Chapter Six

Process Of Growing Up: Gender Dimensions
In the preceding two empirical chapters, I have studied the culture of schooling and the sociology / politics of school knowledge and curriculum and their impact on the formation of gender identities. In this chapter, I wish to go beyond this macro reality and see how some children (with whom I have interacted in detail) looked at their own selves, internalized gender identities and evolved an orientation towards the world. In a way it is a study although a brief one of their biographies. A closer look at these biographies definitely enables us to see how concretely identities are shaped and manifested in everyday life practice. This qualitative data, I wish to assert, would humanise the field, because it means that my respondents are not just objects of study to be classified in tables and statistical representations, they are also subjects and persons having their own narratives to tell. At this juncture, as a sociologist, I sharpen the art of listening, and begin to listen to their stories. The brief biographies of select children would acquire special meaning if we also see how ‘significant others’ teachers and parents who, for the children, represent the adult society look at themselves, internalise certain beliefs and practices and construct their gender identities.

I

TEACHERS ON FEMININITY

To the question “do you think it is important for women to work”, most of the teachers replied in positive. But the rationale given for this was embedded in the traditional view with regard to gender.

Mrs. S. Mohanty, the present P.E.T. said:

If you ask me, it is very important for women to work in order to be economically independent but the real problem is to adjust job responsibilities with home responsibilities and to strike a balance between the two.

Mr. K.P. Satapathy said:
Girls should take up a career, but the social structure is still not changed in their favour, therefore their status, as a career woman always stands threatened. However, girls must remember that independence is not a license to do everything you like. It is a responsibility. More so, you stand as a representative of your culture. Woman in fact, plays a very important role in fact she can make or break the society. She can hold the reins of the entire family.

Both Mohammad Ishmail and R.K. Chowdhry feel that it is important for girls to be economically independent. Ms. J. Sarangi feels economic independence is a must for girls, especially due to the unsupportive social system. Mr. D.G. Sahoo opines that:

the need for women/girls for working nowadays is mainly justified on the economic grounds i.e. in a middle - class family, the women by working can always add valuable contributions to the family coffers. But if the husband does not will, and also if there is no economic need then there is actually speaking no necessity for housewife/women to work.

Mr. D. Singh said that:

It is difficult for women to balance both home and teaching job (he speaks of teaching job as if its the only job women can do). They neither find time for preparing for their assignments nor for their students. They have an inclination to bend more towards the domestic sphere. Especially, the scene is worse is Primary Section, where mostly the teachers are women, and what they do? You can even catch them perhaps knitting in the class.

Mr. B. Parida speaks of career women making a significant contribution to the home coffer. Ms. Basanti says, it is important for women to engage themselves i.e. utilise the excess time at their disposal in productive activities. Mrs. S. Mohanty, the science teacher and Mr. B. Mishra speak in the same tone that women should at least be qualified satisfactorily to take up jobs in contingency situations i.e. untimely death of husband and other such factors. Ms. U. Kanungo says:

It is not necessary for the girl to be economically independent if she is married to a person who can give her economic security satisfactorily.

Mr. D. Dash also speaks in a similar vein:

If a girl is financially well-settled, there is no need for her taking up a job. But, say for instance, if it is middle class family, they can do with some supplementary income.

Ms. Dei, Ms. Mohapatra, Mr. B. Ray and Ms. J. Majhi speak in favour
of girls being economically independent for self-dignity, widening her mental
horizon, her self-identity and overall personality.

In an effort to filter the gender perceptions of the teachers more
minutely, the question “do you think a sex-wise classification can be made as
far as occupations are concerned?” was put. Except four teachers, all teachers
believed that it is a fact that there are some jobs specifically marked out for
women meaning women would do well in these jobs that is teaching,
medicine, lectureship and so on.

According to Ms. S. Mohanty the P.E.T.:

School teaching/lectureship is best for women today. It is convenient for
women and also a big learning experience.

Mr. K.P. Satapathy says:

Women have a bright future in teaching and medical profession.
According to Manu's Manav Dharma Samhita, “Sushru Sahajya Balang
Strinam” which means service and ‘rendering help’ is the main streng:h
of women. But politics is one arena it is advisable for women not to
enter otherwise the natural instincts of women would be destroyed. Even
in a business venture, a woman given the scope can excel.

Most teachers say that women can do well in teaching jobs i.e. teachers
in schools, or lecturers and in medicine i.e. nursing, doctors. Ms. Mohapatra
gives the rationale in favour of teaching. She says:

In any other field, it is necessary that they should have a superior post,
otherwise, there are chances of women being largely exploited against.
Primarily, teaching is a women's job

The general belief that men are more aggressive than women is
perhaps the most commonly held belief about differences between the sexes.
Most teachers attribute this difference to biological determinism rather than
social construction. It may be mentioned here that studies have revealed that
ideological formation in the minds of adults in the patriarchal setup, crucially
influences the processes of schooling to reproduce and legitimize gender
differentiated identities, perceptions and cultural visions.

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1 Askew and Ross, 1988, op.cit., p. 13.
2 For Details see Barton, Len and Stephen Walker (eds.), 1983, Gender, Class and Education, Falmer
The teachers in the individual interviews were asked, “Do you think the feature of boys being ‘aggressive, tough, competitive’ and girls being ‘feminine, affectionate, dedicated’ is a natural endowment?” To this, majority of the teachers agreed to. All said it is indeed a natural endowment, with the exception of only four teachers.

The agreement of the majority of the staff can be aptly expressed in the words of Mr. Satapathy, the Sanskrit teacher. In his words:

Lajja (Bashfulness), Daya (Kindness), Kshma (forgiveness), Shraddha (dedication), Shanti (peace), Kanti (beauty), Tatha Rati (sexuality), Sushrusha Bhushanam, Prajanang Paripallanam – these all are like ornaments to the woman – they enhance her beauty and are very important traits in a woman, since after all, she is the one who looks after the needs/maintenance of society.

The female teachers’ rationale for joining the present job throws light further all their perceptions regarding femininity. In personal interviews almost every lady teacher divulged that she joined this job because husband works in Cuttack and has a non-transferable job and teaching in this school is also non transferable. Mrs. S. Mohanty who is the P.E.T. wanted to join this school particularly for the convenience of staying in Cuttack, notwithstanding the fact that teaching job in this school is non-transferable. Ms. B. Das said that this was a job of her choice. She honestly divulged that:

I joined this job for engagement of some sort and extra addition towards maintenance of the family. It was convenient because my husband works as a senior Assistant in one of the departments in the Board of Secondary Education, out here.

Ms. B. Das is the 'needle-work/tailoring teacher.

Mrs. S. Mohanty wanted to become a doctor as the first preference and next wanted to be a teacher. She wanted to work in this school because it is a 'good' school and also the post is non-transferable.

Most of them have also compromised on their careers for this reason. Ms. J. Sarangi did say, that she always wanted to teach. She gave her preference to the job of 'lecturer' as compared to 'teacher'. But that teaching was only her second preference came to surface only towards the end of the
interview when she gave the rationale behind taking up science at intermediate level and then switching over to doing History (hons) and then went on to do post graduation in history. She said that:

This direction in education was taken because I wanted to take the IAS Examinations. But that time there was a problem. My mother was taken seriously ill and there went my ambition for competitive exams. owing to this pressure and societal pressure for marriage at a certain age, I had to give in to it and got married. So, I thought of doing the next best thing join a teaching job. As soon as I got my M.Ed. degree, I was married off.

Here, the teaching job seems to be an adjustment because at another point in the interview, she had opined that:

family is the fulcrum of a woman's life, so whatever she does, or whatever job she takes up should be seen totally from the point of-view that it doesn't hamper family life.

Thus, both male and female teachers hold that gender behaviour is dictated by biological sex. The inherent trait of girls is docility, delicateness etc. and that of boys is active, tough etc. They have extremely gendered ideas as far as professions are concerned too. They feel that only professions such as teaching, medicine etc. is meant for girls. According to them toughness, aggressiveness or being go-getters in seeking tough careers (armed forces, police service, administration) is meant for boys alone.

Hence it may be deduced that the teachers' subjectivities which comprise of such 'gender ideas', is bound to find expression in their actions and the subtle messages that they pass on to the impressionable minds of their pupils, both boys and girls.

II

PARENTS ON GENDER CONSTRUCTION

This section probes into the orientations of parents i.e. both mother and father. This was taken into consideration because it has much significance. The parents bringing up their children is largely impacted and influenced by their orientation to different areas and issues. Overall, the questions asked to
the parents, were counter probed again and again through several other questions, the motive behind it being to identify the genuine orientations.

To the question, "Whether occupation can be classified sex-wise? This would be later followed by question like - "In your opinion, the success in any occupation, does it largely depend on the potential of the person for the job, irrespective of gender, or does gender have a large role to play?" Many who replied on the positive in the former question, when crosschecked again by the latter question were found to be having quite different ideas in this regard. However, this was not the case always.

Mr. Parida - parent of a girl-student of the school said:

Times have changed as far as gender is concerned, so girls and boys irrespective of their gender can join any occupation and excel.

Mr. Moharana said:

No there are different jobs for both sexes. For girls certain services are good such as 'school teaching'.

Mr. S.C.Kar said in a negative tone stressing on what is not for girls rather than what is. He said:

Being in the forest department, I can give an example. Women are not meant for some jobs at all. Take for instance, forest guards- it is a job, which would include lot of danger to self because it may involve encounters with poachers. So despite their being educationally eligible for the job, they are not appointed. Of course, there is no problem with their appointment as Range Officer - this is different. In this job, they can delegate responsibilities to others.

An assumption is found about girls that makes them eligible of chosen few jobs. The statements - "..................they can delegate responsibilities to other" shows the person's attitude that women cannot handle responsibilities unless helped/supported from others i.e. men. Mr. S.C.Kar is father of Sambit.

Mr. N.Nath said:

As far as physical exertion is concerned, girls do have a disadvantage. So, jobs requiring lot of stamina/physical labour cannot be suitable for women. I am in favour of the gender differences maintained.

* He works as a senior assistant in the forest department.
Mrs. B. Das doesn't believe in sex-wise classification of jobs. She says girls can do well anywhere. Mr. R. K. Behera says:

As far as teaching jobs concerned, women would do better as compared to men. As far as other jobs, no sex-wise classification can be made.

Mr. Behera is S.I. of schools.

Mrs. (Padhi) Behera, who is principal of a UGME school at Cuttack said:

service requiring touring are difficult for women.

Mrs. J. Raj says:

some professions are better for girls such as medicine, lecturership etc.

Mr. S. Mahakul believes that no sex-wise classification of job is required.

Mr. Abdul H. Khan says:

I do not prefer services of any kind for girls.

Mr. Khan is driver in the Board of Secondary Education, Orissa.

Mr. B. Rout also feels that no sex-wise classification needs to be made and that girls can do well in any area of occupations.

Mrs. Pal says:

Girls are doing well, may be they are looking around and are getting inspired to do well. But I want to ask you (the researcher) a question. My husband's elder brother's eldest child - a brilliant girl doing her engineering in a reputed institute in Mumbai, now wants to get married to a boy of her choice shrugging off the advice of her parents. This boy in question is not from our caste (Mr. Pal's family belongs to Brahmin caste). So she said, "Parents feel very cheated as they have given her lot of independence in every aspect in her upbringing, and this is what they get in return.

Her narration underlies, certain issues that the very important decision of choosing mates, despite a girl being very highly educated a career woman should leave it in the hands of the parents.

Dr. S.C. Pal (husband of the above mentioned Mrs. Pal) replies in negative to the question vehemently saying what is not for girls rather than what is. He said:

I do not believe that both sexes are equally endowed/placed as far as any
profession goes. Take for instance in my profession (He is a veterinary Doctor), we need to rush to the client i.e. owner of animal at odd hours also, sometimes, it can be in the middle of the night etc. This definitely is difficult for girls. Besides in our profession, we may need to control real ferocious animals for which one requires the physical strength and fearlessness. I remember during my training days a female batch mate of mine who was badly, injured during a training course by a cow.

Mr. J Behera said:

Education and medicine is most suitable for women. Engineering and police service is not very suitable for women since physical strength is required.

Mrs. Surekha Sahoo says:

Teachership, nursing, these are the jobs that should be taken up by girls, as it can be well balanced with their household responsibilities otherwise, women who opt for careers other than these two should not marry.

She cites example of her younger brother-in-law.

This person serves in the Army and so does his spouse. After marriage, he encouraged his wife for serving in armed forces. She took the CDS examinations, fared well and made it. She has been appointed as a commissioned officer, whereas he is a JCO. She goes off to work, leaving husband to do all the household chores, including baby - sitting, isn't it unfair?

Mr. G. Sahoo thinks that medical field is ideal for women, whereas his wife thinks that an educated girl is what she likes irrespective of the service.

Mrs. J.Dash:

Education line is good for girls.

According to Mrs. Prabhati Pati:

A girl has to keep in sight both her job and family life which perhaps a boy doesn't have to worry about. So a girls accordingly has to think of a job which does not place her disadvantageously, as far as housework is concerned.

Mr. B.C.Dash says:

Girls would do very well in the field of medicine and teaching as they have patience.

Apart from these, other parents believed that girls can do well in any job, same as boys.

With regard to the question 'what opinion do you hold about
reservation' quota for women in government services? Most parents proclaim that they favour the reservation in jobs for women, as is workable in Orissa.

However many of those who favoured reservations, also said that, working women neglected taking care of home and children, and that was not good,

Mr. S.C.Kar is not in favour of reservation for women. He says:

I feel girls should compete on an equal platform.

Mr. N.Nath doesn't favor reservation. He cites example of the women employees in the Board of Secondary Education office where he also works. He says:

Actually speaking they do not deserve to be there - meaning that women are far from proficient in their jobs, and they usurp somebody else's job who is more deserving (a man).

Dr. S. K. Pal - is not in favour of reservation, because he says:

Both get equal encouragement/privileges unlike earlier days.

Mrs. A. Mishra –

I am in favour of reservation, but if a girl gets a good candidate, there is no need for her then to seek a job.

Mr. J. Behera is against reservation for women. He says:

In the wake of rising problem of unemployment, it is unfair that from one house both work and from another none.

Ms L.P.Dash says:

Times have come when girls are or have to mostly take up careers, especially when it is difficult for only one earning member to fend for the entire family. Thus reservation is a big encouragement for girls, who are competing with boys in the job-market.

In fact, she stresses that there should be reservation in medical profession.

Mr. A. Biswal is in favor of reservation, but worries that no one thinks of the various social problems a women has to face in the cut throat competitive atmosphere in the jobs.

As regards their preference, most parents say the co-educational schools are better as compared to mini-sex schools. But the rationale offered is very
incidental. Some parents of girl students feel that the school being in close vicinity is the main reason behind their decision to admit their daughters here.

Mr. D. Moharana says:

If there was a girls' school in close vicinity, then I would have sent my daughter there.

Mr. C. S. Mohanty, D.I (District Inspector of schools) is in favor of co-education, because as far as his experience goes as District Inspector, in girls' schools, the teaching staff are mostly women and they are largely unable to do justice to their job. Another interesting rationale offered is by Mr. S. N. Mahakul:

Co-educational school is better because competition is keen. The boys would feel bad if girls exceed them in studies and that motivates the boys to study well, than would be the motivation if they were in a boys' school.

The assumption being that it is important for boys to do well, and the only reason why they should be in co-educational schools is that when they are pitched against girls as fellow-pupils, it affects their performance in a positive way. Many parents also thought that co-educational atmosphere, makes adjustment with the opposite sex, better.

The question “should there be differential or equal type of upbringing for children of both sexes”, drew the most interesting and heavily gendered perceptions about the two sexes. The majority of the parents said that the upbringing should be same; some parents who thought that the upbringing should be differential gave interesting reasons to support their stand. Mrs. Basanti Das said that she does not believe in differential upbringing of children of both sexes. However later in the interview divulged that as far as she has understood her daughter, she feels that she should take up Arts subjects (Social Sciences) as a career. But laughingly says that the daughter gets angry whenever she gives this suggestion, because she wants to study science.

Mr. K.C. Sahoo says that the upbringing of both should be kept differential. he says:
I feel, certain restrictions should be imposed on girls as far as their mingling and interacting with boys are concerned. For, boys you can explain, if they go astray (as far as involvement with the opposite sex goes), but girls, if they go astray in this regard, it is difficult to explain them or chastise them, since they are very emotional and sentimental.

Mrs. Surekha Sahoo says:

Definitely, the upbringing of children of both sexes must differ. For example, they are followers of "Guru Anukula Chandra" and the Guruji (master) says that special emphasis should be given to increasing the affection and attachment between father and daughter, so that the daughter thinks several times over before she takes any drastic step to hurt her father.

The 'step' denotes in terms of marriage or selecting a mate of one's own choice.

Parents more or less echo 'ideas on gender' in the same tone as the teachers. Home is the world tout court for children and the subjectivities of parents, along with the gender behaviour as well as gendered division of labour, makes the child to internalize the sometimes subtle but most times the consciously directed gendered messages.

Control over 'sexuality' of girls, rings out very clearly. Parents of the pupils of the present school mostly give the message that they are all in favour of women's progress such as education or taking up a career, because this invariably raises their daughters' prospects in the marriage market. However, decisions concerning marriage itself and the choice of job are not to be left to the children and most certainly, not to the girls.

Besides, another commonly held belief of the parents is about relation of both sexes to the 'private domain' of home. They feel that despite girls taking up a career, the most essential point for them to keep in mind is their home. The assumption of the teachers seems to be that only the female has significant role to play at home, thus excluding the males from the responsibilities of home.
A series of in-depth interviews were taken to delve into the ongoing process of internalization of gendered values and attitudes as part of their identity formation. All the girls and boys exhibited inculcation of gendered attitudes and values.

Manisha's father is a Sub Inspector in the Orissa State Police service and mother is a housewife. As a general rule Manisha is not allowed to move about town on her own. When there is a requirement, her father accompanies her. She however is allowed some independence of mobility when it comes to going to school on a bicycle. This is not the case of her brother, younger to her by two years, who has unrestricted mobility. "In fact", she says laughing, "It seems to me that roaming and visiting friends are his favorite pass times". She shifted to this school from Ranihat High School, because the environment in that school was not good - as far as boys are concerned, they were very mischievous. She takes tuition in Maths, Science and English. The tuition teacher comes to a friend's house, near hers and there all the students gather.

The fact that she is inhibited in her choice of outfits is obvious from her sharing. Her favorite clothes are Salwar Kameez, Pants, Minis and other such attires, but she says, "Mama restricts from wearing minis and pants. She says, "you are a big girl now, its not good for you to wear all these?"

She likes to get a haircut, now and then, but is restricted by mother. Her favorite subject is Maths and her favorite teacher is Ms. Mohanty - the science teacher. She likes her for her affectionate nature. Manisha wants to take up medical profession, but given a chance/choice, she would like to be an actor. Her mother encourages her in this. She is also interested in joining the
armed forces - inspiration is father who works in the police and her uncle who is 'Captain' in the Indian army. Her favourite work in literature is Baikunthanath Acharya's 'Shakuntala'. She admires the protagonist, Shakuntala - especially, the way she bears every difficulty (the fact that her husband forgets about her) and hence, in the end is rewarded. According to Manisha, an ideal Indian girl is the one who has qualities like 'smartness, simplicity, not ultra-modern but traditional and an ideal Indian boy would be the one who does not misbehave with girls, but rather is very helping in nature. She helps around at home in the kitchen and sometimes in the washing too. She says that even her brother helps around by sweeping, washing and cooking.

Ipsita's father serves in the State Medical Service, as a doctor. Mother is a housewife. She has an elder sister who is in 12th Std., and is aspiring to be a doctor. She has a younger brother who studies in Std. II at Saraswati Sisu Mandir. She comes daily in an autorickshaw with some other girls and some junior boys. She takes tuition at home in English, Sanskrit, Maths and science. She desires to be either a doctor or a computer engineer or else take competitive examinations of different types and join a government job. In her leisure, she prepares study notes. She desires to take formal training in music/dance someday, when she has the chance.

Her father encourages her to be a doctor. She helps her younger brother in studies, also helps mother in cooking. Her favorite subject is Maths. Her favorite teachers are Mr. D. Dash who teaches English, and Mr. S. Dash (National Award Winner) who teaches Math. She likes both of them because they clear doubts and teach well. She likes to play kabaddi and watch cricket. She likes to wear outfits such as jeans and salwar-kameez. Mother places restrictions on wearing Jeans. She says:

it does not appear good if big girls wear jeans.

She also likes to have different hairstyles from times to time, but mother restricts her to do so. She is interested in participating in debate
competitions, but since no one has time to take her, especially if the venue is very far off, therefore she cannot participate nowadays. She never goes out alone. Whenever she goes out, her elder sister or an elder cousin brother accompanies her. Besides these, she is interested in watching some cultural functions, especially those of children, but only gets a chance to go with family, if it is convenient. In her opinion an ideal Indian girl is the one who respects elders and shows love to the younger ones; behaves well with everyone and whenever chastised by anyone, doesn't mind but accepts the advice in good humour. An ideal boy, according to her, must have the same traits too. She adds that boys should behave properly with girls and boys alike.

Arundhati's father has a canteen running on contract basis in the Engineering School campus. She comes daily to school by cycle with her younger sister. She takes tuition in Maths, Science and English- one teacher comes home to give lessons and for English, she goes to the teacher's house-which is close by. She takes tuition because her father felt the need to do so. She spends her leisure time with brother and sister. She is interested in classical dance and sports, but is not able to pursue either due to time constraints. Her father wants her to take up medicine - due to the dangers in other fields for girls. But given a choice, Arundhati would like to be a Computer Engineer, or a Cinematographer. She has this desire to open an orphanage too. Her favorite work is Radhanath Naik's poem, 'Chilika'. This poem talks about the scenic beauty of the lake and how it is being ruined and also inspires children to persevere for environmental protection. She helps her elder brother who is in Std. 12th in writing notes; She helps her mother in household chores such as sweeping, arranging the dining table. She also helps father in his money calculations of the business. Her favourite teachers are Mr. N. Sahoo and Mr. Parida who teach Math and Science respectively. She likes them because they are helpful and teach well. She likes to play football and badminton and likes to watch cricket, football, and tennis.
She likes to wear Salwar Kameez. She likes wearing her hair long and knows to cook most items, commonly cooked at her home, except the non-vegetarian items.

Her elder brother is preparing for 'joint entrance exams', is especially interested in studying medicine. He reads extensively in his leisure time, or also does shopping and helps father in his work. She goes with her mother to shop. She also participates in acting and other cultural activities in the school annual functions.

Subhasmita’s father works as an Assistant Superintendent in the State Statistical Department. Her mother was a teacher earlier but left the job after marriage. Subhasmita comes to school on bicycle, with her friends (girls) and her younger sister. Her favourite subject is math and science. She is aspiring to be a doctor. She takes tuition at home only. When mom is ill, she helps at home by cleaning the utensils, sweeping. Her favorite teacher is Mr. K.C. Sarangi, (the former principal). She admires his simple, frugal life style. She likes to play badminton, chess, and 'long jump' in athletics, but likes to watch cricket also.

Pragyan's father is Chief Supervisor in the Parcel department. Her mother is a matriculate who is housewife. She has an elder brother who is studying to be a Computer Engineer. Pragyan aspires to be either a doctor or a computer engineer. Her favorite subject is science. She goes to her teacher’s house to take tuition.

Tapaswini’s father is a T.V. actor and presently he is directing a T.V. serial. Mother along with maternal uncle runs a nursery school called ‘Jyoti Nursery School’. She comes daily to school on bicycle in the company of other friends (girls). She takes tuition at home, this was her mother’s decision. In her leisure time, she plays video games, spends time with sister and brother, reads novels/storybooks. Her favorite literary work is ‘Nak-kata Chitrakar’, which is a love story in which the heroine rejects the hero due to his ugly appearance, despite the fact that he was an extremely talented painter.
Her favourite subject is English literature. She wants to be an 'Air-hostess' because she loves visiting different places and is good in English. She would also like to learn Odissi dance. She helps mother in household chores such as washing and sweeping; helps elder sister in her work. Her favourite teacher is Ms. Mohanty. She likes her due to her cooperative nature especially towards girls. According to her, an ideal Indian girl is the one who knows her limits - not showing too much smartness and should be strict in her disposition whereas an ideal Indian boy is the one who respects girls and does not underestimate their capabilities. She likes to play carom and also likes watching cricket. She likes to wear Salwar kameez. She likes to have different hairstyles, but since grandmother does not approve, she cannot do so. Her father works in another place.

S. Ipsita's father is an English lecturer and mother is a senior history/English teacher. Her favorite subject is science. Each day she comes to school alone on her bicycle. She has a younger sister who studies in another High School. Her favorite literary work is 'Jagyansini' by Pratibha Ray. This novel is based on the life of Draupadi. S. Ipsita likes it because Draupadi's strength of character is very inspiring for women. She aspires to be a doctor preferably a neurologist. Both her parents advise her to be a doctor. Her favourite teacher is Ms. Mohanty. She likes her because of her affectionate nature. In her opinion, an ideal Indian girl is the one who can adjust to circumstances and has faith in God. An ideal Indian boy, she says is one who respects girls and who obeys elders. She likes to play kabaddi and watch cricket. Her favourite attire is 'Salwar kameez'. Parents (either of them) do not say anything regarding the attires. She goes to buy ration and also helps in cooking. Ipsita likes to get haircut. Father actually encourages keeping hair short, but mother says keep it long.

Sagarika's father is a businessman. He owns a Godown. Her mother is a housewife. She has an elder sister who is studying history (Hons.) in a women's college and has a brother younger to her by one year. She takes
tuition along with brother; the teachers come home to teach. Both she and her parents thought it necessary for her to take up tuition. She aspires to be a computer engineer. In her leisure times, she plays computer game or watches T.V. Her favourite subject is English literature. Her favourite literary work is 'Arabian Nights’ in Oriya. She thinks it proper that children help at home, but she could not get an opportunity to do so. Her favourite teachers are Sachi Guruji who teaches well and in leisure time tells interesting stories, Ms. Mohanty, Mr. S. Dash and Mr. D. Dash who understand the feelings and needs of children. In her opinion a good Indian girl should not be very strict i.e. not having a foul temper, and at the same time, should not be very simple too, so that people don't take undue advantage of her. A good Indian boy should have decent behaviour shown towards girls and respect parents - keep their desires, and cares about them. She likes to play kabaddi and Ludo and likes to watch cricket and WWF. Her favorite outfits are Sal war kameez and long frock. If she has to go somewhere, generally takes the permission from parents and since she is in a joint family, asks a cousin brother or someone else to escort her and bring her back. If she has gone somewhere and is not able to return in time, elders have advised her to call up home and inform. She helps in the kitchen occasionally. Usually in the family anyone eats at anytime, but the women eat in the end. Sometimes if they have kept fast and are hungry, they eat first. Sagarika feels that the job of 'Airhostess' is very good for girls. She also likes to have haircut of different style, but mother does not approve of it.

Rojalin's father is an Auditor in Water Resources Department of the Orissa Government and her mother is a Nurse in ‘S.C.B. Medical College and Hospital’. Her favourite subject is geography. Her first preference for a career is getting an engineering degree from one of the IITs, and second preference is to get into the IAS. She has a younger sister who is in std. VI in Ranihat High School. Her mother advises her to become a doctor and father tells her that she can have any career option she chooses. She takes tuitions, thrice a week in Math, English and Sanskrit. Considering the present dearth of
the required number of teachers in the school and many holidays, it will be
difficult to cover the entire course at school, hence she and her parents
decided that she should take tuitions. In her spare time, she enjoys reading
biographies of great men. If given a chance, she would like to pursue research
on them.

Usually she helps around at home by setting right any mechanical
device at home. She does not like cooking. Even her father discourages from
participating in the kitchen. But her mother says that certain cooking is a
'must' to learn, because sometimes you need to cook for yourself. She loves
the poem 'Chhoto Moro Gaan Ti' a nostalgic description of a village life in
Orissa by Sachidananda Routray.

Rojalin says that her favorite teacher is the former principal, Mr. K.C.
Sarangi. She was very much impressed by his administrative skill, also for the
fact that in any situation, he does not give way to corruption. She likes to
wear 'Salwar Kameez' and 'Churidar', but as it is, there are no restrictions
from parents on wearing any outfits. She likes to have long hair. Daily, she
cycles to school, alone (not in the company of friends that is). She also goes
on her own, if need be, by her bicycle to different places. Her parents do not
worry much if she goes on her own.

Her opinion about ideal Indian boy and girl is very interesting. About
the boy she says, one who respects parents in all circumstances. Even after
marriage, he should take care of his parents. He should not inflict any
pain/misfortune on his children. For other people's sake should not look down
upon his parents and must also honour teachers. About the girl, she says, one
who respects parents, teachers. Whatever her duties are towards home, she
should fulfill. For example, she herself (Rojalin) - She should take care of
work at home; parents should never regret not having a son. The girl after
marriage should care about both her family of orientation and family of
procreation.
Rojalin, comes across as a very confident, courageous girl, having a high self-esteem, notwithstanding the fact that her mother is a working woman, and both the parents are equal partakers of any decision in the house of regarding the children.

Dharashree's father works as a Branch Manager in the Tribal Development and Cooperation Corporation of Government of Orissa. Her mother is Principal of Chhatra Bajar UGME School. She also writes poetry.

Dharashree's favourite subject is biology and she aspires to study medicine. She loves visiting places, earlier used to learn painting, also loves music (she sings too). She is keen to learn classical dance/music. She takes tuition in three subjects, mathematics, Sanskrit and English. The teachers of first two subjects come to her house to teach and for English lessons; she goes to the teacher's house. Her elder brother is studying in intermediate Science in J.K.B.K. College. Her parents encourage her brother for engineering and encourage her to take up any career she chooses. Her favourite teacher is Mr. Satapathi - who teaches Sanskrit at school. She likes him as he teaches well, shows lot of patience with the students, and is very friendly with the students. She is keenly interested in athletics - likes playing and watching Lawn Tennis. Her favorite outfit is 'salwar kameez and Churidar. Brother is keen in joining NDA i.e. joining as an engineer, but parents are not keen about that. Dharashree goes in a rickshaw or bus with her mother. She knows to cook vegetarian dishes. In her opinion, a good/ideal Indian boy should be confident, punctual, sincere in the work he does, cares about other's welfare, always truthful, should be ready to learn and adopt good qualities of others, strong in will power. In her opinion, the ideal Indian girl must posses many qualities as the boy, besides should have self confidence and must be pleasing when she talks/speaks.

Subrat's father is a field officer in the SBI. He has two elder brothers. His mother is housewife. The eldest brother is preparing for engineering entrance exams. His favourite literary work is 'Narada Stuti' by Sadasiv
Mishra. It is a criticism of the world economy, throws light on the causal factors of Orissa's economic backwardness. Subrat wants to be an IAS. In his spare time, he likes to spend time with friends or reading books. He admires armed forces. He helps at home by shopping vegetables etc. His parents encourage him to take up medicine. Subrat agrees that cane should be used to discipline a child. He agrees with what Chanakya has said, "uptil ten years, giving affection is alright, then onwards till fifteen years, use of cane is needed." In his opinion an ideal Indian boy is the one who is obedient to parents and other elders and an ideal Indian girl is the one who is educated and obeys elders. Subrat likes watching WWF. He plays cricket. His favourite outfit is Panchhi i.e. a Brahmin male’s sacrificial wear - includes Dhoti and a sheet called 'Otta' on the shoulder. Subrat takes tuition in Math, Science and English. One teacher comes home and other comes in the neighbourhood. His favourite subject is Oriya literature. His favourite teacher is Mr. D. Dash. He likes him for his teaching style.

Arabinda's father is a contractor of civil constructions. His mother is a housewife. Each day he cycles to school. In his spare time, he finishes lessons. He likes to play football and cricket and likes to watch cricket. His favourite subject is Sanskrit. He takes tuitions in all subjects four times a week. He goes to the teacher's house. He decided to take tuition, because his elder brother also used to take tuition from the same teacher, considering the fact that he is studying chemical engineering at REC, Rourkela. He has three sisters. All three sisters have a B.Sc and a B.Ed degree. One is married to a Mines Manager, other two also took 'Montessori training' One is teaching in St. Xavier's school and another is teaching in Modern Public School.

Arabinda is the youngest in the family. He wants to be a computer engineer. His favorite poem is 'Sephali' by Kuntala Kumari Sabat. It speaks about a flower, which blooms for a day and then withers but while it blooms, it gladdens many hearts by its beauty and fragrance. His favourite teacher is Mr. D. Dash because he is strict as needed. One of his sisters is also preparing
for bank P.O. exams. Father is encourages Arabinda to study Bio Technology. Mother advises him to strive like elder brother and achieve. Arabinda believes 'use of cane' may be needed to discipline some people. He thinks that ideal Indian boy should be one who serves and pays respect to elders and parents and also should have a serving attitude towards one's own birthplace. Arabinda says an ideal Indian girl should be simple not fashionable. He likes to watch cricket. He helps at home by shopping for groceries etc. Otherwise, generally father does it. For girls, he thinks 'Salwar Kameez' is the right outfit. His favourite outfit is jeans and T-shirt. He thinks that teaching is a very good career for girls.

Sambit's father works as Senior Assistant in the Orissa State Forest Department. His mother who expired in 1998, was a teacher in a girls' school. Sambit wants to be a Scientist in Chemistry - wants to work independently by inventions and discoveries. His favourite subject is science. He has a younger brother. His father wants him to be a doctor or an IAS. At home, he has a aunty (his mother’s younger sister) who does all the housework. A maternal uncle also stays with them who is studying an ITI course. Sambit takes tuition in Math, Science, Sanskrit and Oriya. He goes to the teacher's home. His father suggested for tuition. According to Sambit, "No cane is needed to discipline a child. A child can be taught discipline by use of love and affection." According to him, an ideal Indian boy is one who is obedient to elders, smart and caring towards family. In his opinion, an ideal Indian girl, is one who takes good care of the family (meaning housework, cooking etc.) and contributes towards building a family, not to break the family. He cycles on his own to different places. He also does shopping for the house.

Manoj's father is an SBI branch manager. His mother is housewife. Manoj takes tuition in math, science, sanskrit and english. In his spare time, he watches television, cleans his bicycle or is playing with his sister's baby. He also likes to read comics, or draw sceneries. He aspires to be a doctor. Both his parents encourage him for medicine. He helps at home by shopping
for groceries. Sometimes he makes tea for his mother. He has an elder brother, who is in his IInd year of B.Sc and is simultaneously is preparing for engineering. His elder sister is married to an engineer. She has an M.A degree in Oriya literature and the second sister is a B.A and now she is doing BCA. He does not think use of cane as necessary. Ms. Nayak, the Maths teacher, is his favourite. He likes her because she does not ever lose her temper and also she takes care to find out the difficulties of the child. Manoj plays cricket. He also likes to watch football and hockey. In his words, an ideal Indian boy is one who is obedient to his parents and sensitive to their desires. According to him an ideal Indian girl is one whose education level is high but who is calm and quiet, not like how some girls are seen behaving nowadays. Manoj thinks girls can do well in teaching and in the field of medicine. His elder brother's pastime engagements are gardening and watching T.V. and sisters spend their leisure time in knitting and in fabric painting, or helping mother in household chores.

Biranchi Prasad’s father is a cooperative society officer, and mother is housewife. He has younger brother who studies in Std VII. Biranchi takes tuition in four subjects, Math, Science English and Sanskrit. He goes to the teachers’ houses. It was he who took the decision to take tuition. He spends time playing with his brother. He would like to learn computers. His favorite subject is maths and he aspires to join one of the IITs to study engineering. His favorite teacher is Ms Soubhagya the geography teacher. He likes her teaching style. His father encourages him for IITs. Mother does not say for any career. He likes to play cricket and watch lawn tennis. In his opinion, an ideal Indian boy is one who respects his parents. He thinks teaching is a good job for women. The two individuals, whose suggestions he really counts are his father and his uncle who is teacher in an central school.

Subhashis Ansuman Sharma – about him a female science teacher pointed out in a low voice:

he is our record holder in mischief - mongering.
His father is lecturer in English, in Dhenkanal (an adjoining district) Government College. His mother is housewife. His elder brother is in Std XII, also preparing for medical. He takes tuition in math, science and Sanskrit. He goes daily to the teacher's house. It was his own decision to take tuition. In his leisure time, he plays cricket with brother. He would like to take formal coaching in cricket. He wants to become an engineer. His favourite subject is Math. At home, he helps his father in cleaning, washing the 'scooter' and in cutting vegetables. Parents encourage him to become an engineer. His favourite teacher is Mr. D. Dash. In his view an ideal Indian boy is he who is humble, decent, respect/obeys parents, and an ideal Indian girl is one who is traditional and simple. He likes to watch rugby, heavyweight boxing, lawn tennis. Subhashis believes that both the sexes would do well in any profession, but thinks that men would do well especially as teachers because of their authoritative attitude by which only, the class would be disciplined.

Ashis's father is Account Manager in Paradip Oxygen Private Limited and mother is a housewife. He has an elder brother who is studying engineering in Electronics and Telecom at the National Institute of Science and Technology at Berhampur. In his leisure time he likes to sketch (scenery and flowers especially) and plays with video games. He would like to take formal training in dancing. He would like to study medicine. Both his parents encourage him to be a doctor. He favourite subject is English Literature. His favourite literary piece is 'A Face' in Std VII English Book. Ashis helps in the kitchen and purchases groceries for the house. Even his brother helps. His favourite teacher is Mr. D. Dash who created in him an interest for English literature. He likes him for his style of teaching. He has absolute craze for the game of cricket, likes watching as well as playing cricket. In his opinion, an ideal Indian boy is one who is truthful, principled, patriotic - to the extent of giving one's own life and striving for the progress of country. In his opinion, an ideal Indian girl is she who is traditional - knows and understands the Indian culture well. Accordingly, the girl must build her persona. The girl should also wear traditionally apt clothes. He takes tuition in Maths, Science.
English, Sanskrit and Oriya. He goes to the house of the teachers who give tuitions. Especially the opinion of his father and elder brother matters a lot to him.

Pravanjan's father is a bus-conductor and mother is a housewife. He is the only child. He wants to be a doctor or an engineer. His favourite subject is science. He takes tuition four times a week in math and science. His mother used to help in studies, but owing to father's illness, he had to take tuition. In his leisure he makes drawings, plays cricket with friends or reads story books. He is also interested in public speaking. He helps at home by doing lot of errands-delivers change of clothes for father in the place of duty, buys groceries for home and fills water in the vessels etc. His favourite teachers are Mr. D. Dash and Mr. S.Dash. He likes their method of teaching and appreciates the fact that they are punctual in class etc. His favourite outfit is trousers and full shirt. According to him, an ideal Indian boy is the one who toils to excel in whichever field he is and who is punctual. And an ideal Indian girl should not be daunted by social traditions but should try as much as possible to support her family.

Gaurab's father works as a Manager in a Medicine Company called 'Suzikem Formulations' and mother is housewife. He has a sister, two years younger to him. He takes tuition in math, science, English and Sanskrit. He goes to the teacher's houses. He took the decision to take tuitions on the basis of father's advice and peer pressure. In his leisure time, he plays chess and carrom with sister or father, or watches T.V. or reads magazines. He has this desire to spend time seeing places in Cuttack and also educating the illiterate. He wants to be a doctor preferably a paediatrician. He likes math and Sanskrit. He helps at home by fetching groceries as per mother's directions and also fetches stationaries for father or 'paan' for him. Father advises him that if he wants to study medicine, he should strive hard, from now itself. Mother also encourages in the similar manner, she says, "Since father's job is a tour-oriented, he has been places and has a fairly good idea about the
trend of good careers and jobs, which she would not have, so it's better for him to abide by father's advice". His favourite outfit is knickers and half-shirt. For him an ideal Indian boy is he who behaves according to circumstances, shows affection when needed or shows anger too when needed - to put it, as it is shown in Raymond's Suiting's commercial, 'The Complete Man'. For him, an ideal Indian girl is one who shows respect for elders, shows affection for her own age group, does things in the time that they should be done such as studying in study time etc.

Himanshu's father is a Circle Inspector of schools and mother is housewife. He wants to be a doctor. He also desires to help poor people later in life. He takes tuition in science and math, thrice a week. The teacher comes home to teach. His favorite literary work is Manoj Das's 'Smruti Bismruti Raw Sārnath' - he decries that how Indian people are ignorant about the rich history of India. Rather they are more well-versed in others' history. At home, he cleans/washes his own clothes. If his sister needs to go somewhere, he gives her a lift. His father encourages him to prepare for Civil Services and his mother encourages him to be a doctor. His favourite teacher is Mr. Satapathy, the Sanskrit teacher. He likes him for he is simplicity, spiritual mindedness and loving nature. Himanshu likes to play cricket and to watch football. His favourite outfit is T-shirt and Jeans.

Thus, the Significant Others chiefly parents and teachers reinforce and legitimate the gender socialisation of each other. The children of both sexes who move between the reality of everyday life at home and at school constantly, learn that what is experienced by them or instructed to them is the de facto truth pertaining to their gender identities and they need to follow that.

Five concluding observations are:

- Girls learn that they need to be taken care of / protected and boys learn that it is their duty to protect girls.
- Boys / men are the chief decision makers.
- Girls need to help mother with household chores. Even if they take up a career, they have to handle the 'domestic sphere'. Boys need to help with the chores relating to 'outside' the home.
- Girls should not draw attention towards their 'sexuality'. Hence, they should dress up soberly.
- Girls can do only certain things, not everything unlike the boys.