CHAPTER – VII
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The phenomenon of slum has come to be regarded as a major problem of urbanization. While no Indian city is free from slums, the problem appears to be more acute in metropolitan cities. Slums are known by different terms in different regions.

It has been estimated that 30 to 50 per cent of the population of million-plus cities in India reside in slums. Accordingly to the Slum Area (Improvement and Clearance) Act 1956, enacted by the Union Government, slums have been defined as those areas where buildings are unfit for human habitation; or are by reason of dilapidation, overcrowding, design of buildings, narrowness of streets, lack of ventilation, light or sanitary facilities or any combination of these factors, are detrimental to safety, health or morals.

The slum life cannot be properly understood without studying the social, economic and cultural background of the migrant slum dwellers, the pattern of their migration, settlement and social composition, their economic activities in the slum, their continued attachment with their places of origin, and the purpose or meaning they attach to their slum living.

The pattern of migration can be a basis for classification of the slums. One can find two distinct patterns of migration; total family migration and part migration. In the first case, the migrants come to the city along with all the members of their family and they maintain either very weak or no linkages (social or economic) with their place of origin. The second group of migrants consists of mostly the working male members (the children, aged and female members are left at their place of origin). These two groups of slum dwellers come to the city with altogether different perspectives, which ultimately shape their slum life and their relationship with the dominant. This also determines their
degree of involvement in city life and their participation in the collective movement.

The third meaningful way of classification relates to the economic activities of the predominant section of the people living in a slum. There can be a working class slum (constituted of the workers mainly in the capitalist sector and in public sector), a slum where people are pursuing their traditional caste occupations (e.g., the Kumhar) and a slum where people are predominantly engaged in non-traditional informal sector occupations (e.g. petty traders, maid servants, construction workers and so on). Finally, one can classify slums on the basis of some social factors such as religion, language, and caste. Thus there are slums inhabited by Hindus or Muslims; there are slums populated more or less exclusively by some low castes such as chamars, churah and so on.

From the moment one is born, the process of socialization begins as a person is taught the rules, relationships, roles and expectations and entitlements of the society into which she or he is born. Gender socialization encompasses the all-inclusive process of learning society’s gender roles and their advantages and limitations. In most societies, specially in Indian society, there is a clear categorisation of what it means to be male or female. This categorisation process and the agents of socialization that transfers knowledge about gender role influence how individuals define themselves and others in terms gender and sex roles.

Gender roles—the expected or preferred ways for people of each sex to behave—are rigidly denied in many societies. Men have traditionally been expected to be strong, aggressive, even domineering; the cliché that “boys don’t cry” typifies one aspect of the male role. Women have been expected to be nurturing, sensitive, emotional, and relatively passive. Children are taught these values, both consciously and unconsciously, from very early age.
Agents of gender socialization include parents, siblings, peers, schools, society, formalised religion and a variety of other institutions. Schools and families continue to influence gender socialization throughout adolescence. During adolescence, however, peer influence becomes the strongest agent of gender socialization as teens bond together in small social groups to facilitate their transition into adulthood and into the larger society. The socialization effects of the mass media also become powerful in the teen years.

For the present study among the Kumhars, a Backward Caste, of a urban slum in a city sector of Chandigarh has been selected, with special emphasis on the girl child socialization in this community.

The city Chandigarh is a well-planned township in the country. But there are more than fifty thousand inhabitants who are living in blighted settlements here. Though people of these sections have ration cards and names in electoral list, but they are deprived of basic services and amenities.

With the influx of in-migrants and rapid growth of urbanization, slums occur due to shortage of land for housing, the high prices of land beyond the reach of urban poor. Its growth has put pressure on the existing urban basic services and infrastructure. Despite the rehabilitation schemes of Chandigarh Administration for the control of slums, its growth has taken place in the past two decades.

According to Census of 2001, the total urban slum population of Chandigarh is 1,07,098 in which males (62,747) also outnumber the total female (44,351) population. The total number of slum population in the category of 0-6 years is 21,777 and the number of males is 11,321 and females 10,456. Data regarding slum literacy reveals that only 47,317 persons are literates; males (33,730) are more literates as compared to females (13,587).

The term Kumhar is derived from the Sanskrit kumbha kara, which means ‘maker of jars’ (Crooke 1896). In Sanskrit ‘Ku’ means
earth and they make thing out of earth. It is also claimed that the Kumhar is derived from Hindi *kumbh*, which means earthen pot or vessel.

The community has two sub-groups, Gola and Mahar, which were until recently endogamous. A few members of the community claim that they can use Brahma and Prajapat as surnames, but this is denied by others. Ethnographic and historical accounts of the community exist. A few accounts of mythology were about the origins of the community which continue to be narrated by the Kumhar.

One of the largest community, the Kumhar, are spread over 212 districts in the country having 334 segments. The Kumhar have migrated to the present place from various districts of Haryana, and their settlement dates back to the 1950s and 1960s. However, a few families in the town have lived there since early British times. These families had also originally migrated from the Patiala area.

The Kumhar are a landless community and continue to pursue their traditional occupation of pot-making. Interior decoration in the fashion conscious middle class and rich homes of large towns and cities is going 'ethnic'. The non-traditional urban potters are experimenting with new ideas, creating distinctive forms in clay through studio-pottery done in a scientific manner. The market for the village Kumhars is now opening up in countries like Canada, Britain and Dubai. Now a days, some of them are shifting from red clay to terracotta, painting it with different colours and designs.

The community is dependent on land as a source of clay for pot-making. The clay is bought from both individual proprietors as well as government agencies. In addition to its traditional occupation of pot-making and working in the brick-kiln, it is employed in various categories of jobs in the government offices. A few members are also self-employed. Some work as vegetable sellers. Some carry bricks from the brickfields with the help of donkeys. Since pot-making is of seasonal
nature, Kumhars have to be engaged in other jobs, viz., vegetable selling, transporting bricks by donkeys during the winter, when pot-making and pot-selling go at a low key.

For the present study on the Kumhar community in terms of the modalities of girl child socialization and its variation, the framework given by Whiting (1963), which was also modified and adopted by Banerjee (1987) for his study on child socialization of three communities living in a North Indian rural set-up, forms the basis of a theoretical model with the following variables.

a) Obedience: It is defined as an attempt to meet the demands of others.

b) Responsibility: Responsibility as a variable of socialization has been defined as performing one's expected role.

c) Aggression: In the study of socialization, it has been defined as hurting others.

d) Dominance: Dominance is defined as an attempt to change other's behaviour. It is referred to the manipulating power of an individual over other people.

e) Succorance: This behaviour relates to asking others for help.

f) Sociability: It is defined as making friendly approaches to others adjustment.

g) Achievement: It is defined as striving to meet internal standards of excellence.

h) Self-reliance: It is related to socialization of doing things for one's self. It refers to independency.

i) Nurturance: It is defined as “giving help or emotional support.”

The major aims and objectives of my present study on girl child socialization of Kumhar community are delineated as under:
1. To study the girl child socialization among the Kumhars as a distinct social group in an urban slum. When and how does a girl child learn the content of roles appropriate to her?

2. To estimate the impact and roles of various agents and agencies of girl child socialization such as parents, peer-group, ambience, the school and mass-media.

3. To study the mechanisms through which the respondents acquire the social norms and values that shape their images of themselves and visions of the future thereby determining when and how a girl child learns the content of roles appropriate to her.

4. To investigate the nature of interaction of the respondents with the male folk of the community and outsiders; its approval and disapproval.

5. To assess the impact of education on the respondents in terms of tradition and modernity and the mechanisms of conflict resolutions between the parents and the respondents, if any, as influenced by the urban surroundings.

6. To study the differential treatment met by a girl child relating to education, food and nutrition, illness and health. Also an estimate of the extent of neglect of a girl child in other spheres of activities as well shall be probed.

7. Social situations have a strong influence on adolescent sexual behaviour. Also to assess the awareness among the girls about biology of reproduction and sex education.

Based on the aims and objectives of the present study as well as the theoretical and conceptual issues, following hypotheses are formulated:

1. The process of gender socialization is discriminatory towards the girl child. The family allows more freedom and other concessions to the sons. It is within the family that the girl child faces
discrimination and inequalities. Within the family she is forcibly engaged in domestic servitude at the cost of her schooling.

2. The values of patriarchy and male supremacy largely determine the differential socialization and reinforcement of a separate set of behaviour for boys and girls. The socialization of a girl child is guided by traditional concepts of feminine behaviour and that her actions are inextricably linked to family honour and prestige.

3. Traditional norms forbid the girl child from indulging in activities visualised as masculine that prepares them for roles other than their traditional roles. Patience, tolerance, obedience towards elders, dependency, readiness to sacrifice for loved ones are lauded. The girl child is likely to be portrayed as passive, nurturant, conservative and dependent. She is socialised into the docility, blind obedience and total dependency.

4. Females are expected to be more nurturant, sensitive and responsible. The girl child is encouraged for social conformity and dependence. There is less scope for aggression, achievement and self-reliance. The mother acts as the role model for her daughter. She trains her to be a good wife, a good mother and a good daughter-in-law. Yet mothers are more love-oriented and less power assertive with boys than girls.

5. The socialization process conveys the idea to the girl child that certain activities or tasks are performed by members of a particular gender and a different set of tasks or chores are extended by members of the other sex.

6. There is a tendency towards socialising the girl child to adopt nurturing, care-giving roles. This notion is conveyed through the family, peers, schools, neighbourhood, the community and the media and gets reinforced on account of the lack of economic independence in this section of the society.
The universe of study for this research work is an urban slum in the city of Chandigarh better known as Kumhar Colony. This slum is located in Sector-25 of the city and has two geographical divisions or colonies namely Kumhar Colony and Janta Colony. The present study deals with the inhabitants of Kumhar Colony only. A sizeable concentration of Kumhars only is found in this settlement whereas Janta Colony has several scheduled caste groups. They are mostly Hindu by religion whereas only two families of them are Christians (in contrast to their counterparts in Burail village of Chandigarh who have allegiance to Islamism). Most of the Kumhars are migrants from the neighbouring states—Haryana and Punjab and are engaged in petty trades, apart from their traditional occupation of pottery making. An attempt has been made to study all the Kumhar households residing in the Kumhar Colony having at least a girl child. An attempt has been made to cover all the Kumhar families having a girl child residing at Kumhar Colony. The total number of households are 105 of which only 67 households have unmarried daughters in the age group of 10-19 years. Rest of the households has either no girl child or they are too young to be interviewed. In this way the total number of girl child respondents are 102 and 67 mother respondents on which present study is based. Despite this, an attempt has also been made to collect the household census of each and every Kumhar family in the colony whether or not they have a girl child. The social organisation of Kumhar is essentially centered around family structure with close consanguineous and affinal kins staying together.

Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were followed for the collection of primary data. Quantitative Data: Quantitative study was designed to generate information with the help of set of schedules. A household census was prepared consisting of closed, open and multiple response questions. To confirm the responses in the census, many of the questions were asked in different ways and different contexts, two or
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three times, during the interviews/ triangulation to arrive at the factual data or information.

Household Profile: Information from the households were obtained regarding: Demographic parameters; Education; Income and Household assets.

Slum/Colony Profile: In the same schedule, questions were also asked regarding the facilities provided in the colony such as provision of medical facilities, school, water supply, electricity connections.

Qualitative Data: In order to get free flow of information on various agents and agencies of girl child socialization, following qualitative techniques were used: observation, interviews, case studies, focus group discussion.

Following the proposed conceptual model, some of the significant attributes which have been dealt within girl child socialization among the Kumhar of Chandigarh are discussed below. These attributes are obedience, responsibility, aggression, dominance, succorance, sociability, achievement, self reliance and nurturance.

It has been observed in the Kumhar that much pressure is put through girl child socialization for development of obedience in girls. 97.06% of the girl child respondents thought that children should always obey their parents. On the empirical account, however, there may be minor variations towards total conformity. The matters related to minor mundane sphere like switching off the T.V., time schedules for the studies etc. There was a total agreement that both the boys and the girls must be obedient. The mothers also confirmed this.

Consequent upon the attribute of obedience, responsibilities of the girls included their involvement in household chores, looking after younger siblings (26.47%), accompanying their mothers, washing clothes, cleaning utensils etc. The help rendered to the mother in carrying out these activities, 63.72% of the respondents expressed that they do so voluntarily. The notion of responsibility towards their
daughters than their sons was 74.63%. The socialization that the mother had when she was a daughter is inculcated in her daughter's too. The girl child needs a greater sense of responsibility towards the family members because when she grows up she can inculcate the same in other female younger members of the family. It is the daughter of the house for whom the parents feel more responsible because dignity of the family is much attached to her. Thus, a strict supervision is envisaged for her. The girl child should not go astray and bring in a bad name to the family.

The girl child socialization suggests that the upbringing should be such that only feminine characteristics like submissiveness, tenderness, sensitivity and nurturance must predominate. Aggression, as an attribute of socialization, is not tolerated. This variable is of immense importance in socialization of boys. However, it is not to suggest that the girl child do not quarrel or fight. 69.60% respondents admitted having quarrels with their siblings but barely 2.90% respondents were involved in a quarrel with parents. Aggression, being a male-dominated trait, is much denounced. A large number of children (73.24%) admitted that they faced scolding and other forms of punishments from their parents. 23.94% children were actually beaten up by their parents. The parental interviews reveal that aggression in any form in their boys and the girls are not tolerated and they are punished without any gender bias in their mind.

In a patriarchal society the authority of the males over the females is an all-India phenomenon. Yet for the Kumhars 59.80% of the girl child respondents assessed the authority of the fathers over the mothers to be justified. The reason attributed being that father is a bread winner in the family and hence should have the authority to dominate in every matter relating to the family. The girl child is socialized through the mother that submission to the male authority is pre-requisite of a fully functional family. Any deviation from this means disruption of normal family relations and activity. 95.52% of the mothers wanted their
daughters to perform as per their wishes. The supervision of the mother is visible particularly in the socialization of the girl child. The role of father in this aspect is limited. The dominance of a husband upon his wife gets a 88.06 % approval by the mother respondents. Certain measures of strictness for the girl child is a part and parcel of the socialization of the girls in this community.

Succorance relates to asking other for help. It is a general impression that in India and many other Asian Countries the girl generally does not get her due share of love, recognition and other facilities from her own parents. She is given much less in comparison to her male siblings. She is subjected to different standards of reward and punishment. In contrary to this popular notion, 95.10 % of the respondents admitted having got love, emotional support and security from their parents. Also, mothers felt that the girl should express their feeling freely to them. They felt that mothers can understand the problems of their daughters patiently and lovingly to tide over any crisis. Marrying-off a daughter in order to save face is a rare thing among the Kumhars. Under such a situation it is not surprising that 97.01 % mothers rendered their parental support to the girl child to fight for her right.

The girl child respondents were questioned to assess the degree of their sociability. 95.10% of them enjoyed social gatherings and outings. 57.80% showed their preference to go out only with the members of the family. 30.39% showed their preference for going out with their parents. The girl child is most comfortable with her family members and preferred their company. Peers also influence the sociability variable when the girl child grows in age. Since aggressiveness is not a desired form of behaviour, the extent of sociability has much scope in the child socialization. The visits of peer group friends are welcomed in a Kumhar family. 88.06 % of the mothers endorsed it.

The Kumhars, inspite of their economic backwardness, value individual achievement of members of the community. Although,
traditionally achievement, much like dominance and independence, is an attribute essentially meant for the men-folk, yet in this community the girls are encouraged to be achievement-oriented and show competency and self-confidence. Schooling and education, the ladder to higher achievements, is much desired in the community. While the percentage of the boys attending regular school is higher than their counterparts shows that achievement through formal education, though much wanted by the parents, is a desired thing in the Kumhar community. Even when the girls attended their schools, their participation in co-curricular activities was limited. 59.80% of the respondents did not participate in such activities. However, 81.40% of the parents applauded any achievement of their children in the school. Those who involved themselves in such activities remained limited to the traditional forms like music competitions, knitting, dance and embroidery competitions. Inspite of many social and economic constraints, the study reveals that 50.98% respondents wished to be a doctor, 11.77% wanted to join army or police and 18.63% wanted to become a teacher. Other professions like tailoring (1.96%); salaried government officer (1.96%); nursing (0.98%); clay work (0.98%); support person (0.98%) and beautician (0.98%) are low in priority whereas 10.78% were still undecided. The mothers were unanimous in their opinion that they wished their children to achieve a bright future through higher education.

The socialization of the girls focusses on family-centred roles for them. She is socialized to play the roles of a daughter, a sister, a wife and a mother. Their socialization pattern lays a greater stress on the fact that women have a primary commitment to these family roles and working outside or career is of secondary importance. 97.10% of the girls replied that in their opinion the girls and the boys should be equally self reliant. 94.10% of the respondents admitted that their parents wished and helped them to become self reliant. Apart from the moral and emotional support, the parents helped to financially support
any professional course or training to make them self reliant. Be it tailoring, computer courses or a beautician’s training. When given an option to choose between self reliance or to get married, a large majority (88.20%) of them opined that it was more important to be self reliant. Likewise, were the responses of the mothers (95.52%) that girl should be equally independent and self reliant. To facilitate this, financial help and withdrawal of their daughters from attending to their daily household chores are some of the efforts often made by them. Although a marriage for their daughter is a societal prescription yet 40.30% of the mothers felt that they would like their daughters to be self reliant first and then get married. Freedom of movement for the girl child is restricted and is under constant and strict vigil, supervision and control of their mothers and elders. A grown-up girl could hardly move out independently and alone without the company of their mother or other girls from the neighbourhood. This is to ensure that her actions are not linked to the family honour and prestige.

The transplantation of women from their parental families to the in-law’s has its all pervasive influences on the nurturance of the girl child. Women expect their daughters to grow as cultured, submissive, nurturant, obedient, responsible and are encouraged for social conformity and dependence. They should enhance the prestige of the parents and the parental family.

The family has a key role to play in the life of the child who is born in it. It nurtures and helps him to develop as a suitable member of society. It is the first unit in which the child has continuous contact with other human beings. Interacting with it, he learns various skills and develops value systems appropriate to his society. The family is the first agency through which society operates on the individual. The family is moulded by the culture, and, at the same time it moulds the culture.

In this process, the family enables the child to establish basic patterns of thinking behaviour and reaction to different social
situations. This paves the way for the internalisation of social norms and values.

In Indian society, beliefs attached to the birth of a son are that father can reach immortality (moksha) only through the birth of a son. Sons are ritually essential to light the funeral pyre of their parents and thus help release their souls from earthly bondage. Boys also ensure the continuation of the lineage and the family name. A son serves as an old age security to his parents in another way. In Indian society where there are few alternative sources of support in old age, the parents expect to rely primarily on sons in their old age. Society frowns upon parents who rely upon their daughters.

The necessity of a male child in the family was frankly admitted by 91.04% mothers. The necessity of the male child in the family was explained by most of the respondents on the grounds that the support he extends when the parents get old and have no earning of their own; it is the male child who shoulders his responsibility of feeding and providing them the necessary shelter. In comparison, the girls get married and move to different families. He also is responsible for protecting and helping his sister even when the parents are no more. Strangely, some of the respondents also justified the necessity of the male child in the family because in the community the marriage of such girls who do not have a brother is extremely difficult. Traditionally speaking also the male child is the symbol of the family tree.

The upbringing of the girl in Indian society is considered highly expensive because of spending high amount of money during her marriage. In the opinion 80.60% of the mothers, the upbringing of the female child was more expensive.

The identification of a girl with her mother is greater because, in the socialization process, the mother is the role model after whom she fashions her behaviour and attitudes. She acts as first hand, direct socialising agent to the Indian girl. She teaches her the roles and
behaviour norms tailored for them-the girls. How to cook, how to serve, how to talk, how to wear clothes, how to behave—all these prescriptions are strictly served to the girl child by her mother—without realisation of the fact that they are doing the same injustice which was done to themselves a few years back. Consequent to the close contact between the mother and the daughter, the values, attitudes, and the social experience of the mother as well as the socialization practices adopted by the mother profoundly affect the values and attitudes of the daughter.

In the preceding paragraphs on the various attributes of socialization we have observed the mothers profoundly influencing the socialization of the daughters. Their seems to be a positive relationship between the mother and daughter's beliefs, expected roles and behaviour. It is evident that although the mothers themselves are not much educated yet they strived to inculcate in their daughters more practical and liberated views on various aspects of their community life. They do not want their daughters to become what they (mothers) are. They aspire for their daughters an independent, self reliant and achievement-oriented future. Such a stand of theirs, at times, may jeopardise the traditional notion of social conformity and dependence.

The internalisation of the values of the community was ensured in the early years of the childhood span, so that the considerations of alternatives seldom arose. Girls in the family setting are frequently in no-choice situations. Exposure to the outside world, through the school system, is generally of minimal duration.

The importance of the family atmosphere on the socialization of daughters was admitted by 100% of the mother. It can be clearly visualised through a case study that the family atmosphere affects the upbringing and socialization of the children in a big way. The children are highly perceptible and sensitive but sometimes do not express what they feel nor do they question the doings of the elders.
Among the siblings, it has been observed that foul and abusive languages are not tolerated. The elder or eldest sister often resort to corrective measures. If that does not work, a complaint is made by her to the father about the erring sibling. Often a girl child picks up dirty and bad habits either from the school mates or other children of the locality. In order to make the family environment healthy and conducive to a happy living, efforts are made by the family members to minimise infighting or conflict among members of the family. 86.57% of the respondents admitted that such incidences are not very common in their family. Any type of violence particularly of wife-beating is detested, more strongly by the female inmates of a household. However, they admitted that often exchange of hot words may crop up on specific occasions. Such incidences are carefully avoided by the females who tend to subjugate themselves to a submissive and non-defined posture.

The analysis reveals that girls begin to participate in domestic work much earlier than the boys. At times they may do heavier household chores such as fetching and carrying of water from the community tap, gathering fuel dung and fire wood. 60.78% of the respondents found it fair to assign household chores to girls and outside work to boys. The girl child is thus socialized more for doing household work. Also, girls are socialized to their traditional emphasis on activities within the four walls of the household like knitting and kroshia work, stitching of clothes, embroidery etc. Of course, the modern modes of recreation like television watching and gossip with friends are some of the leisure time activities of the girl child. Newspaper reading has a few takers and is restricted to the elderly persons having some level of literacy.

The infants in the Kumhar community are with their mothers till they are very young. Other female members when available in the family, usually daughters or mother-in-law, near relatives and women in the neighbourhood assist the mother. During the child’s infancy, it is common to find girls, grown up women and children fondling him. At an
early age the child begins to grow in the neighbourhood and be a part of the community. It is fairly common for elder daughters to help the mothers and much responsibility is put on their shoulders especially when no other adult female member is available in the household. The father’s involvement in baby sitting is marginal. 68.66% of the mothers supervise the conduct and behaviour of their daughters. 94.03% of the girl child respondents admit that their mothers supervised and assigned responsibilities in the family. The matters relating to dress-code of the girl child, the role of mother are significant. The dress-code for going out and within home, the choice of clothes and sharing of clothes of the elder siblings, all are supervised by the mother. The mother adds special attention towards her daughters dressing sense. Not much concession is given to daughters to wear unisex dresses like pants and jeans and only the traditional form of wear like salwar-kameez is much preferred. Although some girls showed preference for wearing a dress as per the style of their favourite film stars yet such a phenomenon is not approved.

While several studies point to inferior feeding and nutrition of the girl in terms of allocation of food, medical care and love, this does not hold good in case of the Kumhars. The mothers do not discriminate in terms of allocation of food and feeding among their daughters and sons. They denied that their boy should be given better diet. The gender bias, thus towards diet and nutrition is not there.

Following their mothers, who are their role-models, the girl child is socialized to keep fasts on religious festivities. It is true that only elderly girl child keep fast or observe fast along with their mothers on specific days of a week i.e. Mondays and Fridays. Ahoi, Karvachauth, Shivratri, Tilkuti, Janamashtmi and Navratras are religious occasions to keep fasts. They consider these fasts to be essential component of Hindu religious festivals and ceremonies.

The analysis reveals that the gender-wise interaction within the family and the locality is much encouraging. 91.18% of the girls had no
hesitation talking to a male folk although 59.80% did not find it suitable to have friends of opposite sex. The girls clearly distinguish the male members of the family and the kin groups from others in the locality. 80% of the respondents share their feelings with their brothers. The mothers detest their daughters to mingling with boys in the neighbourhood (79.10%).

It is a truism for the Kumhars that there are more restrictions on the girl child related to their movement outside the home. She is essentially to be escorted by a family member in case she wishes to go to her school, the training centre or the nearby market.

The issue of marriage is seen in the most conservative and traditional mode. The girl child has no say in the choice of a prospective bride-groom. Neither is she made aware of any marriage negotiations in the offing nor her involvement in such matters encouraged. She is socialized to conform to the wishes of the elders in the family. The girl and the prospective groom are never allowed to meet and discuss. It is only after the marriage that she gets to know her husband. Caste endogamy is strictly maintained and any concession is not allowed. The most sought after profession of prospective groom is that he should be a government servant. Those who are engaged in traditional pottery work are not the preferred ones. His age, formal education and his physical outlook are some of the other criteria that are kept in mind while negotiating a marriage.

In matters of decision-making within the family, the male elders have the ultimate authority. It has been observed that among the girl child respondents 99.02% never made any major decisions in their lives. Only 35.29% of the respondents admitted having parental involvement for her opinion in any matter. The girl child is socialized by the various agents and the agencies of socialization that 85.29% of the respondents did not have courage to go against their parental decision. The role in decision-making is seldom left to the females even if they have experience and wisdom.
While the family acts as an informal agency of socialization, the school is considered to be a formal agent of socialization. The school functions as a primary setting for gender learning with peers and teachers reinforcing behaviour differentially on the basis of gender. There is no denial that the progress towards education of the girl child is slow. Girls enrolment at the primary and middle level has grown but their participation is below 50%. In the Kumhars, the percentage of school going female children is much higher in comparison to males and the percentage of school dropout was roughly half of the male dropouts. Although the percentages of educational levels of father (56%) and mothers (28.89%), there is a positive effort to send their girl child to schools. 73.53% of the respondents felt that co-education schools were better. Since the parental support and help for carrying out in school was limited (10.78%), there is a strong tendency among the younger group to drop out. However, the mothers and the elder siblings continue to give moral and emotional support to them. Self-help and peer-help tend to predominate in most cases. Mothers (92.54%) encourage their children in the period of crisis. The impact of formal education is not very strong because 39.05% of the heads of household continue their traditional occupation of pottery making.

The role of mass media is one of the most powerful influences of socialization. Television, radio, films, magazines, newspapers are the ideological apparatus for imparting knowledge and information. They are the socio-cultural forces which do not simply reflect but subtly and indirectly help in shaping the social reality for the girl child. In the Kumhar community, T.V. viewing is rather regular while reading books, newspapers and magazines have lesser members. Besides the low economic standing the girl child is not motivated to socialize herself through them. Paucity of time is yet another important factor.

Peer group is the only safe, secure and reliable group where a girl child confides and share everything especially her inner feelings without any inhibitions and embarrassment. The topic of sex and sex education
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is one such sphere. This aspect of girl child behaviour is never discussed with the elders particularly with the parents. Books, magazines and advertisements on television provide some information. The girl child socialization relating to sex is quite silent at the familial level. The efforts on the part of NGOs who visit the school and talking to them, salesgirls of companies selling sanitary products also help them to enrich their knowledge about menarche and the female body. Yet the girl child may not know the human physiological process.

Informal relations between neighbours provide a framework for sociability which is periodically strengthened by formal social gatherings, ceremonial occasions and gift exchange. A good neighbourliness is the order in the Kumhar Colony. 80.60% respondents maintained friendly relations with their neighbours. This friendliness is not based on any caste lines.

Thus, the first hypothesis which states that the process of gender socialization is discriminatory towards the girl child is partially valid because the Kumhar family tends to strike a balance between freedom and other concessions to the daughters and the sons equally. There is not much evidence to prove that there is gross gender discrimination and social inequality prevailing in the community. The concept of domestic servitude at the cost of schooling is not tenable and she is never forcibly engage in domestic chores. The services rendered by her are part and parcel of socialization prevalent within the community. Hence it would be wrong to surmise that she is a victim of gender discrimination.

The second hypothesis holds good that the values of patriarchy and male supremacy determine the differential socialization and reinforcement of a separate set of behaviour for Kumhar boys and girls. But the intensity with which this is carried out is slow paced. The girl child socialization has mother as the role model. It is guided by traditional social norms relating to the feminine behaviour. The various
attributes in conformance with the girl child socialization are feminine in nature and inextricably linked to the family honour and prestige.

The third hypothesis that traditional norms forbid the girl child from indulging activities visualised as masculine that prepare them for roles other than their traditional roles. Also, patience, tolerance, obedience towards elders, dependency is lauded. This holds good, yet it would be wrong to project that the girl child is socialized into docility, blind obedience and total dependency since the agents and agencies of socialization within the family and outside tend to be independent, self-reliant, achievement-oriented and sociable emphasis on girl child.

There is no denial that the girl child is encouraged for social conformity and is expected to be nurturant and responsible. While aggression for the girl child is a taboo, achievement and self-reliance are prized value of a Kumhar community. The constant vigil, supervision of the mother socializes the girl child for her future role. The mother undoubtedly is the role-model for the girl child. She trains for her future roles—as a good wife, good daughter-in-law. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is validated but the statement that mothers are more love-oriented and less power assertive with boys and girls is in-validated.

The fifth hypothesis that the socialization is discriminatory towards the girl child. The family allows more freedom and other concessions to the sons. It is within the family that the girl child faces discrimination and inequalities. Within the family she is forcibly engaged in domestic servitude at the cost of her schooling is partially validated.

The girl child is socialized through mother and elder females including grandmother, elder sister and sister-in-law to adopt nurturing and care-giving roles. Since the major activities of a girl child in the Kumhar community are centred within and around the family, the mothers play the pivotal role of socializing the child. The peers in the school and neighbourhood are essentially females. The feminine
characteristic in the girl child are reinforced by them. Aggression, dominance and similar masculine characteristics find no place in their socialization. Economic deprivation bonds the members of a family stronger and there is little or no scope of agents and agencies of urbanization making any dent on the traditional norms and social conformity. The mass media appeal and education tends to strengthen traditionalism. Thus there exist a state of complementariness in terms of tradition and modernity. In a way the last hypothesis is validated.