Becoming duteous daughters, caring mothers and generous grandmothers: Gendered practices in socialization

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Abstract: Gender socialization or gendering occupy a very crucial role in the identity formation of an individual. A dichotomy in gender is instilled into the mindsets of persons from the childhood itself and the language of culture and the societal norms and notions are imbibed by the children through the influence of the family members in the initial stage of their cognitive development. The study attempts to identify the intergenerational differences or similarities of the gendered socialization patterns experienced by women of different generations including daughters, mothers and grandmothers, who were selected through the multi stage random sampling method. In depth studies on the three generations of women comprising of 60 samples within the kozhikode district of kerala provide substantiation that there are no such drastic changes happening in the upbringing of girl child in the patriarchal setting of a society and that the gendered practices in raising are still highly prevalent in all cultural arena which confirm the inferiority of the womenfolk.
Keywords: gender, socialization, patriarchy, gender roles

I. INTRODUCTION

Gender roles and expectations have extensive and wide-ranging ramifications in a person's life. The gendered ideologies of acting masculine and feminine are taught through the process of gender socialization within the family from an early age by the parents of a child. It becomes nearly impossible for individuals to survive the reality of everyday life without having to perform either of the binaries of the gender spectra (the other genders in the social order are conveniently or intentionally omitted). There are so many ifs and buts raised by children at different stages of their development, furthermore, these gendered messages get into their 'doxa' and gradually they start internalising the idea of gender.

Gender socialization can be defined as the process of educating attitudes and characteristics considered appropriate for the assigned sex. We can attribute several behavioural differences between genders to gender socialization. Beauvoir (1949) opines that "The condition of women is not dictated by her hormones nor predetermined in the structure of the female brain: they are shaped as in a mould by her situation."

There are different ways to look at how the children are socialized within a family. Research has focused on four traditions, namely, the parent effect perspective, the child effects perspective, the reciprocal socialization perspective, and the systemic- ecological perspective. The present study tries to analyse the parent effect perspective which is considered to be the oldest of the theories related to socialization that examine the influence of parents' propensity and inclination on the behaviour of children. During the process of identity construction, a child receives more cues from the parent itself as family is generally the first unit where the various socialization practices develop. The parenting styles, according to Baumrind(1991), are of four categories: Authoritarian- in which the children are told exactly what to do, Indulgent- in which the children are allowed to do whatever they wish, Authoritative- providing rules and guidance without being domineering, Negligent- parents disregarding the children and focusing on other interests. The sociological as well as feminist literature on gender recognize the significant role of socialization practices for making the children acquire the ideas of gender. The do's and dont's of the masculinity and femininity are imposed on the girls and boys from a very early age and restrict their development of personality to a great extent. Walby, S. (1990) is of the opinion that " ideas about masculinity and femininity are to be found in all areas of social relations; they are part of the actions which go to make up the patriarchal structures. The most traditional approach to sexual difference is to see masculine and feminine identities as reflecting biological structure, of bodies, hormones, muscles and genes."

Mies, M. (1988) opines that male-ness and female-ness are not biological givens, but rather the result of a long historical process. In each historic epoch male-ness and female-ness are differently defined, the definition depending on the principal mode of production in those epochs. Therefore, men and women develop a

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qualitatively different relationship to their own bodies. While studying the role of mothers in moulding the choices of their daughters. Rollins(1996) said that the messages received by daughters from their mothers are more influential and the mother-daughter closeness is illustrated by the fact that daughters were much more likely to confide in mothers than in fathers.

II. GENDER SOCIALIZATION: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND APPROACHES

The application of psychoanalytic theory, though a bit odd when explaining the theories related to gender and socialization and that the theory was partly based on Freud's male-biased concepts, it shows how gender is separated from biology and it is extracted from our cultural traditions and hence it is acquired. The internal conflicts of the unconscious mind(id) was first introduced by Freud in his theory, and the urges or drives of the unconscious mind is controlled by the social ideals like the norms and traditions(superego). The theory intrigued the thought of what is personal and what is cultural. The application of psychoanalytic approach to gender socialization was more fully delineated by Nancy Chodorow. She opines the gender identity is developed through the role played by mother as the primary caregivers. Chodorow(1978) revised Freud's theory by critically evaluating the formation of feminine and masculine identities.

The social learning theory of Bandura, first proposed in the 1950s and 60s, defined learning as the internalizing of the ideas by observing and reproducing the behaviour of same-sex adults. A young girl learns how to perform like a female by imitating the mother and the traits and mannerisms of the father is imitated by the son to be accepted in the family as a male. Secunda, V. (1990) opines that, " A daughter is a mother's gender partner, her closest ally in the family confederacy, an extension of her self. And mothers are their daughters' role model, their biological and emotional road map, the arbiter of all their relationships." But the drawback of social learning theory is that it states that the gender is passively acquired through the stimulus and response however further research shows children are active participants in the socialization process.

The ideas and opinions of suitable gender roles conceived by the children may change as they start growing and are exposed to the different social situations other than the condition within in the family. Kohlberg (1963) was the first to apply the theories of cognitive development to gender identities. Younger children within the age of nine tend to violate severely the gender norms and once they develop gender steadiness they become stimulated to display gender appropriate behaviour. In response to Kohlberg's theory, Sandra Bem developed the gender schema theory which proposes that the phenomenon of sex typing derives from the society's ubiquitous insistence on the functional importance of gender dichotomy and from the gender based schematic processing. According to Lorber, J. (2005), "masculinity and femininity is not inborn, that is, children are taught these traits. As soon as a child is identified as being a male or female then everybody start treating him or her as such. Children learn to move in gendered ways through the support of his environment. They are taught the gendered roles projected someone who is female or male. As the child grows up, he develops his identity, know how to interact with others and learn the role to play in the society."

Family and parents can be considered as the primary agent of socialization and have a great influence in the life of an offspring more than any other socialization agents such as media, peer group, education, and religion because all the other agents come in a later stage of one's life. The centuries old story of gender gap and discrimination could be only shattered through recognising and attaining the opportunities around oneself. According to Rich, A. (1986), " the quality of a mother's life – however embattled and unprotected – is her primary bequest to her daughter, because a woman who can believe in herself, who is a fighter, and who continues to struggle to create liveable space around her, is demonstrating to her daughter that these possibilities exist."

III. DATA AND METHODS

3.1 . Sample of the study
Ten college-going girls from the Government Arts and Science College and ten girls from the Farook College of the Kozhikode district in Kerala were selected and the grand mothers and mothers of these girls were also interviewed in the study. The samples were selected by categorizing them on the basis of institution.
3.2. Tool for Data Collection
The tool used for the data collection in the present study is a semi structured interview schedule prepared by the researcher. In the interview schedule, different aspects regarding education, mobility, marriage concepts, dressing and relationships within the family are mainly scrutinized to determine the socialization patterns that existed in the generation of grandmothers, in the generation of mothers and now existing in the present generation of daughters.
3.3. Analysis Techniques employed in the study
After collecting the data, it was analysed qualitatively and the results were interpreted.

IV. FINDINGS

4.1. The profile of the sample

The study includes twenty college- going girl students and their mothers and grandmothers. The girl students are presently studying the under graduate courses and the number of mothers having college education are very low but most of the mothers have completed high school education. The generation of grandmothers have had primary education and only six of them got high school education. Most of the samples are from middle- class families and a few of the respondents hail from upper middle- class families. The college- going girl students are below the age of twenty and most of the mothers are within a radius of 45- 57 years of age. As regards the grandmothers, they mostly come under the age of seventy to eighty years. The respondents are from Hindu community, Muslim community and Christian community respectively.

Table 4.1.

Educational aspects	Daughter	Mother	Grand Mother
Had consent for higher education	20	2	6
Studied the subject of their choice	16	20	-
Opted Arts subjects by persuasion	20	20	-
Studied in co-ed schools	8	17	8
No equal opportunity within the family	20	20	20

Out of the twenty college- going girls and mothers, all of the girls and two of the mothers responded that they were allowed to go for higher education although four of the girls and all the mothers were denied to opt the subject of their choice. All the girls and mothers revealed that they are motivated to pursue arts subjects than professional courses. Eight girls and seventeen mothers studied in co-ed scools.

Only six grand mothers got high school education and nine of them have had primary education and five of them have had informal education. From the twenty respondents, seven grandmothers went to girls -only schools and eight of them studied in co-ed schools and the remaining five have had informal education. All the sixty respondents opined that there were no equal opportunities for girls and boys in their family in matters regarding education.

Table 4.2.

Mobility	Daughter	Mother	Grand mother
Freedom to hang out with friends	18	15	12
Allowed to go for college tour	16	1	-
Restrictions in timings when going out	20	20	20
Control in behaviour patterns	20	20	20
free will in pursuing education or employment abroad	-	-	-

Out of sixty respondents , eighteen girls, fifteen mothers and twelve grandmothers were allowed to go out with their friends. All the respondents who were allowed to go out have had restrictions while they went out. Their behaviour patterns were also controlled like speaking too loud or running in public was seen as a great issue. Sixteen girls are allowed to go for a college tour and one mother was allowed to go for a tour during her school days. Pursuing education or employment abroad was out of question for the mothers and grandmothers and even for the present generation of collge-going girls.

All of them responded that they were restricted in their behavior patterns while they went out and were asked to walk slowly in public. This was because of the social norm which viewed women as modest and submissive and the women are not supposed to walk fast but to be seen as calm, quiet and shy. Hence there were restrictions in mobility and the girl children are socialized in such a way to fulfill all these terms and conditions of the society regarding mobility. Women of all three generations deeply internalized the cultural notions of the gender divide of public- private spheres.

Table 4.3.

Marriage	Daughter	Mother	Grand mother
Husband of one's own choice	5	-	-
Completion of education before marriage	20	5	-
Acceptable age for marriage as not beyond 25	20	20	19

Among five of the twenty college-going responded that their family will accept a bridegroom of their choice but all the respondents belonging to the generation of mothers and grandmothers never had any freedom

to choose a husband of their choice. All the grandmothers were of the opinion that their freedom was reduced after marriage and seventeen mothers also held the same opinion. All the twenty girls said that they would rather complete their studies before marriage. Out of the twenty mothers, fifteen of them wanted to complete their studies before marriage and the remaining five completed their studies before entering into conjugal life. All the sixty respondents, except one grandmother, had the opinion that girls should be married within the age of twenty five and most of the grandmothers like the girls to married off around the age of 18 to 20.

Table 4.4.

Notions of modesty in dressing	Daughter	Mother	Grand mother
Opt socially accepted/traditional wear	20	20	20
Often reminded to dress modestly	20	20	20
Wear the dress of one's own choice	18	20	20

All the respondents belonging to the generation of mothers and grandmothers said that they were not allowed to wear the dress of their choice. But eighteen teenage girls opined that wear the dress of their choice. But their choice never went beyond the traditional or socially accepted wear. All of the women belonging to the different generations of daughters, mothers and grandmothers were often reminded to dress modestly than the males in their family and hence experienced restrictions over their dressing patterns.

The dressing styles are influenced by the socialization patterns, especially the dressing style of women. One mother who is a retired teacher said "It is because of the restrictions imposed by the society that the girls observe this much modesty and decency in dressing. God created women for the purpose of propagation of species. So even without them being aware women have an inborn tendency to attract. For example flowers that bloom during night have white color and strong smell. This is for attracting moths which will pollinate them thereby propagating the species. Likewise the women are born to procreate. Because of this they try to attract men by whatever possible means. Women have a very romantic structure . It may be because of this that the concept of dress code came into being. If there were no such concept of decent dressing, this will affect the women themselves adversely. This fear may be the reason for the society to impose such restrictions. I tell my daughter to dress decently not in order to impose restrictions on her but because I fear the society." Therefore women are not allowed to wear the dress of their choice.

Table 4.5.

Interpersonal family relationship	Daughter	Mother	Grand mother
Take/took part in decision making in one's own personal matters	1	-	-
Mother as the most supportive member	17	20	11
Father/eldest malemember imposes/imposed maximum restrictions	17	20	20
Mother is/was the role model	20	20	11

All the sixty respondents, except one girl student opined that they never got freedom to take decision on their personal matters within the family. For all the mothers, their father was the person who imposed maximum restrictions on them until marriage and the most supportive member was their mothers itself. Seventeen of the girl students, out of twenty, felt the same way. For all the girls, their mother was their role model but only eleven grandmothers opined their mothers as their role model and for six of them, it was their grandmothers who supported them mostly within the family. Three respondents belonging to the generation of grandmothers considered their grandfathers as the most supportive member in the family and all twenty grandmothers opined that it is the father or eldest male member(generally, uncles or grandfathers) who imposed maximum restrictions within a household.

V. DISCUSSION

It is evident from the interviewees that the restrictions or controls put forward by the family or society is quite severe in all spheres of life of the women. The women are controlled in pursing education, in mobility, concepts of marriage, within the family relationships and even in their dressing patterns. Ideas of the inferiority or superiority of either of the sexes, and of stereotyped roles for men and women perpetuate inequalities and act as a hindrance to gain the gender parity. The present study assessed the intergenerational differences or similarities in socialization patterns regarding educational matters and found that the daughters have moved out from the private domain to the public sphere and they want to pursue higher education and set up career for themselves. Majority of the mothers and other family members also support this view of their daughters and are ready to help them fulfill their dreams. When compared to the situation of mothers and grandmothers, the

present college-going girls have more freedom to pursue higher studies while the mothers and grandmothers were denied this opportunity. There is the deep thinking that only women can take care of children. Women being suppressed by a male- dominated society both in education and also in later life. Even though the present generation of girls wanted to pursue higher education and set up a career for themselves, they wanted to get married within the age of twenty five years, which was a surprising fact and rather the result of the socialization process. Moreover, the girls are aspiring to choose the socially accepted jobs for women such as teaching and they are not ready to take up a profession that may challenge the social norms and socially constructed respectability of women.

The research evaluated the intergenerational aspects in the socialization patterns regarding the mobility of women. All of the respondents, regardless of generations, opined that their mobility was highly restricted, mainly for reasons of safety and security. All the twenty college- going girls said that they will not get any support from their families for pursuing education abroad or even out of Kerala state because the parents don't want to spend money on educating the daughters abroad. Instead, they believed in saving that money for their marriage. The family also feared the cultural stigma about sending girls abroad for education. The concept of pursuing education abroad was out of question and irrelevant with regard to the social circumstances of both the mothers and grandmothers. The generations of mothers and grandmothers were allowed to go out with their friends, but only to temples and nearby places. When compared with the older generations, the present generation of daughters are allowed to go out with their friends and enjoyed a bit more mobility in this regard. Outing of women from home after sunset is not a permitted matter. This affects the education and profession of women very badly. So many restrictions are also there in the matter of women reaching back to home from office, school etc. It is evident that there is only some small changes seen in the time limits in each generation. Whether it is in old time or in the present era stepping out from home are restricted for women, especially after dusk. Women get no opportunities to go for shopping or to some other places when night falls. This could be ascertained from the responses of women who hail from all the three generations.

The present analysis to find out the intergenerational similarities or differences in the socialization patterns regarding the concepts of marriage revealed that the generations of daughters, mothers and grandmothers never had the freedom to select a husband of their choice. The opinions regarding the ideal age for marriage of girls is increasing through generations. But still, the girls wanted to get married before the age of twenty five years, and aspire to complete their studies before marriage. The view is definitely the result of the socialization process that inculcates the social attitudes. Most of the mothers got married before the age of twenty and grandmothers before the age of fifteen years. Majority of them are of the opinion that their freedom was reduced after marriage. Women still don't have any freedom to express their opinions regarding their marriage. From the response of mothers and grandmothers it is evident that they were forced to obey the decisions of the eldest male member in the family regarding their marriage. When it comes to the matter of marriage, only the heteronormative customary marriages are taken into account for discussion. Even the present generation of college-going girls are unaware of the fact that debates or discussions are happening around the world which tries to deconstruct or reconstruct the ideas of hetero normativity.

Restrictions were imposed upon the women on all aspects of their lives within their families. One mother lamented that when she was a young girl the punishment for laughing out loud warranted beating from elder men with hands tied to a pillar in the courtyard. Young girls were supposed to speak in hushed tones. During the times of mothers and grandmothers, they were not allowed to express opinions or take decisions on their own personal matters. For most women, mothers were the most supportive member within the family. Because of this, their role model was their mother. Hence daughters imitate and identify with their mothers in deep and powerful ways. . Majority of the interviewees stated that maximum restrictions imposed upon them came from their fathers. Even now, the ultimate decision makers in the family are the male members. Not much generational changes have occurred amongst females within the family relationships.

Most of the mothers said that they would not meddle with the sartorial tastes of their girl children, provided they dress decently. The above statement is tricky in the sense that no tangible definition can be given for "decent". We can safely assume that these mothers are just echoing their support for the accepted standards of male dominated social beliefs on decency. One college-going girl student responded that she is having full freedom on dressing. It is quite usual for her to wear sleeveless tops and graffiti tee shirts. But when she was asked whether she does it on all occasions she replied that she restricts herself on social gatherings attended by the members of her extended family. From this response it is understood that women are groomed in such a way that they cannot deviate from socially accepted norms of respectable dressing. All the respondents opted for dressing style which was regarded as modest. All the respondents opined that, being a girl, they were often reminded to dress modestly while boys in their family seldom had such reminders. One of the respondents said that, while in her early adolescent days, she felt so fed up with the restrictions, that she wished to become a boy.

VI. CONCLUSION

By the development of society, women are getting more opportunities to spread out their activities and participation and also the contribution in society. But it is always limited by social controls. The patriarchal notion has been ingrained and normalized in our society that women even fail to realize that they are being cowed down. There is not much change in the approach towards women and the restrictions imposed on them by the society through the three generations that was studied.

From the study it is evident that the conscious minds of women are trying to blindly follow the patriarchal norms prescribed for them in our society but they surely encounter 'internal conflicts' depicted by the psycho analytic theory. It is evident from their responses that they are not getting equal opportunities to explore or augment their lives fully like their male counterparts. According to Muzumdar (1998), the average Indian woman has no choice in relation to important events in her life such as marriage, parenthood, family planning, participation in community activities and divorce. The wife is often blamed, ostracized and even divorced for her inability to produce sons or in case of sterility. With a few exceptions, the eldest male in the family is still the decision- maker in relation to familial issues. It is only in minor matters such as those relating to the kitchen the women can have their say.

They are aware, to some extent, and disturbed by the controls and restrictions experienced in their mobility, decisions regarding their marriage and occupation and other walks of life and are still confined to the societal roles of being an obedient daughter, caring mother and benevolent grandmother. Despite the calls for transformation, women are still underrepresented in power positions around the globe. When scrutinizing the ideologies of patriarchy, society needs to identify the cultural elements related to the arrangement of social life that conceive women primarily as mothers and place them in the domestic sphere and men as breadwinners and situate them in the public sphere. With such an understanding, and realising the functioning of the patriarchal system, people may shape the lives in different ways by escalating to amelioration of existing condition and it can be accomplished by practising the gender neutral behavioural patterns.

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