him, he would ask me to go ahead and do it. He tells his parents that this is our life and I am not going to hurt you intentionally. Please don't try to impose your believes on me. I promise that I will not do anything wrong." In case of Shweta, she would use her husband as a safeguard in situations that she anticipated would cause conflicts with her mother-in-law. She said, "I feel that he (husband) is my protective shield. If I come with him, I would not be confronted with same kind of shouting or yelling. If I come along then something will be brought up, which will spoil my mood or something that you don't want to get into after a day's work."

In addition to coping styles, social and emotional support available to individuals helps them to cope effectively (Pestonjee, 1999). The parents of a few women stayed in the

same city, which provided emotional support to the women. Not many women appeared willing to discuss issues with their parents as they thought that it would lead to greater anxiety among them. Even if the women shared their problems, parents would give "positive" advice to women to adjust and compromise.

Women who moved to a different city after marriage, expressed difficulty in maintaining close relationships with parents and friends. Friends who played an important role before marriage almost disappeared after marriage, especially when women had moved away. Under the circumstances women relied heavily on the support of the husband. Summarizing, marriage is an institution where a daughter-in-law is mostly expected to adapt to the new environment. When an educated woman with personal goals enters into such an institution, she experiences the process of exploring her new sense of self related to her new roles and relationships. During this time of exploration and assessment, she constantly struggles to maintain balance between agency and communion while resorting to different coping strategies.

Aspects of Identity that have Remained Unchanged after Marriage

Women had changed in many ways after marriage in order to meet the expectations of their new role. These included changes within self that were associated with their role related behavior (such as become more sober, polite, mature), increased responsibility and external appearance (such as wearing Indian dresses, jewelry, insignia of a married woman), as well as changes in relationships (such as develop deeper relations with parents, establishing new social relations).

When women were asked about the aspects of their identity that had remained unchanged after marriage, two patterns emerged. First, some women changed certain aspects of their

identity but maintained the core identity. Secondly, some women found a complete

transition of their identity after marriage. Figure 5 depicts their perceptions about the

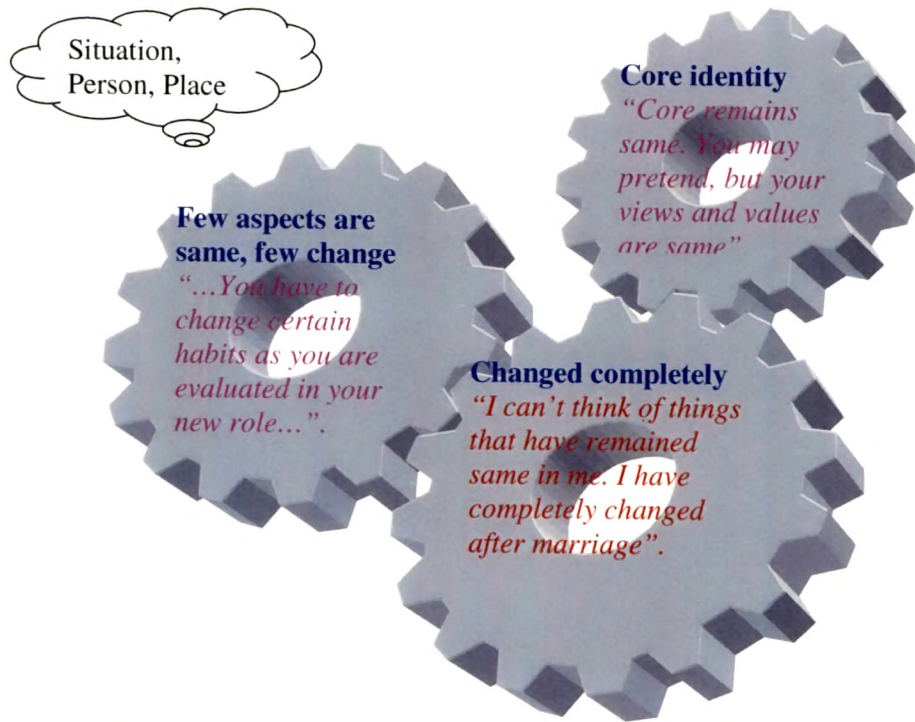aspects of their identity that had remained the same after marriage.

Figure 5. Responses of women about aspects of identity that remained unchanged after

marriage.

Most of the women said that the core aspects of their identity remained the same. Women

who had self-selection marriages said that their spouse liked them for certain

characteristics and they would not like to change those. For Divya, "You should not

change core habits. You are adjusted to a certain kind of behavior. My husband likes me

for what I am. So why should I change?" Women reflected their "real" identity in certain

situations such as work place, with husband, friends or parents. For instance, Shweta who

was expected to be a conventional daughter-in-law at home said that 'when she was out

of the home, she was her real self'.

Even Shalu felt that the major aspects had remained the same. Her behavior had 'toned down' but she was still the same person. The process of change was not so pleasant for Surabhi who changed drastically after marriage. She shared, "...I feel lost sometimes. I feel that original Surabhi has got lost. Even my husband tells me that you are not the same person because he has known me before also. I have changed but with my husband I feel comfortable. I am different with my in-laws; they can't even imagine that I was that type of a person. My mother-in-law will get a shock."

An interesting finding is that women who were married for a year and for whom marriage was very significant, felt that marriage brought a complete transition in them. For instance, Riddhi said, "I have changed in almost every way. It is amazing that I can't think of anything that has not changed in me." Similarly Punam after a year of marriage was very excited about her married life and could not think of anything that had remained unchanged in her after marriage.

After marriage, all women made efforts to internalize their new roles and adjust to the lifestyle of the affinal family. This period may not be very clear and consistent for all women as they experience contradictory expectations of husband and other family members. Some women were more comfortable in adapting to new roles and relationships. However, women who remained aware of their identity while consciously conforming to the roles expected of them after marriage, wished for self-expression and decided to live their original identity. In this context, Markus and Wurf (1987) rightly point out that the core aspects of self are relatively unresponsive to changes in an individual's social environment.

Summary

Summarizing the section on marriage and identity, it can be noted that on one hand there

were women who were socialized to perform new roles of a daughter-in-law, on the other

hand women who were staying away from family for higher education or employment

did not receive such intensive 'training'. However, almost all the women were prepared

for the idea that marriage called for behavioral and psycho-social changes in a woman.

The fact that not all the women were deliberately socialized for marriage is indicative of

a change in the self-conception of a woman where becoming "good" wife and mother

may no longer take precedence in their lives. This is corroborated by Gupta and Sharma's

study (2003) with women in Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) and Seymour's study

(1994) with women in All Women Institutes (AWI) where women mentioned that their

parents, in addition to becoming wives and mothers, wanted them to be independent and

develop ability for social change.

The conception of marriage was mostly the conjugal bond for these women. With the

introduction of the ideal of compassionate and romantic marriage over the last century,

there has been a focus on the conjugal bond that has given rise to the cultural conflict

over the meaning of institution of marriage in Indian culture (Uberoi, 2000) that

considered marriage as a union between two families.

After marriage, the woman forms a new network of relationships with husband's

immediate and extended family, peers and neighbors. She makes attempts to share their

values, goals, life style, beliefs, and understand the meaning they attach to the new role of

a wife and daughter-in-law. In other words, the social identity of a woman is enhanced

with the assimilation in the new family and formation of a new identity defined in the

matrix of relationships. Nevertheless, women who are conscious of their personal identity create a boundary beyond which they do not wish to assimilate into the new identity after marriage. Unfortunately, the Indian social ethos does not provide an adequate support system to women to efficiently cope with the changes after marriage.

Section 4

Higher Education, Marriage and Identity of Women

When exploring the linkages between higher education, marriage and identity of women, two aspects emerged, first the perception of husband and the in-laws about women's education and the employment, if employed; and secondly, the impact of characteristics developed with higher education (such as independence, ambitiousness) on marital life.

Perceptions of Husband and Other Family Members about Women's Education and

Employment, as Perceived by the Women

When asked about the perception of husband and other family members about women's education and employment, as perceived by the women, three different patterns emerged. The first and a positive pattern was that there were families who wanted an educated and employed daughter-in-law and therefore also extended support to the women's aspirations to continue their career. These are labeled as 'contemporary' families. A second pattern was the families where the husband was supportive of women's education and employment, but the parents-in-laws wanted a conventional daughter-in-law. These are called 'disparate' families. Most of the couples in these families had self-selection where the boy's parents did not have a chance to voice their opinion about the desired qualities in a daughter-in-law. In these families women witnessed conflicts between the expected roles of a daughter-in-law and that of an employed woman. Thirdly, there were 'in-transition' families where the family members wanted an educated daughter-in-law, but who was not employed. Where the women were interested in working outside home, they opted for professions that suited their marital life such as teaching or joined husband's business.

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'My in-laws are proud of my education and career': Contemporary families

One-third of the families wanted an educated and employed daughter-in-law. Most of these families comfortably accepted the job profile of women who were employed before marriage. Also, most of the mothers-in-law in these families were employed and few held graduate degrees. Thus, in few cases the mothers-in-law not only encouraged their daughters-in-law for a career but were also sensitive towards the work pressures of the employed daughter-in-law. Expectations were clearly conveyed by the boys before marriage in cases where they wanted the women to take up some specific professions such as teaching so that she could combine her work with household responsibilities. Gauri shared, "They (in-laws) are proud of it (education and job). I am also doing research so they are *gung ho (happy)* about it. So they like that some one has come at our place who believes in academics. They are happy. No hassles about it. At times I feel that they think that I am too overworked. But they have never commented negatively even if I come late. Never. And Abhi (husband) also wants me to work. He feels that I am worth a lot more."

Parul was fortunate to get married in a family with a very sensitive mother-in-law and supportive husband. She shared, "My husband told his mother that 'I want a working wife because I want a higher standard of living. If she is also earning then we both can do well'. And even Puja (her sister-in-law) is working. So they did not have this idea that girls should not work. They were quite encouraging and proud that I am working. Fortunately the boys of our generations have understood that if they want a working woman, then they also have to help out in house hold. For example, my husband's mother always told him that 'if you want a working woman as a wife then you also have to

contribute 50% in the house hold. You can't expect her to do double shifts'." This is a

reflection of changing socialization of men to accommodate the new demands on women

in terms of sharing household responsibilities when women too are financial contributors.

'My husband is proud of my education and career, but my mother-in-law wanted a

conventional daughter-in-law': Disparate families

Women in families where the husband was supportive of women's employment but the

parents-in-law wanted a conventional daughter-in-law had a difficult time managing their

work and home. For instance, according to Surabhi, a school teacher who aspired to study

more, "He (husband) wants me to do M.Ed. He himself is a person who likes to study.

Academically one should be in touch with books. He feels that marriage should not stop

you. For in-laws, if I am working, it is my problem. I have to handle it. She (mother-in-

law) doesn't realize that in today's world both of us should earn then only we can

survive. So job is our problem. If I talk about studying further I don't know how she is

going to react!"

Shweta, a professional in advertising, selected her partner by herself when she was

pursuing her MBA. She shared, "See, in my case, the perception of my husband (about

my education and job) doesn't matter. We were essentially from the same place, same

school of thought. We were exposed to same level of interaction, same people. Neither

my parents nor my parents-in-law actually know what I do. Nobody is concerned that you

look too tired today or you seemed to be tensed. No mention ever. Its only Manish

(husband) who discusses my work with me."

These women experienced greater dissonance in their roles because as a wife they were

expected to be independent in thinking, making decisions and continue to remain

professional, but as a daughter-in-law they were expected to perform all the household chores including cooking, laundry, cleaning as well as maintain social contacts with all the relatives. Most of the women in these families were employed.

Shweta shared her problems in a desolate tone, "I cook both the meals in a day. I wanted to keep a maid to wash clothes because I don't have time and nor the energy to wash clothes myself. But that was resisted. I can't imagine that after slogging for 12 hrs in office, then cooking up, and there are several other things to take care off in the house. Then bashing *bahu* (daughter in law) in front of relatives that she does this, she doesn't do that... that psychologically tears you apart. You are trying to be very cooperative. You realize that this kind of a life calls for some changes, some adjustments, which you are trying to cope up with. For example, I have stopped doing my innovative cooking which I used to do. Because I realize that it might not be appreciated so I do it in conventional way."

If the husband offered help to the women, it was not appreciated by the mother-in-law. For instance, Ruchi shared, "Praveen (husband) likes cooking a lot so he would enter into the kitchen and my mom-in-law wouldn't like it. She would never understand that he likes to cook. He doesn't do it only because I am tired."

In the Indian context mothers-in-law usually resist the help of their son in household chores that are considered to the prime responsibility of women. Very few women are in a situation like that of Parul whose mother-in-law socialized her son to help a working wife.

"My in-laws are happy about my education but they do not want me to work outside home": 'In-transition' families

At the time of interview Puja was pursing her CA after marriage. Her husband wanted her to complete her studies but did not want her take any job. Puja was not career oriented and was pursuing CA "because she had to do something in life". She had readily accepted the wishes of her husband. This was not so easy for Monika who, even though not much interested in her studies, always wanted to work outside home. She got married in a business class family where the daughters-in-law did not work outside home. She said, "My husband feels happy that I was educated at LIC (Lady Irvin College, Delhi). But here nobody wants me to work outside. Even my father never let me work. Once I had a terrible fight with him about this issue. But then I was explained how daughters and daughters-in-law do not work outside home." By the time the interview was conducted, it appeared that Monika had accepted this fact when she added, "I am also not fond of working now. I also feel that if I go out, *bhabhi* (sister-in-law) will be alone at home."

A similar mentality was observed in another business class family where Surabhi shared, "They (in-laws) have a mixed reaction (about my advertising work). Sometimes they feel very proud of it. Basically there's is a business class family and not many *bahus* (daughters-in-law) work. In their family circle, they are a bit embarrassed about the fact that their *bahu* (daughter-in-law) is working." Surabhi had made mental adjustments to their thinking. She continued her work in advertising with the cooperation of her husband.

Identity of women in different family types

Perception of husband and parents-in-law about the women's education and employment had a significant impact on their identity. Women in 'contemporary families' were more likely to integrate their personal and social identities wherein the positive attitude of family towards women's education and employment as well as the support provided by family for managing home, helped them to reconcile her personal aspirations and family roles. Contrarily, women in 'disparate families' were likely to experience maximum conflicts in expressing their personal identity as the image of an 'independent' woman with a 'mind of her own' was being constantly over shadowed by the responsibilities of a daughter-in-law. Nevertheless, it is important to integrate the process of identity experienced with each life event. In this context, Erikson described the importance for individuals to integrate past identifications, present experiences, competency and future aspirations into a coherent sense of self (Bromnick & Swallow, 1999).

Women in 'in-transition families' may have initially experienced some dissonance in their identity, especially in cases where the woman wanted to work outside home, but was not allowed. However, the magnitude of adjustment appeared to be less as compared to the 'disparate families' as the women were briefed about the expectations of the in-laws before marriage. Hence during the courtship period the women would have accepted and molded their aspirations according to the expected role identity.

Thus, the perceptions of husband and family members about the role of women as well as their education and career goals, has an impact on the identity of women.

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Influence of the Changes in Identity due to Higher Education on Marital Life

This section examines the influence of women's identity developed with higher education (such as independence, decision making skills, analytical thinking) on the process of adjustment after marriage. Figure 6 illustrates the perception of family members, as perceived by the women, about some of the specific identity characteristics developed through higher education.
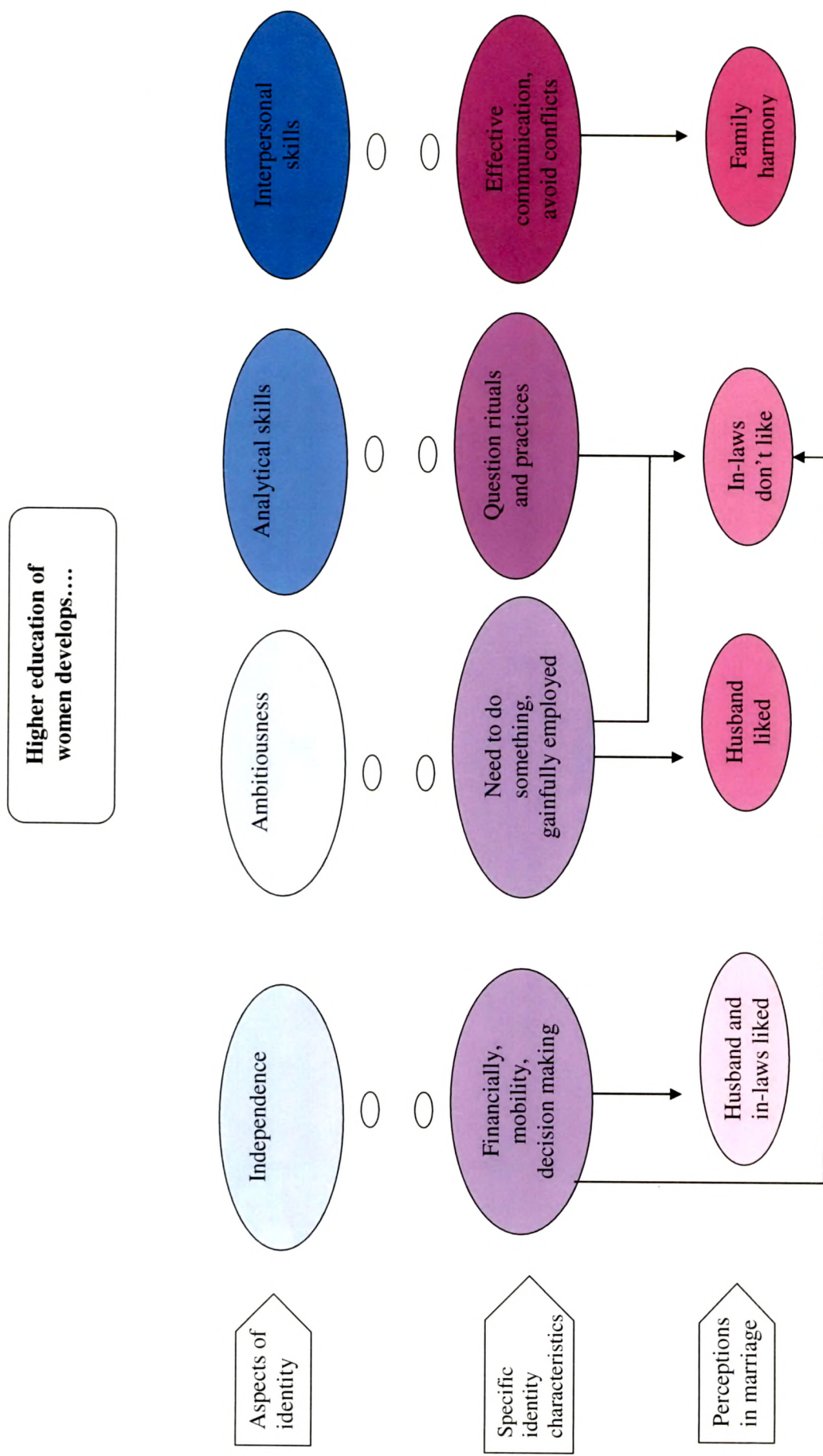
Higher education of women develops....

Aspects of identity

- Independence
- Ambitiousness
- Analytical skills
- Interpersonal skills

Specific identity characteristics

- Financially, mobility, decision making
- Need to do something, gainfully employed
- Question rituals and practices
- Effective communication, avoid conflicts

Perceptions in marriage

- Husband and in-laws liked
- Husband liked
- In-laws don't like
- Family harmony

Figure 6. Influence of identity developed through higher education on marital life, as perceived by women.

Women reported that the in-laws, especially the mother-in-law, did not appreciate an independent daughter-in-law. Shivani, a management graduate shared, "It (education) has not helped me because there was this prejudice ......You know there are these conventional norms that you have about women who are independent. So that thing of *bahu* (daughter-in-law) coming in, I (mother-in-law) will mold her the way I want to, did not happen. I think half of what (problems) is happening in my life is because of that". Ritu who was continuing her MD after marriage shared, "I think education creates more problems because I have become less adjusting. And then you feel that I have devoted so much time to my studies that I need to do something for myself. I need to live my life the way I want to, which I can't". Similar findings were noted by Seymour (1995) in her intergenerational study with women in Orissa. Educated and career oriented women were older, independent and considered to be less docile and subservient wife and daughter-in-law.

The dilemmas of the educated women in adjusting to the traditional role were recognized, but the notion of role of a woman towards her family was not rejected as revealed in this thoughtful response of Pragati, "I am a career woman but I have my values. I know that as a woman, how well I may do in my career or my education, but after all I am a woman and I have to maintain a balance between my career and family."

Some women felt that with education they developed analytical thinking and started to question many practices and ideologies including the rituals practiced by the in-laws. The mothers-in-law did not appreciate such queries from the women.

Women in 'contemporary families' received encouragement and support from the family for their careers because the husband and the in-laws wanted an educated and employed

daughter-in-law. Moreover the parents-in-law in these families had supported the higher

education of their own daughters and witnessed their daughter's struggle to be

economically independent after marriage, which in turn developed sensitivity among the

in-laws towards the career aspirations of their daughter-in-law as well. Moreover, in

some of these families the mother-in-law was highly educated and had positive

perceptions about the daughter-in-law's education. Puja's mother-in-law who held a PhD

in physics said, "Even for my mother-in-law it's like work comes first. When I took a

break of 6 months before switching over to another job, my mother-in-law used to tell me

that why don't you write or do some activity which will use your brains. So for my in-

laws it's very important that I work".

Referring to the positive influence of education on their married life, majority of the

women said that education increased 'effective' communication and helped to avoid

conflicts among the family members. Education helped to develop a balanced mind

where they were aware of the extent to which they could express their displeasure or

"make an issue of things". This had significant influence on their adjustment in marriage

as the women expressed that after marriage they had to think carefully before saying

anything in front of in-laws, in order to avoid conflicts. The educated woman is

portrayed as having more understanding, being more knowledgeable, more open minded

and more 'cultured' in dealing with people – provided she is careful not to act self-

important because of her education (Blumberg & Dwaraki, 1980). In addition, the goal of

family harmony can partly be a reflection of their socialization process. Even in the

contemporary context children are socialized towards conformity to family authority,

social competence and interdependence (Bharat, 1997); and girls are especially taught to

acquire the qualities of self-denial, adjustment and docility to perform marital roles (Dube, 2001).

Women with partners who were less educated, had to underplay their education in front of the husband. Divya said, "Education has made adjustments after marriage difficult because I have become more ambitious, which sometimes is not a good thing in your personal life. Your husband feels that you are proud of your education. If it was not for education, I might have been more dependent on him". Similarly Gauri who was a very enterprising woman said, "I downplay my post grad because Abhi (husband) is a graduate. Till date I can tell you that he is going to be more successful than I am. Because of the kind of patience and stability he has in his attitude. Initially my mention of being a PG (post graduate) was really irritating for him. Later I started to monitor myself. I don't repeat it because ego problems happen." These women had self-selected their partners. They had struggled to get the desired education and therefore at some level they were unhappy about such an adjustment in their marital life. Gradually however, they had accepted the reality, but a faint disappointment was exemplified in Gauri's statement, "I am convinced that marriage is not just love. It is all about arrangements."

Women, who did not observe much impact of higher education on their identity, also did not perceive the influence of the same on their adjustment after marriage.

Salient Factors Mediating the Changes in Identity of Women after Marriage and

Higher Education

In general there was a consensus that it was important for women to change after marriage in order to immerse into the life style of in-laws and husband. Nevertheless some women resisted changing their core identity or aspects that were central to their identity such as being economically independent, ability to think and take decisions and expression of thoughts, which were mostly the result of higher education.

The analysis revealed salient factors related to the process of socialization of women, higher education and marriage that mediated in the process of identity development of these women. Figure 7 summarizes all these factors that emerged from the responses of women. As depicted in the figure, these factors are:

- Process of gender role socialization

- Higher education: reasons for pursuing higher education, type of course, stay at hostel or home, and the employment status of women

- Marriage: duration and quality of courtship period, age and duration of marriage, composition of family, attitude of husband and in-laws towards women's education and employment.

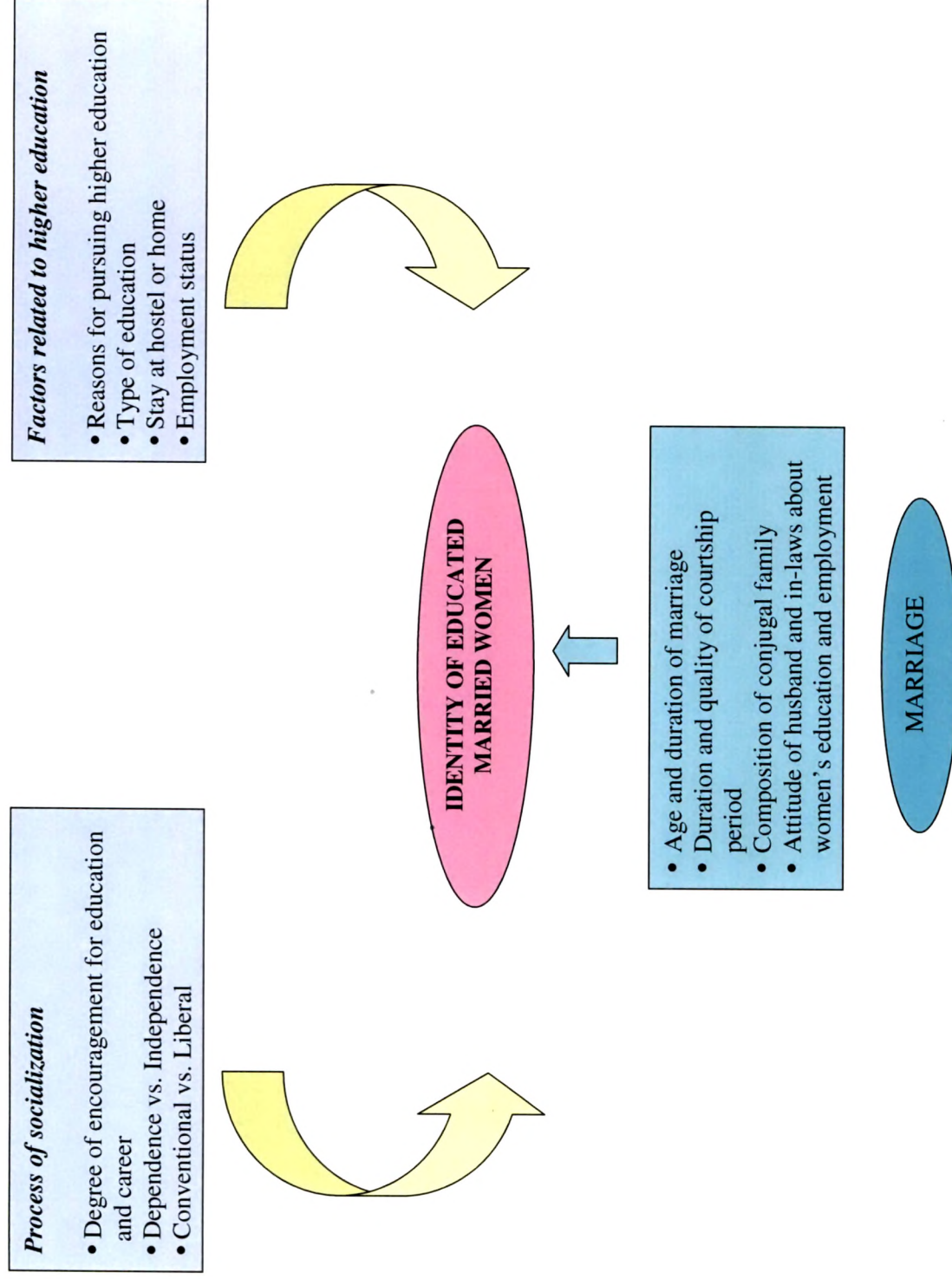The above factors have already been dealt in previous sections.

Factors related to higher education

- Reasons for pursuing higher education
- Type of education
- Stay at hostel or home
- Employment status

Process of socialization

- Degree of encouragement for education and career
- Dependence vs. Independence
- Conventional vs. Liberal

IDENTITY OF EDUCATED MARRIED WOMEN

- Age and duration of marriage
- Duration and quality of courtship period
- Composition of conjugal family
- Attitude of husband and in-laws about women's education and employment

MARRIAGE

Figure 7. Salient factors influencing the identity of educated married women.

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Section 5

Types of Identity of Educated, Married Women

Based on the above discussion the present study unearths four different types of identity that women with higher education formed after marriage, namely, 'double-bind' women, 'asserter', 'accomplisher' and 'acceded'. After marriage all women made efforts to adjust to their new roles and responsibilities. With higher education, most of the women aspired to be gainfully employed. 'Double-bind' women made attempts to balance the demands of family and work outside home. They did not give up their career aspirations but became more amicable. However, women with strong career aspirations and values of independence and leadership, when confronted with the traditional role expectations, experienced intense conflict. Their self-aspirations and desire for self-realization persuaded them to turn 'assertive'. They wished to revert to their 'real' identity wherein they could 'live life the way they want to'. Women in 'contemporary families' where husband and family members upheld the professional qualifications of their daughter-in-law, and were not only sensitive to the work pressures but also provided required support to the women, are called 'accomplishers'. There was a consensus about the roles of a daughter-in-law that facilitated women to not only pursue careers of their interest, but also received support from family in managing the house.

In cases where higher education did not bring any significant change in the identity of women, those who were socialized for gender roles, and where women's expected roles were negotiated before marriage conformed to the expectations. These women are termed as 'acceded'. Figure 8 reviews the four types of identity of educated women after marriage.
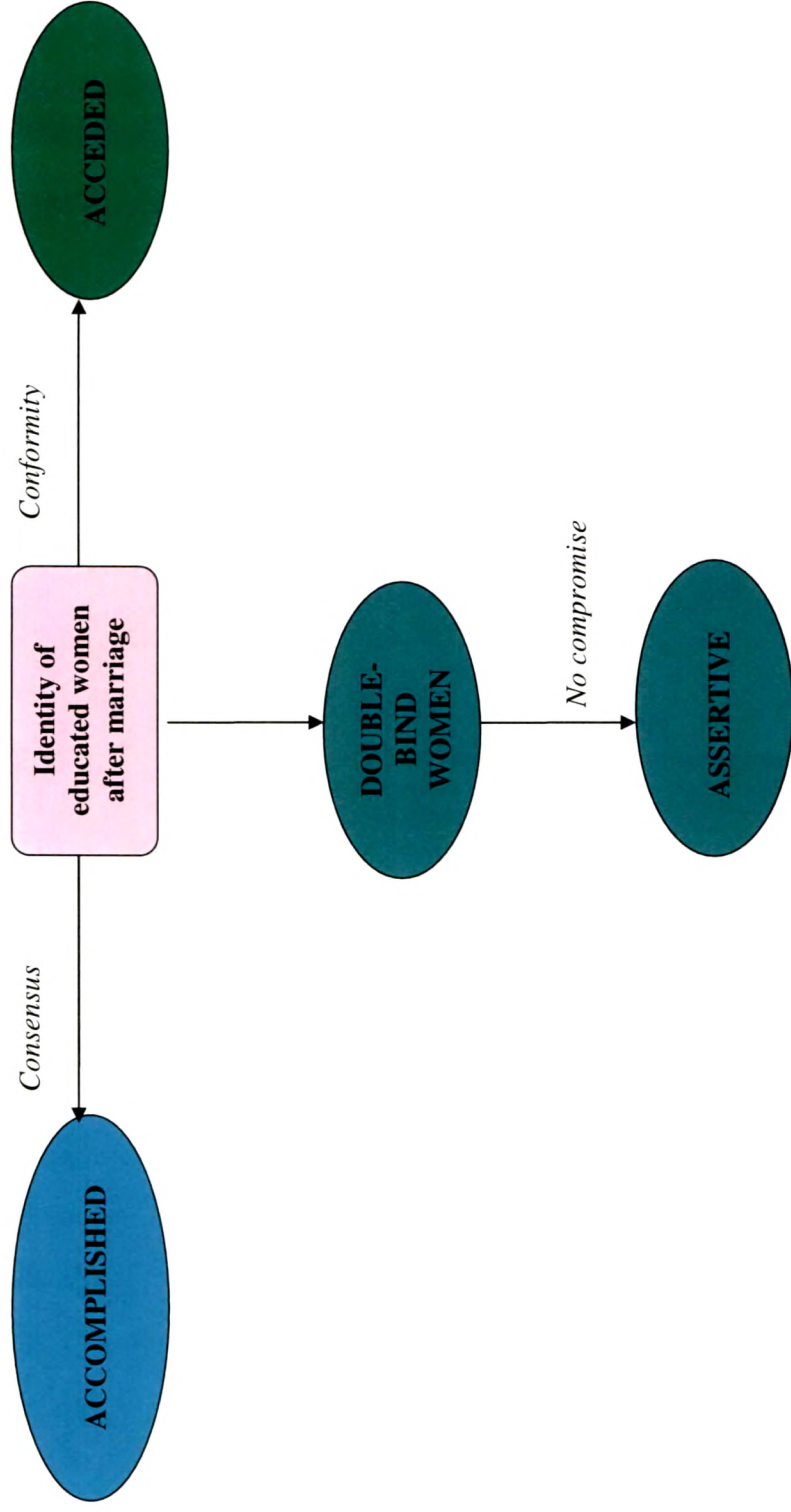
Figure 8. Identity patterns of educated, married women.

As depicted in figure 8, 'acceded' women conformed to the conventional norms of the affinal family. 'Accomplished' women, married in families that were receptive of their role as economic contributors, could continue their career after marriage with the support of the affinal family. 'Double-bind' women made attempts to 'double-bind' their domestic responsibilities and career goals. Some of these women turned 'assertive' to establish their professional achievements and for self-fulfillment.

Table 4 provides a summary of these four types of identity with a list of salient characteristics of each identity type. This is followed by a detailed description of each identity exemplified with case profiles. Figure 9 depicts the life path of women with 'assertive' and 'double-bind' identity. Having self-motivation and support from the parents, 'assertive' and 'double-bind' women pursued higher education aimed at gainful employment. After marriage, they tried to balance multiple roles (social roles that accompanied marriage such as roles of a wife and daughter-in-law, and personal role of being a professional). Depending on the role expectations of family members, availability of help in household work, attitude of husband towards wife's employment, women either continued to 'double-bind' their multiple roles or turned 'assertive' to fulfill her personal goals.

Table 4

Types of Identity formed with Higher Education and after Marriage

Type of identity	Intervening variables	Personal and social identity
Double-bind women	• Encouragement for pursing higher education and career	• Independent
(16)	• Self-inclination and motivation to continue career (or job) after marriage	• Academic and professional achievements
	• In-laws wanted a conventional daughter-in-law	• Accept multiple diverse roles
	• Socialization for marital roles in some cases	• Maintain some personal space
		• Compromise, adjustments
Assertive (4)	• Encouragement for pursing higher education and career	• Independent
	• Self-inclination and motivation to continue career after marriage	• Academic and professional achievements
	• In-laws wanted a conventional daughter-in-law	• Need for personal space
		• Self-expression and self-fulfillment

(table continues)

Note: The figures in the parenthesis indicate the number of women in each category

Type of identity	Intervening variables	Personal and social identity
Accomplished (5)	• Encouragement for pursing higher education & career	• Independent
	• Self-inclination to continue career after marriage	• Consensus about the roles
	• In-laws are supportive of women's education and career aspirations	• Conforms to family values
		• Division of household work among family members
	• Socialization for gender roles in some cases	
Acceded (10)	• Parents encouraged for higher education but less self-motivation to study	• Satisfied, accepting, conformity
	• No inclination for career	• Completely accepts the role of wife and daughter-in-law
	• In-laws appreciated women's education but did not want them to work outside home	
	• Negotiations before marriage	
	• All were arranged marriages	

Note: The figures in the parenthesis indicate the number of women in each category

Parents encouraged for
higher education
career

Self-motivated →

Graduate Degree
(mostly professional)

Gainfully
employed

Marriage

Career

Balance

New roles and
Relationships

Expectations
of in-laws

Attitude of
husband

Paid
help

Value for family
cohesion

Adjusts

e.g., wishes to create a
separate household
('ASSERTER')

('DOUBLE-BIND' WOMEN)
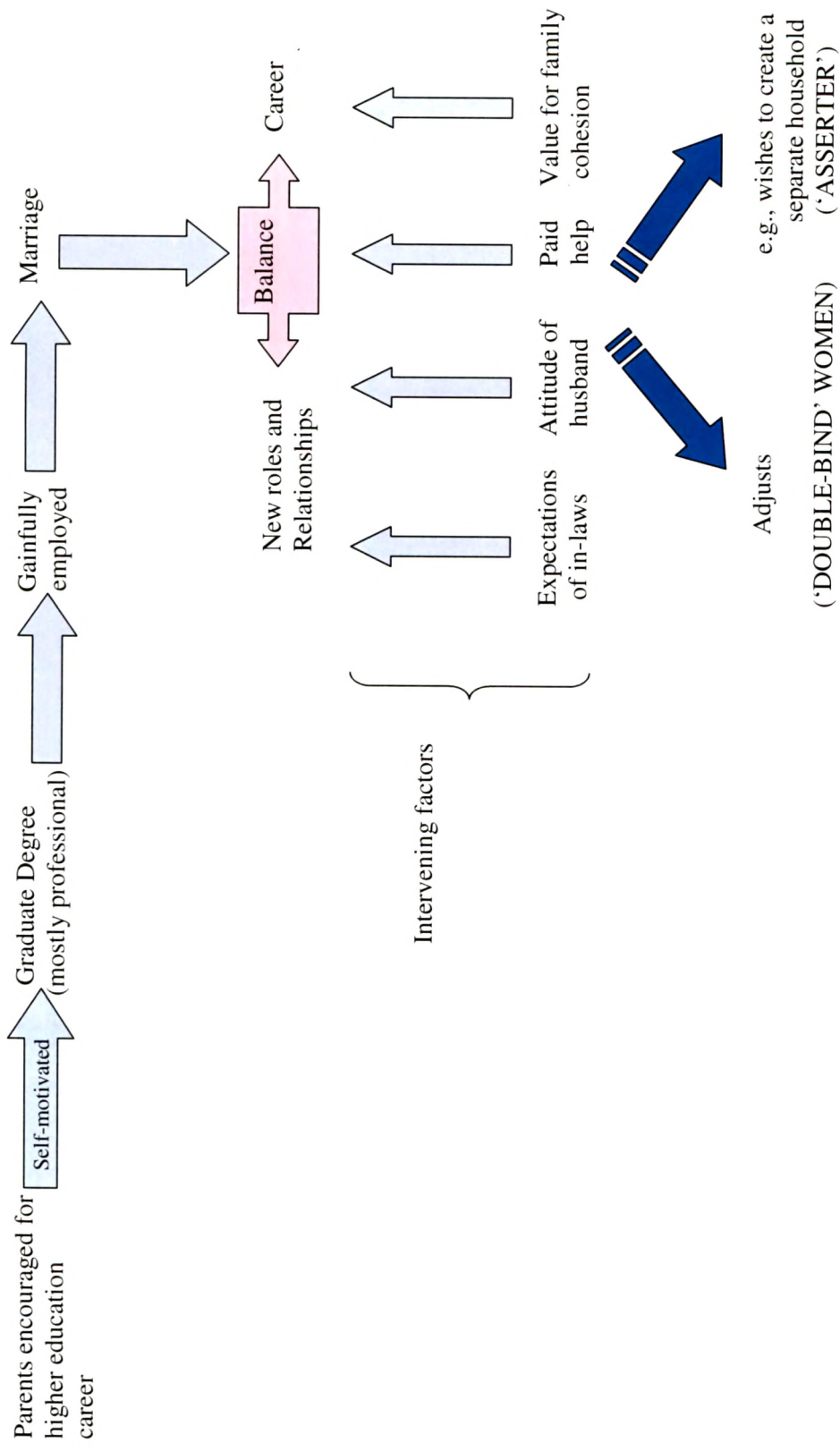
Intervening factors

Figure 9. Life path of 'asserters' and 'double-bind' women.

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'Double-bind' Women

Sixteen women were categorized as 'double-bind' women. Women under this category were encouraged to pursue higher education and establish a career. Some women had greater motivation and inclination towards a professional career, while few others were interested in less demanding jobs such as teaching. But higher education and employment outside home after marriage was crucial for these women. After marriage all the women were expected to take the prime responsibility of housework. Professional women with strong commitments for career and self-oriented values of 'independence', 'self expression', and 'self enhancement' experienced greater difficulty in balancing familial responsibilities and work. Their gender role socialization towards maintaining family harmony and conformity to the family values made them reluctant to create a separate household. They struggled with the expectations of family members including the husband and the aspirations associated with career. In the process they experienced gain and loss, pleasure and sorrow, satisfaction and regrets. Nevertheless, gradually they developed affection and care for the family members. Even the in-laws and especially the mother-in-law started to make efforts to accommodate the interests of daughter-in-law. There were negotiations about the division of work. These women are representative of the traditional Indian culture where most of the married women make efforts to adjust and accommodate the interests of the family members in order to maintain the family harmony.

Radhika

Radhika was brought up in a family that laid premium on education and success in the professional field. After her Bachelors degree in commerce, she moved to IIM,

Ahmedabad for her MBA. Her higher education and stay in hostel made her more confident, objective, structured and analytical in thought process. With MBA and successive employment she became more ambitious as she said, "I am not a kind of person who would just stay graduate. I am a kind of person who would always do something in life. Even now I want to do more, rise in life. Go abroad, move up in career."

During her MBA, she liked one of her classmates who was originally from Bihar. Radhika was a Punjabi. They went around for three years before getting married. Before marriage, she thought that marriage would be a continuation of seeing each other. Very soon she realized that her in-laws family was more patriarchal where her parents-in-law and surprisingly for her, even her husband expected women to perform major domestic responsibilities. Being a Punjabi, her own parents were more liberal and believed in gender equality that was witnessed among the roles performed and duties shared by her mother and father. She elaborated, "I think women have just been dominated (at the in-law's home). If they (women) want to spend the whole day shopping they can't. My mother can and even I can. So it's a big change for someone who has been working to realize that a woman is considered as weaker. In our section of society (i.e. Punjabis) women is never weaker, usually they are stronger. At my home, my mother in some sense is stronger because she is responsible for everything at home. And she becomes the authority. But in this case there is responsibility but no authority."

Being employed in a corporate sector, Radhika wore *saree* only on the first day of her marriage. She did not wear *sindoor* or any other insignia of a married woman such as *mangalsutra* or bangles. Her mother-in-law initially did not appreciate but gradually got

used to it. Her in-laws never had a working daughter-in-law so it was difficult for them to accept a daughter-in-law who was economically independent. After marriage Radhika had become more responsible towards the home, sensitive towards the needs of the family members and performed more social obligations. However, her core self had remained the same. She said, "... the core remains the same. What happens is your most of the time is spent at work. At home you would try to do things to keep everyone happy... For short term you may pretend but your views, values will not change. Only thing is that you handle things more delicately. I don't think marriage changes everything drastically. It can't change you. Your reactions may become a bit tempered, softer because you are being judged as a new person."

Radhika was sensitive to the background of her in-laws and attributed differences in thought processes to their being *Bihari* that is considered as a more conservative caste. Radhika did not like to disappoint people and would therefore attempt to adjust to the expectations of in-laws. Nevertheless, she was certain that the expectations of the in-laws could be accommodated to a certain limit. She said, "You as an individual are always flexible. But if you do everything (that they expect), you keep raising the bar of your flexibility. Beyond a limit you can't do things because it is physically and mentally tiring. To manage everything with work is difficult. It leaves nothing for you as an individual to grow. There are so many things which you would wish to experience and grow but then you don't have time at all. So it stunts your growth. You don't have energy to put so much of efforts. See your relationship with your husband....that affection and commitment will grow but for a relation to broaden, become bigger and may be

interesting, you don't have time frankly. You may do things to keep his parents happy. I think it really takes a stroll on you and your relationship with husband."

Radhika's education and work was not valued by her in-laws. Poignantly she said, "They don't have any clue what MBA means. I think they even don't know what their son does. If they don't know about their son then I being a daughter-in-law, I come much later. What they feel is that people who have lot of money are the people who are doing right. And frankly, we don't believe in that only. We work for our own development and satisfaction. So it was a shock for me. They didn't know about my education. There was no professional respect." For Radhika, her work was 'her real life' and she did not compromise on her work for familial functions. According to Radhika, she did not share a 'true' relationship with her in-laws. She tried to adjust in the family to maintain harmony and solidarity. Her understanding of mother-son relationship and the associated expectations refrained from creating a separate household. Moreover, her husband was independent and did not appreciate involvement of his parents in their personal life. Radhika continued to remain professional and pursued her career aspirations with the support of her husband. Also, she adjusted according to the expectations of the in-laws to the extent that her personal interests were not challenged.

Refer to Appendix C for another case profile of a 'double-bind' woman.

'Asserters'

Another set of women had **assertive** type of identity. Socialization of these women was similar to 'double-bind' women, where they were encouraged to pursue higher education aimed at a job or career. They were professionally qualified and considered their academic and professional achievements as important sources of their identity. They defined themselves as 'independent', had a 'mind of their own', needed 'personal space', and 'self-expression' and 'self-fulfillment' were important in their lives. These women after marriage were expected to perform traditional roles wherein besides cooking, cleaning, socializing, taking care of family members, they were expected to wear *sarees*, jwellery and *sindoor*. Of the thirty five women, four belonged to this category. Initially they agreed to most of these expectations. Two of these women negotiated during the initial month as to what they could do and what they could not. But after a year they realized that they were gradually losing their 'real' identity. At the time of interview they had decided that they wanted to revert to their original identity; how they would do it was not yet thought out.

Shweta

Shweta, a management graduate, was a committed professional in advertising. Since childhood she was a voracious reader and wanted to pursue her career in advertising. She was encouraged by her parents especially mother for higher education but had to convince the parents to allow her to pursue a course of her choice. She was brought up in Bhopal, a small town in Madhya Pradesh. It took a lot of her courage and determination to get adjusted to the demands of a metropolitan city, Bombay where she took admission in MBA. She was thrilled about her course and stayed in hostel. Her education, stay in

hostel and the socialization process made her independent, a broader person and provided her more exposure. In her words, "Staying in hostel was a process for me to acclimatize to staying or your own, meeting strangers, finding for self, whether this guy is fine or not. It was a process to get me where I thought I can be."

During her MBA, she became friendly with her classmate, Manish, and later got married to him. At the time of marriage, she was 23 ½ yrs and Manish was 24 yrs They continued to stay in Bombay for a year before shifting to Delhi with Manish's parents. For Shweta, those twelve months after her marriage in Bombay were 'an extension of love affair'. She fondly remembered that period when she did her home, lived her life the way she wanted to with her husband. Her life changed drastically after they shifted to Delhi. Her mother-in-law expected her to be a conventional daughter-in-law in terms of taking care of household chores such as cooking, cleaning, grocery and maintaining social relations. Contrarily Manish wanted her to continue being independent and provide support, financial and emotional, whenever he needed. She was taken aback by the behavior of mother-in-law who would not allow her to use new crockery, cook food in a different way, wake her early in morning and criticize her in front of other people.

The transition from an independent working woman to the role of a conventional daughter-in-law and working wife was stifling for Shweta. She felt quite harassed when she was expected to cook all the meals in spite of her demanding job. She was overworked because of her dual responsibilities.

Shweta had not only become more mature, responsible after marriage but also lost her innocence and sensitivity towards others and became more pragmatic. Her threshold level had decreased and she would break down even at small affairs at home.

For one year Shweta had been struggling to create an understanding between her mother-in-law and herself. Initially she wore *sarees* and *suits* to please her mother-in-law but after a few months shifted to jeans that she was most comfortable in. All that had bearing on her relationship with Manish where they started to have frequent fights. Manish was occupied in his work and preferred to stay away from the conflicts at home.

It was not so easy for Shweta as well because she took a new job when she shifted to Delhi. Gradually she was making new friends. Her parents were in Bhopal. She did not prefer to share her problems with her mother as she thought that would upset her. She found her father-in-law to be understanding and supportive.

Her in-laws were unaware of her job profile. Education had made her independent, created a broader outlook that was not appreciated by mother-in-law. For months, she struggled to create an accord between her aspirations to pursue her career and be independent in her thoughts and behavior; and the expectations of mother-in-law who wanted to control the actions of Shweta and expected her to be a conventional daughter-in-law. She tried to live with these two contrasting images for a long time but realized that she was unhappy and unsatisfied with her career. She wanted to revert to her original self. With determination in her tone, she said, "If I had my way I needed three-four years to be the same that I was. I have been working towards getting back to things. I will not give away like this because these are the things that I feel about; they are a lot of importance to me so I will not give up easily. That much I have decided. I have to get back to my life on my own terms despite the fact of whatever is expected out of me."

Will Shweta be able to live her life the way she wants to? What will be the implications of her decision on her relationship with her mother-in-law? Does this mean that she will have to create a separate household, an option increasingly preferred by many couples? Her life trajectory appeared to be uncertain as she struggled between her identities as an individual, as a wife and a daughter-in-law.

'Accomplishers'

The third group of women was socialized in families that valued girls' education. Figure 10 depicts the life path of these women, called as 'accomplishers'. They received encouragement from parents to pursue higher education. Fortunately, these women got married in families where the husband and in-laws were supportive of their education and career aspirations. Interestingly, the mothers-in-law of these women were also well-educated and had worked outside home. So there was a greater understanding of the nuances of the struggle to balance home and work. The mother-in-law and daughter-in-law devised strategies such as hiring paid help to not only preserve the career aspirations of daughter-in-law, but also ensured smooth functioning of home. These women were 'independent' yet 'conformed to family values', cushioned by supportive family members.

Parents encouraged for
higher education
career

Self-motivated

Graduate Degree
(mostly professional)

Gainfully
employed

Marriage

Career

Balance

New roles and
Relationships

Value for family
cohesion

Availability
of paid help

Positive attitude of
of husband and in-laws
about women's education
and employment

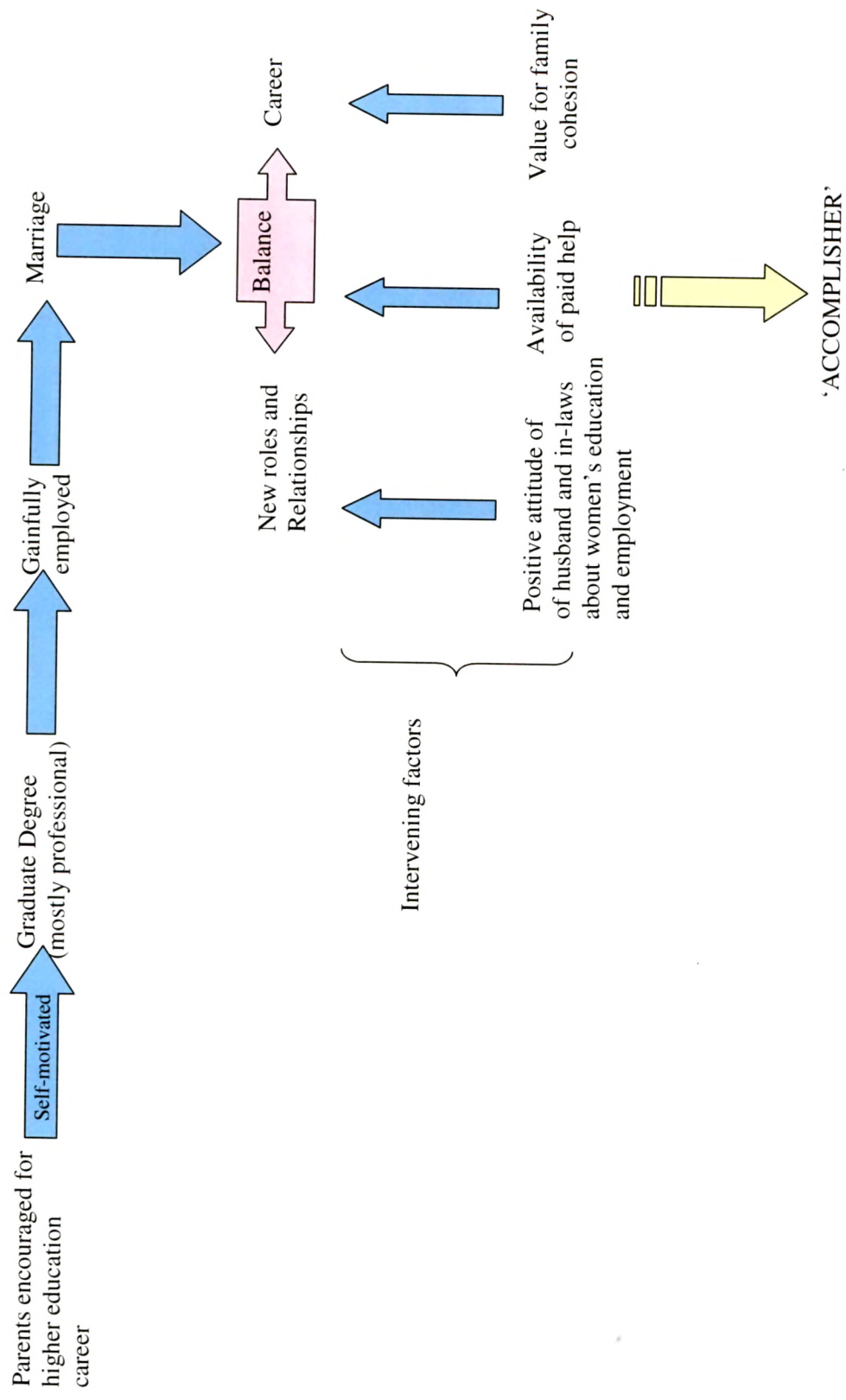Intervening factors

'ACCOMPLISHER'

Figure 10. Life path of 'accomplishers'.

Parul

Parul was born and brought up in Pune. She had a younger sister. Parul's parents gave special attention to her education. Her mother especially thought that a girl should be financially independent for security reasons after marriage. When she was pursuing her under graduation in chemistry, her father passed away. Following her father's advice to pursue a progressive field, Parul shifted from chemistry to pursue computer software as her profession. She got her first job with TCS, Hyderabad. For the first time she moved away from home. Her mother supported with great conviction. Parul remembered her words, "She (mother) always said that because you are born a girl does not mean that you will remain financially dependent. You will get educated, earn your bread." Nevertheless, she also taught Parul from childhood that 'household duties are a woman's prime responsibility...it is ultimately the woman who carries the house on her shoulders.' Her mother reiterated the same when Parul expressed her wish to be a working woman after marriage. Parul felt that master's degree was a 'self learning degree'. Higher education made her more mature, independent and confident.

At the age of 24 years, her mother arranged for her marriage through matrimonial advertisement. Fortunately, the boy and his family wanted an educated and working woman. The boy's mother had socialized him to contribute in the household work when both the husband and wife were working outside home. Parul credited their Mathur community for a lot of her happiness after marriage. Taking about her community she said, "We (Mathurs) are more educated, liberal minded, forward looking, western habits." Parul who considered name as an important part of her identity was glad that in their community the name remained unchanged after marriage.

After marriage, Parul became more patient, responsible, socializing, sensitive to feelings

of others and learnt to compromise on small daily issues. She consciously made efforts to

change in order to adjust well in the family and therefore felt happy and satisfied about

these changes. Her core self did not change after marriage as her independent thinking

and decision making skills were not challenged. Her mother-in-law was sensitive to her

interests and 'did not believe in completely changing a girl's personality after marriage'.

Parul accommodated the interests of her mother-in-law such as she performed all the

rituals for the happiness of the family and community irrespective of her own beliefs.

There was a mutual understanding and adjustment between Parul and the other family

members. Parul and her mother-in-law decided to hire a full time servant who could

assist in cooking in addition to cleaning. Parul shared, "Everybody is working. We all are

so highly educated that you work. Moreover she (mother-in-law) is an excellent cook that

her children can't tolerate any one else's cooking. She also loves cooking. When she does

not feel well my father-in-law will cook. If he does not want to do it my husband or

anyone else will cook. Since you are getting a working woman in the house it is very

clear that you will get up in the morning and cook. All these negotiations take place right

from the start. So its not a surprise." Parul had told her husband before marriage that she

would continue her job and her husband had asked her to adjust to his family and live

with them cooperatively. Parul strongly believed that marriage was 'a union of two

families and not just a bond between two individuals'. For her, the synonym for marriage

was compromise. She was ready to compromise (to some extent) with the affinal family

to maintain peace, harmony and happiness in the family.

'Acceded'

Figure 11 depicts the life path of women with 'acceded' identity. As illustrated in the figure, parents encouraged women to pursue higher education, but the women had less inclination to study further. Although they completed their graduate degree, the process of higher education did not significantly influence their identity. Most of these women valued the prescribed gender roles and considered domestic and family duties as primary for a woman. Some women wanted to take up jobs such as teaching to keep themselves occupied. When arranging an alliance for them, most of the in-laws wanted an educated but unemployed daughter-in-law. Negotiations about women's expected roles occurred before marriage. Thus, these women conformed to the more 'conventional' identity after marriage.
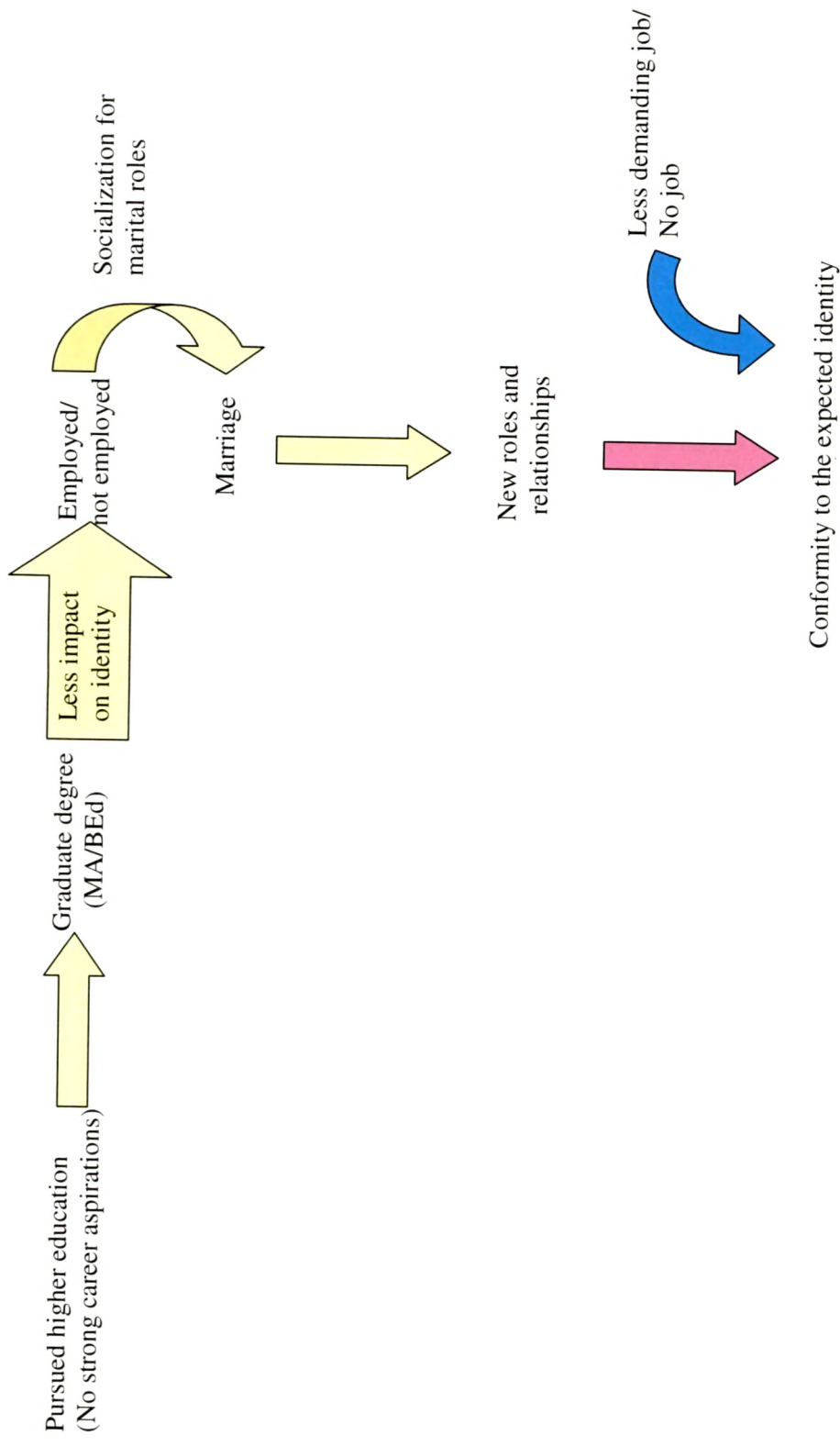
Pursued higher education
(No strong career aspirations)

Graduate degree
(MA/BEd)

Less impact
on identity

Employed/
not employed

Socialization for
marital roles

Marriage

New roles and
relationships

Less demanding job/
No job

Conformity to the expected identity

Figure 11. Life path of 'acceded'.

Puja

Puja was brought up very lovingly and pampered by her parents. She was not interested in studies and wanted to get married soon. She received intensive training for cooking, housework and acceptable behavior (such as speak softly) from her parents. Inspite of her lack of interest in further studies, she pursued CA before marriage. Elaborating on her decision for CA, she said, "My father and sister both are CA. I wanted to do something so opted for CA." In the meantime, her parents started to look for a partner for her. Very soon they arranged for her wedding. The family where she got married was conventional where she was allowed to wear only *sarees*, expected to assist in cooking and other housework and attend guests properly. In addition, the husband wanted her to take care of his parents. Puja was flexible and willing to accept their way of living that also included covering head in front to elders or touching feet of elders everyday. Since she enjoyed socializing she welcomed the guests and willingly went with the mother-in-law to visit friends and relatives. But she did feel suffocated when she had to completely conform to their expectations as she said, "After marriage if you do whatever your in-laws say, you don't question them, don't argue with them, don't put forth your view points...then life will be smooth. But you start to feel suffocated. You do not feel at home." Puja felt that after marriage she had completely changed and adopted the way of living of he affinal family. She would often share her problems and daily events with her mother who resided in the same city.

She was neither interested to continue CA nor work outside home. Her husband insisted on completing her CA but she seemed uninterested. Though education had made her more confident and independent but that did not influence her marital life in anyway.

Being a woman, she considered her duty towards the family and home as the most significant ones. According to her the synonym for a 'good marriage' was 'successful adjustment'. Married for only a year, she got a complete feeling of belongingness to the affinal family.

Refer to Appendix C for another case profile of a woman with 'acceded' identity.

Highlights of the Results

- Higher education shaped the personal identity of women, by making them 'independent', 'confident', 'ambitious', 'analytical', 'logical'. However, the context in which education is provided, such as the process of early socialization, meaning attributed to higher education and the type of course pursued, have implications on the identity of women.

- Marriage calls for behavioral and psycho-social changes in a woman. It contributes to the social identity of women as she forms new networks of relationships and adapts to new roles. Most women in the present study changed the peripheral aspects of their identity, retaining the core identity.

- Assimilation into a new family was emotionally exhaustive for many women as they experienced more negative emotions such as aggression, sadness, anger and irritation.

- Women struggled to maintain a balance between agency and communion while resorting to different coping strategies to deal with the changes in identity after marriage and the emotional sentiments accompanying them. Agency was expressed in the form of 'self-assertion' and 'self-expression' while communion was manifested in the form of 'avoid and move along'. The context failed to provide adequate social support system to women to cope with the changes in identity accompanied by new roles and relationships.

- Multiple inter-related factors influence the identity of educated and married women. The process of socialization, factors related to higher education (such as reasons for pursuing higher education, course of study, stay at hostel or home, employment status) and marriage related factors (such as age and duration of marriage, courtship

period, composition of affinal family, perception of husband and in-laws about women's education and employment) synergistically influence the identity of educated, married women.

- Four types of identity of educated and married women have emerged, namely, 'double-bind' women, 'asserter', 'accomplisher' and 'acceded'. Almost half of the women were 'double-bind'. In an Indian context women are socialized to adjust and adapt to new situations as well as balance contrasting multiple roles.

- 'Accomplisher' is an indicative of a social and economic change in the Indian society wherein the husband and other family members support the professional qualification and earning potential of women.