III

Family and Gender

A comparative comprehension by the digression into the studies on family in assorted regions coming under the names as East and West might provide the picture of the universality of the patriarchal form of family.[134] Gender is the strong category of analysis for this purpose and so that the historical developments in the gender theorization are also outlined in this section. The construction of gender in relation to varied factors such as religion, culture and language are observed as an obligatory task.

A concise glance into some family studies would certainly throw light into the attempt of sketching the patriarchal nature and structure of the concept and institution along dissimilar geographical areas. This chapter turns to be a review of literature on the key concepts involved in this study which are gender and family. The conceptual clarification and theoretical outlook would be done as a requisite to support the comparative reading of the interconnection between family and gender. The 'family' has been very much taken-for-granted ever in the history of human life, and still lacks its generalized unitary form. A profound problematization of the concept and practice of family might give rise to the picture of women`s subjugation as well. The concept 'gender' is a recently generated social construct which facilitates the tearing up of the practices of discrimination, oppression and objectification of women both inside and outside the family.

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[134] The terms East and West would seem to be used explicitly in this study, but they are used not to assert the oppositions in terms of geographical areas. The terms are employed just for the expediency to read the nature and structure of family existing in different places in the existing norms of geographical divisions.

Studying family may be prone to complications because of the various factors of caste, religion, ethnicity and culture along with the class aspect in the Eastern regions. The changing notions of family and kinship, and the dynamics of households were drawn into the attention of sociologists, anthropologists, economists and demographers. But the recent analyses on family as a gendered/gendering space, have slightly deviated the kinds of studies existed. The discussions on the family studies from various countries in the Eastern and Western geographical regions might support the study to look at the Indian situation of which the present study is mainly concerned about. Such an effort may at least fling a few ideas about the commonalities in the patriarchal nature and structure in the conceptualization of family. Anyway, the purpose of understanding the family and the household, in the ambiguity of their own gendered meanings, might be cherished by such a foretaste.

Gender

Gender has been a widely contested term in the critical lexicon during the recent decades. Some sort of intellectual thrust among feminists after the ideological backlash during 1930-1960s[135] caused the conceptualization and usage of 'gender' in a more lucid way. It gives the ideas of masculinity and femininity, and how they are being constructed as part of the social life. In nearly all cultures of the world, gender

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[135] Schneir, Miriam. *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings,* Vintage Books Edition, Random House Inc. USA, 1972 .See, p.xii.
Schneir writes about the decline of feminism after first world war along with the economic depression and anti-feminist Freudianism. She notes Kate Millet had described the period from 1930-1960 as the counter revolution.

is a central organizing principle of the social life.[136] Gender inequality has been a social problem across the globe for many centuries. The power of gender in the social life is fundamental and it is embedded in the individualizing and socializing process. The history of masculinity and femininity are diverse and they are informed by a crucial epistemological and political principle.[137] Gender is not something God-given, but it is part of systems of thought and action which human beings have constructed over centuries.[138] From the plethora of feminist theorizations on gender, many different theories on epistemological and ontological characteristics of gender are noteworthy for this particular study. The phenomenon of men and women being viewed as essentially different 'beings', is taken to be a problematic in some of the theories on gender. At the same time some other theories on gender may explicate the pragmatic and normative facets of masculinity and femininity formulated and articulated by culture, religion, and the language.

The historical milieu of the concept gender begins essentially from the early feminism in the West. Feminism as an ideology against the oppression and discrimination of the female human beings started taking its course centuries ago. According to the twentieth century French feminist existentialist Simone de Beauvoir, the first woman to take up her pen in defense of her sex is Christine de Pisan who lived in fifteenth century. There were other writers in the subsequent years and 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women' published in 1792 by the French

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[136] Wharton, Amy S. "Gender Inequality" , Ritzer, George ,Ed. *Handbook of Social Problems: A Comparative International Perspective*, Sage Publications, UK, 2004, p.156
[137] Geetha,V.,*Gender*, Stree, Calcutta, India, 2002. p.51
[138] See Ibid.

feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft became a distinguished literature in feminism. In the nineteenth century the feminist activism started in the United States and then in Europe, causing a great deal of discussion against women's situations.[139] But the old feminism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, was not only holding suffrage of women as the theme but addressed the concept of marriage and family too. The thinkers of that time considered marriage as the   primary instrument of women`s oppression.[140] And thus they addressed the economic freedom and sexual freedom of women as well. Following era witnessed sturdy arguments and theories on the patriarchal power structure, femininity and sexuality issues. In the twentieth century, theorizing feminism has grown into the deeper philosophical aspects of ontological and epistemological realms along with the elucidations of social implications. The way of addressing such issues under the category called 'gender' is relatively a recent phenomenon. Nevertheless it is buoyant to embrace the concept gender to understand the cultural construction of sexuality and the roles and relations of male bodied and female bodied human beings inside and outside the basic gendering space termed as family.

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[139] There was the tremendous revival of feminist politics in North America and Western Europe specifically in late 1960s.(See, Glover, David., Kaplan, Cora., *Genders*, Routledge, London, 2000,p.xxii)
 Even though there were some literature and activism that could be seen as feminist , they were in an unorganized manner in the Eastern countries including India. And , it didn't strike the history writing much with its political relevance, but was swayed in the reformist and anti-colonial movements. .
[140] Schneir, 1972. p.xv
The writer says, although the organized women's movement essentially ignored the topic, even under the Victorian period, a few brave women continued to cite the conjugal relationship as one fraught with sexual, social and economic inequality. But, by the early twentieth century there were a number of advanced women who not only denounced marriage, but openly advocated sexual freedom.

Conceptualizing gender could be understood by starting from the reconsideration of the famous dictum 'women are not born, but they are made', that is written by Simone de Beuvoir.[141] Gender idea would lead us to perceive that the case of construction of gender identity is the same with men as well. The making of a man or a woman is a never-ending process and as the American philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler (1993) said, it starts from the ritual announcement at birth that transforms an 'it' into a 'he' or 'she'.[142] From the time of birth until death, actually people are doing gender as part of various institutions they are involved with. In other words,

> gender is embedded so thoroughly in our institutions, our actions, our beliefs, and our desires, that it appears to us to be completely natural. …………………
> Gender is not something we are born *with*, and not something we *have*, but something we *do* (West and Zimmerman, 1987) - something we *perform* (Butler, 1990). [143]

Different feminist theorists try to understand gender in different ways though they all aim at the same point. According to Butler (1990) gender is something what we 'perform' in the roles of man and woman. It may be doubtless that newly born human beings don't know to play any roles of feminine and masculine features. Only

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[141] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex,* translated and edited by H.M.Parshley, with an Introduction by Margaret Crosland, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1980

[142] Eckert, Penelope., McConnell-Ginet, Sally. *Language and Gender,* Cambridge University Press, U.K.2003. p.15. Also see, Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter*, Routledge, New York, 1993.

[143] See ibid. p.9, 10

by automatic or intentional socialization or training, the children get captured into the girlish and boyish conceptions. American anthropologist and feminist Margaret Mead writes about the damage of the conventions by which societies of all cultures makes the males and females with full membership into the two sexes.[144] She says, if each sex is to realize the membership, each boy and each girl should also feel as a whole human being.

Maleness and femaleness are injected into the bodies through cultural and religious symbols including language and such a 'symbolic interaction'[145] is what makes the meanings of social life. This kind of socialization is usually done by the institutions starting from family, and the human beings are gaining the 'meaning of being men and women', and thus a sense of discrimination between the two sexes is intentionally developed in the minds of people. For Butler, gender is a powerful discourse which creates the sense by which we define and understand the bodies we live in.[146] And as Foucault said, discourse defines reality, we cannot say that gender ends at a particular point, leaving the basic sex (anatomical) based difference.[147] To scrutinize the gender discrimination, understanding the difference between sex and gender is crucial. One kind of explanation for the argument that gender is socially constructed goes on like this:

> Sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential,
> where as gender is the social elaboration of biological sex. Gender builds on

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[144] Mead, Margaret., *Male and Female*, Hyper Collins Publishers Inc. New York, 1949 ,p.343,344
[145] See Herbert Blumer`s (1969) *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, for details.
[146] Nye, Malory. *Religion: The Basics*, Routledge, London, 2003, p.77
[147] Ibid.

biological sex, it exaggerates biological difference and, indeed, it carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant. There is no biological reason, for example, why women should mince and men should swagger, or why women should have red toenails and men should not. But while we think of sex as biological and gender as social, this distinction is not clear-cut. People tend to think of gender as a result of nurture-as social and hence fluid- while sex is simply given by biology. However, there is no obvious point at which sex leaves off and gender begins, partly because there is no single objective biological criterion for male or female sex. Sex is based in a combination of anatomical, endocrinal, and chromosomal features, and the selection among these criteria for sex assignment is based very much on cultural beliefs about what actually makes someone male or female. Thus the very definition of the biological categories male and female, and people`s understanding of themselves and others as male or female, is ultimately social.[148]

The concept of differentiating sex and gender itself blurs by this kind of a discussion. Everything that we determine to be in a particular way becomes social. Thus the unfathomable search of gender concept proposes it as a social construct. The woman and man as imagined usually, could only be taken as socially constructed beings. The social construction impinges not just on psychological but physiological aspects as well. The cultural beliefs of civilized human beings shape the physical and mental

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[148] Eckert, Penelope., McConnell-Ginet, Sally., *Language and Gender,* Cambridge University Press, U.K.2003, p.10

'woman' and 'man' through varied institutions. This derives from Butler`s tiff that biology itself is constructed by discourse and practice.[149]

Another elaboration on the sex and gender may be driven from Freud`s (1979: 9. 398-9) argument that a person`s physical sexual attributes, mental attitudes and objects of desire could 'vary independently of one another'. The psychoanalyst and anthropologist Robert J. Stoller used the term gender locating it in Freud's opinion to signal the complexities of those 'tremendous areas of behavior, feelings, thoughts and fantasies that are related to the sexes and yet do not have primarily biological connotations' (Stoller, 1968: ix).[150] Although he doubts the validity and permanence of psycho-sexual identity as a fact of life, his theory may be eventually derived as if sex is biological and gender is psychological. Stroller's theories on gender identity and gender roles contributed greatly into the apprehension of femininity and masculinity. Accordingly, gender role is that one plays out in front of others and gender identity is one's inner discord which may be a kind of non-identity with one's sexual being.

Since the becoming of an individual man and woman always happens in a specific historical and social context, according to V.Geetha, psychoanalysis provides a thought-provoking argument.[151] It gives the individual's gender identity formation

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[149] Nye, 2003, p.77
[150] Glover, David., Kaplan, Cora., *Genders*, Routledge, London, 2000. p.xx.
Donna J.Haraway also writes about Stoller`s theorization in one of her articles. See, Castelli, Elizabeth A., ed. With assistance from Rosamond C. Roadman *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader* ,Palgrave, New York, 2001
[151] Geetha,V.,*Gender*, Stree, Calcutta, India, 2002, p.71,72

from infancy to adulthood. But it is bizarre that Freud is trying to explain this simply in terms of the erotic life of a 'man'. Freud`s theories of the logic of the Unconscious and Oedipus Complex have been criticized by many other psychologists as well as feminists. While Freud comprehends the 'unconscious' as murky, inchoate, and unpredictable seat of instincts, Jacques Lacan understood the 'unconscious' as the realm of inner life, to be structured like language. For Lacan the ego is born into a linguistic reality and he calls the linguistic reality as symbolic order.[152] The 'castration fear' of boys and the 'penis envy' of the girls explained by Freud would seem to be bit bizarre for people who think with a feminist perspective. Boys and girls, in Freud`s concept, would seek to identify their gender with their physical organ only.

> Karen Horney, for instance, argues that women do not necessarily experience 'penis envy'. She notes that little girls are clearly aware of themselves as female- they recognize the existence of both the clitoris and the vagina. They are curious about the penis in little boys, but this cannot be taken to represent envy, nor do they experience a lack. If at all they feel inadequate, this is because they experience a 'flight from womanhood', caused both by their fathers` rejection of their desire to identify with them and the social devaluation of women.[153]

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[152] Ibid., p.76. Also see , Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Norton, New York, 1981

[153]Ibid., pp.77-78. Also see, Horney, Karen. *Feminine Psychology*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1967

Horney`s point reveals clearly the anti-feminist elements of the theorization by Freud. The patriarchal world- view was the underlying theme of Freudian theory. Freud must have been really unconscious enough while he made the theory, as he has never been able to think about the about the possibility of 'womb envy' or 'breast envy' that men might feel. Simone de Beauvoir refers Horney and agrees with her and explicates the social aspect the girl identifies her gender by the inferior affection she gets in comparison with her brother or male playmate. The American feminist Gloria Steinem agues Freud`s assumptions are ultimately an expression of routine male prejudices and dogma about women.[154] Dorothy Dinnerstein gives touchingly provocative construal of Freud`s assumption that it is the son`s sexual identity that makes it stressful to separate from the mother.[155] Dinnerstein describes it as the fear and anxiety of loosing protection, and the joy of being united with the mother which provides security. This version also connotes the social factors that would make the gendered individuals while they grow from infancy. The reaction of the individuals to the institutions such as motherhood, childhood, wifehood, marriage and family could be understood in terms of the interdisciplinary look through psychology and sociology.[156]

An extra obligatory but dreary theory on gender is one that is provided by Marxism. According to it gender doesn't exist as a categorical imperative. Male and female

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[154] Ibid., p.78. Also see, Steinem, Gloria,. 'What If Freud Were Phyllis?' in *Moving Beyond Words*, ed. By Gloria Steinem, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1994
[155] Ibid., p.79. See also, Dinnerstein, Dorothy., *The Mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual Arrangements and The Human Malaise*, Harper and Row, New York, 1976
[156] For the background in such an effort see, , Kardiner, Abram. *The Individual and His Society: The Psychodynamics of Primitive Social Organization*, Columbia University Press, NewYork, 1939

roles and functions are just aspects of social and economic system.[157] Even though the main theme of Marxism was work and production, the domestic work and reproduction were never considered and so the theory could never include women and women`s work separately. The views put forward by Friedrich Engels, a comrade on Karl Marx, verified some of the gendering issues but that also experienced feminist criticism for different reasons. Engel`s accounts on the mechanism of working of society and forming and defining of male and female identities, roles and functions are useful in several ways for a feminist research.

Engels maintains the cause for the male dominance in the society is their power over wealth. Along with the economic power men exert sexual power over women and women were considered only as a means for reproduction even though she was worshipped and protected in the familial context for that purpose. Engels explains these as historically evolved social situations and suggests it is certainly possible to change such subordination of women.[158] But some of his assumptions are analyzed by gender theorists. V.Geetha (2002) divides these critical positions into three sections. One group accepts that the gendering is based upon material life as Engels said, but criticizes his assumption of natural division of labour. According to Engels women do cooking, cleaning, nursing etc. along with reproduction because it is natural to women. A second group of criticism doubted the very reason Engels claimed for the male domination as the economic power. There is the argument that it is not only the wealth but the wealth transaction along with women transaction,

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[157]Geetha, 2002 , p.52
[158] See, Engels, Freidrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1948

which assured men's status higher. In the patriarchy the women are in a way either bartered as they were considered as men`s property or they were abducted for the work of reproduction. It was total control over woman`s sexuality and reproductive choices. The third sort of criticism on Engels' thought was about his concept that patriarchy would end if women enter into production. Yet, it was not widely debated what is production. Juliet Mitchell maintains there are four levels which comprise the male dominance and female subordination by gendering process, even though they don`t act totally separately. They are production, reproduction, socialization and sexuality. [159] Production involves work. Reproduction also engages one with some work. Then work becomes a problematic to be defined well. The gendering process happens with division of labour and the work assignment then plays a vital role in the gendering of individuals as strictly masculine of feminine. In the production mode in Marxism the reproduction was not a work and the domestic work also was not taken into account very well in favour of women. And the importance of the work done for the socialization of children is clearly neglected in the gender theorization of Marxism. At the same time it controlled the sexuality of women by the patriarchal assumptions making a clear female gender of 'natural' features. Katherine Mackinnon says what sexuality is to feminism is what work is to Marxism.[160] She says this to show what a worker to Marxism is what a woman is to feminism while dealing with male-female gender discrimination when Marxism

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[159] Geetha, 2002. Also see, Mitchell, Juliet. 'Women: The Longest Revolution'. In *Women`s Estate*, Pantheon, New York, 1971

[160] Ibid. Also see, MacKinnon, Catherine., *Feminism Reconsidered,* Harvard University Press, Cambridge:Ma, 1987

deals with proletariat-capitalist discrimination. Gerda Lerner[161] also speaks about the slavery of female gender in the patriarchal society which is comparable to the slavery of workers in the capitalist society.

As part of the postmodern project, feminist theorists have employed deconstructive strategies in order to destabilize a binary model inscribed in the masculine/feminine dyad, says Sophia Phoca in her article 'feminism and gender'.[162] As the binary structure would always supply privilege for one over the other framework to locate the gendered subject seemed to them a prerequisite. The Bulgaria born but known as French philosopher, Julia Kristeva's theories mainly scrutinized the subjects that are gendered.   Kristeva followed the ideas of other French feminists Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous, to pursue a language different from the traditional one and she did different feminist theorizations on motherhood and femininity and put forward the ideas of abjection and semiotic and symbolic in the debate around gender. Cixous wrote about the relationship between sexuality and language. Like the other poststructuralist feminist theorists, Cixous believes that our sexuality is directly tied to how we communicate in society. Luce Irigaray, like Helene Cixous, follows the thinking of poststructuralist theorists in asking questions about the liaison between language and bodies, specifically male and female bodies and masculine and feminine language. She focuses on the female body and how it has been constructed in phallogocentric systems like Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis. Irigaray, however, discusses the question of a female or feminine *sexuality* in more depth than Cixous; she wants specifically to explore the question of a feminine desire and

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[161] Lerner, Gerda., *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1986.
[162] Gamble, ed., 1998. p.55

language. Irigaray asserts that the female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters. She crosses Freud, who defined all active erotic behavior as masculine, and all passive behavior as feminine. Identity formation, the limits of linguistic signification, gender difference, and the possibility for political solidarity are the areas that Julia Kristeva has addressed. Kristeva is most celebrated for contributing to the swing from structuralist to poststructuralist thought in the '60s and '70s. Kristeva was unfailingly concerned with radicalizing the politics of language. These three theorists hand out some of the most nuanced batches of critical theory to date, with all of the passion and rigor of related thinkers like Lacan, Foucault, Barthes, and Derrida.[163] The group embraced the notion of history as an interpretable text, and writing as an act of politicized production. Kristeva`s contribution is often overshadowed by the deconstruction theory of Jacques Derrida who was actually in her circle, according to Noelle McAfee.[164] She explains, while Derrida was concerned with deconstructing structuralism, Kristeva thought it is essential to " 'dynamize' the structure by taking into consideration the speaking subject and its conscious experience on the one hand and, on the other, the pressures of other social structures" (Kristeva,1997:9). Gayatri Spivak proposes the Derridian idea that Western philosophical discourse has constructed woman as a product of linguistic difference, according to a model of binary oppositionality.[165] For her, the category of woman must not be taken as an object of analysis, to make deconstruction available to feminism. Instead, woman must be restored to the

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[163] http://www.artandculture.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/ACLive.woa/wa/artist?id=780
http://www.mdx.ac.uk/www/study/xfre.htm#Freud-Lecture33 and searching, www.wikipedia.org
[164] McAfee, Noelle. *Julia Kristeva*, Routledge, New York, 2004. p.7
[165] Gamble, ed.,1998, p.59

questioning subject. Spivak demarcates essentialist gender politics by establishing a dialectical understanding of identity, where the subject is constructed through gender identification and 'desire'. Asking a question like, 'what is man that his desire creates such a text?' is important as far as she is concerned. [166]

In 1990s Judith Butler engraved theories on gender and argued that the gender identities are just performances made by individual human beings, as part of being the norm. She is holding an anti-essentialist position, which proclaims, gender does not express an inner essence about the subject. In her book *Gender Trouble*, she poses the argument that there is no essential masculine subject, such as there is no essential feminine subject. Butler says subject can either opt for mimetic subject-positioning, which sustains the notion of credible gender identification, or 'camp it up', and so perform gender as excess in order to reveal gender identification as masquerade.[167] So, out witting Lacanian feminism which states women can take up masculine gender, Butler suggests both gender can take up masculine or feminist subject- positioning.

The review that we made above ,shows the verity that an ample portion of feminist theory construction has gone into mounting theories of gender, in which gender is the fundamental organizing principle for explaining divisions in women`s and men`s

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[166] Ibid.

[167] See Ibid. She takes the usage 'masquerade' from the 1939 article 'Womanliness as Masquerade' by Joan Riviere. 'Riviere pioneered the idea that gender is constructed according to social codes, where the subject becomes gendered by the process of mimeis.'

Also see, Butler, Judith., *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York and London, 1999

experiences conceptualized. Many other feminist theorists also have contributed a lot into the conceptual clarification of gender.[168]Gender as a theoretical construct is instrumental for the feminist scholarship and it establishes a whole range of issues which had previously been unthinkable.

Gender is a descriptive rather than an explanatory concept. It is central for understanding sexual dichotomies, sexual identity, sexual divisions in social activities and the symbolic representations of masculinity and femininity (Hagemann-White, 1989). By introducing gender as a theoretical construct, it became possible for the first time to shift relation between the sexes, from biology to society. The locus of the sexual asymmetries budged from nature to social relations. Gender as a category of analysis, launches relations between sexes as a problem and thus helps to make a daring speculative foray into the functional relations inside the social institutions starting from the basic family as well. It is useful for un-covering differences in male and female experiences, social positions, behavior etc. But we cannot disregard that there might be limitations sometimes on the use of gender as a theoretical category, because of the very complexity and multiplicity of the phenomenon, sexual difference. And also the other factors like class, caste/ race /ethnicity/nationality would probably make an analysis intricate as there may be an overlapping of these factors while watching the formulation or articulation of gender through the culture, religion and language in the family and society.

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[168] Rubin,1975; Coward, 1983; Harding and Hintikka, 1983; Hart sock, 1983; Harding ,1986:Scott,1986, 1988; de Lazretis,1987

Gender and Culture:-

Culture being controversial in definition and usage, may cause confusions in the context of discussion on the construction and enunciation of gender. The term culture cognates the belief that the human beings are different from animals, being civilized. The transition from savage life to civilized life has been under analysis by cultural anthropologists and social anthropologists. The contentious investigation into the prospect of understanding male-female contrast as a further metaphoric transformation of an allegedly universal nature-culture contrast along with the contrasts of raw-cooked or wild-tame also happened in the history of thought. [169] Nature and culture have been some of the elementary categories of analysis in the social sciences, inserted as part of the dominant European mode of critical studies. MacCormack (1980) says, the opposed categories of nature and culture (the writer uses in brackets, 'or society' for culture) arose as part of a historically particular ideological polemic in eighteenth century Europe. And he explains this polemic is one that created further incongruities by defining women as natural and thus superior, but instruments of a society of men and thus subordinate. Women were pictured as the repository of 'natural laws' and 'natural morality' but at the same time emotional and passionate and so necessitating constraint within social boundaries. However through the gender theorization and criticism even the way of thought based on oppositional categorization itself was questioned to some extent.

[169] See, MacCormack., Strathern, Marilyn.,ed., *Nature, Culture and Gender*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1980.

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The main criticism was that the nature-culture dichotomization was basically done to assert a 'difference' and establish the typical binary opposition. Ornter asserts, any link-up between nature and woman 'is a construct of culture rather than a fact of nature' (1974: 8).[170]

Rousseau explained about how we passed from a state of nature to become beings with language and culture. Rousseau was the first person probably who made the opposition between nature and something else, whether it be society, art or sciences.[171] Following Rousseau, Levi-Strauss attributes this transition to our capacity for culture rather than to the manifestations of our culture itself (Wokler, 1978: 126).[172] From the structuralism of Levi-Strauss, the stimulating argument that 'both the nature and culture are culturally constructed' became a key element to the gender theorization.

> Since the structuralist method seeks to reduce data to their symbolic structure, symbols are more real than the phenomena; the signifier is more important than the signified (Scholte, 1974:428). But symbols such as nature or female have meanings attached to them which are culturally relative. Douglas, and Kirk, insist that content cannot be ignored; different versions of a myth, for example cannot be reduced to a single structure (Douglas, 1967:66 and Kirk, 1970:78).

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[170] Ibid.,p.25
[171] Ibid., p.25
[172] Ibid., p.1. Details from ,
Rousseau, J.J., Oeuvres Completes, Bibliotheeque de la Pleiade, Gillimard, Paris, Vol. III, Ecrits Politiques, Vol. IV.Emile., 1964 &1969.
 Levi-Strauss, Claude., *Structural Anthropology*, Vol. I ,Basic Books, New York, 1963
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Structuralist analysis should explain with reference to a particular myth how its

meanings are produced and therefore explanation requires an understanding of

the culture in which the myth arises.[173]

Hence there is the criticism towards Levi-Strauss that he intentionally slips from the

concern to 'the other', because his target was to elaborate upon culture only.

MacCormack alleges, although Levi-Strauss has attempted to cast the nature-culture

contrast in a timeless, value-free model concerned with the working of the human

mind, ideas about nature and culture are not value free. That is, the concepts of

nature and culture are not free from the biases of the culture of the society in which it

is constructed and used. For example the meanings internalized by the concepts may

change in accordance to time and space. Levi-Strauss has himself made rather first-

class statement to differentiate nature and culture that, sexuality is natural but

becomes cultural with incest prohibition and rules of exogamy (Levi-Strauss

1969a:30).   This necessarily may not be the moral value for all the people

everywhere. There are controversies of sexuality, that itself is not sometimes

considered as natural, if we look at the cases of sexuality minority rights.

Thus the well-known dichotomy of nature/culture itself reveals the fact that gender is

embedded in such a theme. The evolutionary ides presented a 'natural' explanation

of gender differences in the mid nineteenth century. But no one knows precisely

when and where gender was initially used to refer to the social and cultural aspect of

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[173] Ibid., pp.5-6. Also see, Levi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London
1978:26ff for responses to this criticism.

sexual difference other than noticing its usage in the 1960`s sexology.[174] Gender is

widely analyzed during the second wave of feminism, of which Kate Millet (1970)

played a founding role by theorizing the Patriarchy, in her book *Sexual Politics.* She

argues that male and female are really two cultures.[175] Although this concept

underlies the psycho-analytic base of distinction of sex and gender as biological and

psychological, she was hesitant to plot the dichotomy of sex and gender on to nature

and culture. [176] This sort of a norm that holds the 'psychological' as the culture and

the biological as the nature derived from Freudian psychoanalytic view sustains the

Cartesian mind/body dualistic standpoint as well. Sex and gender are intimately

related, but not because one is natural, while the other presents its transformations

into culture. Rather both are inseparably cultural categories that refer to ways of

describing and understanding human bodies and human relationships, our

relationship to ourselves and to others.[177]

From such an argument it is clear that the discussions about the cultural notions of

male-female discrimination would simply hang around the gender. The influence of

the dominant culture in preserving the gender concepts is evident from the severe

social situations of women in this world. Judith Butler (1990) holds that people are

actually performing gender and the gender repetition may indeed reinforce

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[174]Glover, Kaplan, 2000, p.xix
The writers give example; Gender does not figure in Alex Comfort`s post-war overview of Sexual
Behaviour in Society (1950) until the book was revised for publication some thirteen years later(
under the new title Sex in Society), when the author added a brief discussion of 'gender roles'.
[175] Ibid, p.xxiii
[176] See Ibid. Also see for details , Millett, 1977: 29-31
[177] Ibid.

conservative culture.[178] She draws this idea from the concept of postmodern parody by Fredric Jameson who differentiates the 'postmodern parody of resistance' and a 'postmodern parody of reaction'. According to this idea, the first emphasizes the conservative culture and the second reacts against the dominant cultural specifications. The gender concept is also either accentuated or deconstructed by the kind of parody exercised by the people as part of the culture. The deconstruction could be profitably done by holding the view of Butler`s that 'biology does not exist "in the raw", but itself is a product of culture'[179]. She reverses the 'biology-creates–behavior' argument and subverts the whole attempt to explain the idea that 'gender behavior being determined by biology', by putting that biology itself is a cultural construct.[180] Thus her writings on the 'bodies that matter' prove to be vital in the ultimate solution of the problem of differentiating sex and gender.

Gender and Religion:-

Religion has always been an oppressing institution for women everywhere. Feminist studies of religion and gender has tried to see the pressure excreted by religion in the conceptualizations on woman. Some scholars on religion think, it hasn't been included in the group of race, class, ethnicity/nationality, sexuality and culture, which is the litany of qualifiers for differentiating woman as a particular category.[181]

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[178] Gamble,ed. 1998, p.60
[179] Nye,2003, p.77
[180] See Nye,2003, p.77 for the terms in inverted comas.

[181] Castelli, Elizabeth A., ed. With assistance from Rosamond C. Roadman *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader* ,PALGRAVE, New York, 2001, See p.4,5

But Malory Nye takes the study of religion as the study of culture as well.[182] She says, religion is 'cross-cultural' and it is something that human beings do and feel in the social life. And she has commented eagerly upon the androcentricism of religions all over the world, no matter if it is Christianity, Islam, Hinduism or other, pointing out how deeply the religion constructs and operates the gender differences in the society.[183] She refers Mary Daly(1973:28-33) to talk about the male-centeredness of religion even in the case of promoting Gods and suggests a de-masculinised deity , who learn to think differently in terms of a verb rather than a noun, as a 'Be-ing' process.

The French philosopher Luce Irigaray shares the same thoughts of de-masculinising Gods, particularly in her idea of 'divine becoming' (Irigaray1985a [1974], 1985b [1977], 1987;.Jantzen 1998; Magee 1995; 102-6).[184] The theoretical view that she brought out to critique religious patriarchy was focusing and basing psychoanalytic concepts written by Freud and Lacan, though their gender insensitivity is notable.

> Psychoanalytic theory suggests that 'persons are not ready-made souls inserted in bodies by God. Rather, human personhood s achieved …at considerable cost' (Jantzen 1998:8). This occurs primarily through the repression of the person`s many conflicting desires, and it is religion that has traditionally 'been the source of some of the most effective ….strategies of control'(1998:8).For Lacan however this repression of desire comes about for a boy when he enters

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[182] Nye,2003, p.2,3

[183] Ibid., p.74-76
[184] Ibid., p.80

into 'the symbolic', a term he uses 'to designate the broad conceptual patterns of civilization'(Jantzen,1998:10). It is only by entering this symbolic- by developing language, and overall cultural competence- that a person becomes a unified self with her or his own subjectivity…..Indeed, for Lacan women are so much outside the symbolic that they are 'the Other', the thing against which the male subject define itself.[185]

Feminist critique questioned the religious belief, privileging particular groups not only in terms of gender, but class and colour. Some of them were for the reconstruction of religion stressing upon spiritual and ethical matters. However, there can't be any difference of opinion for the position that the never-ending gendering process in the society makes use of the religion and vise versa. The religious discourses and practices provides for gender as both are about to make the difference and power.[186] Gender is the constitutive element of social relationships based on perceived differences between sexes and it is the way of satisfying relationships of power. May be, people can embrace religion by raising positive elements that pretend to be respecting women and holding gender sensitivity by propagating the ideas of protecting women. But, the false consciousness given by the institutionalized religion cannot be taken just as an acceptable abstraction. While she thinks it would be foolhardy to see religion just as providing false consciousness, Elizabeth A. Castelli proclaims, the negative rendering of religion is in many

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[185] Ibid., p.80-81
[186] Castelli, Elizabeth A., ed. With assistance from Rosamond C. Roadman *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader* ,Palgrave, New York, 2001, p.4

respects an ironic hold over from feminism`s own Enlightenment inheritance. She continues;

> During the enlightenment, "reason"dethorned "dogma" and became the new sovereign. Ever since this revolution in thinking, two related problems have troubled intellectual life. "Religion" on the one hand, was produced as a category separate from other elements, of human social existence (like "society" itself). On the other hand, the binary opposition "secular/religious" imposed itself upon the collective consciousness of the West, especially upon Western intellectuals anxious to carve up the disciplinary turf according to highly rationalized impulses. The ongoing legacy of these two effects is still being lived out in struggles over the border lands that attempt to keep these to purported opposites (religion/secularism) in their places.[187]

The disciplinary territory by the dichotomization of religious/secular concepts and related experiences has someway become maneuver to the construction of gendered society. In India, having a claim of secularism with the different religious concepts based on spirituality, the binary opposition has played its role. The fact is that any of the opposites that developed as institutions or ideologies, proved better against the gendering of the people into typical male and female human beings in the society. While the religious metaphysical assumptions restricted women in one way, the secular ideology seemed to be doing nothing special instead subordinating women with the same conceptions of gender such as men and women have innate attributes

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[187] Ibid., p.5 . Also see, Janet R. Jacobson and Ann Pellegrini, eds., *World Secularisms at the Millennium*, a special issue of *Social Text* 64 (Fall 2000) for an important set of essays addressing the legacy of secularism.

that makes them feminine and masculine. The religion asserted the female body as inferior to men and inherently evil. Men had souls accordingly and so they are positioned as the norm with reference to God.

Various religions produced holy texts as well, which advocates women's subordination considering them as sinful creatures. For example, in India, certain Hindu scriptural texts *upanisads*, *smrtis* and *Budhist* texts declare women`s innate nature is aberrant. According to *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* woman was created by the man for his entertainment in life.[188] This means the idea pertained from and around the 600 BC, almost the same period of *Budhism*. The fight of *Budhist* nuns Soma and Sumangalamatha against the religious discrimination towards women also proves the gender droopiness of *Budhism.*[189] Ancient Greek religion which also underlie great philosophies considered women as imperfect and men as perfect, and Christianity claimed God created man first and woman was made for him from his rib.[190] And this God is always a single transcendent masculine divine being beyond terrestrial existence, says Alison jasper.[191] Thus she criticizes the gendering process by the religious hermeneutics, starting from the positioning of God itself.

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[188] See ,*Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* 1.4. 1-3
[189] See, De Lamotte, Eugenia., Meeker, Natania., O'Barr, Jean. (eds.) *Women Imagine Change: A Global Anthology of Women`s Resistance; From 600 BC to Present*, Routledge, NewYork, 1997

[190] Geetha,V.,*Gender*, Stree, Calcutta, India, 2002, p.12,13
[191] Gamble, Sarah., ed. *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism*, Icon Books Ltd. U.K.,1998.pp.158-167

Gender and Language:-

> Language[192] has its effect on society through repeated use, through sequences
>
> of use, through the laying down of a history of use. And embedded in this
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> history are not simply the things that have been said and done, but the identities
>
> and status of the people who have said and done them. An individual act,
>
> therefore enters into a broader discourse- and its ultimate effect will be the
>
> result of its life in that discourse: how it gets picked up, and by whom, and how
>
> it mixes with what other people are doing and thinking.[193]

Language has been taken as a central concern in the analytic tradition of postmodern

era. The theme of negation of metaphysics drastically flourished in the philosophical

world with a criticism which held the position that may look fanatic. Accordingly, all

the enterprises of making knowledge of reality and truth based the idea that only

language exists. Western feminist theorists have tried to propagate the importance of

language in the construction of gender. They have envisaged the male-centeredness

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[192] Eckert, Penelope., McConnell-Ginet, Sally., *Language and Gender,* Cambridge University Press, U.K.2003, See p.52.Here language is defined as a communicative practice mediated by a linguistic system. 'Philosopher David Lewis (1974) proposed using language as a count form (with an article or plural as in the boat, boats) to designate linguistic systems and using it as a mass form (with no article or plural as in *water*) to designate linguistically mediated communicative practices.'

[193] Ibid., p.53. May be we can find the reason why the analysis of a text , which is a form of an individual or group act of speech or writing, The reason evidently the fact that it affects the broader discourse and thus the lives of the people. And , the writers have given stunning example of the introduction of the social title Ms. into the lexicon of address forms by the US feminists in the late sixties. 'The purpose was to provide an equivalent of Mr.- a term that designates gender, but not marital status. This was felt to be particularly important because, unlike men, women were judged, qualified and disqualified, included and excluded on the basis of their marital status.'

of the language and how it causes the women's secondary status in the societies.[194]

Language is a social institution that affects the individual's behaviour and internalization of conceptions about the world. The role of language in the gendering of people is undoubtedly established as part of feminist theorizations.

In the stream of patriarchal knowledge, feminists intervened strongly with the critique against the andocentric nature and function of language that formulated the identities and subjectivities. Feminist sociolinguist Jennifer Coates in *women, men and Language* (1986), posited the andocentric rule: 'Men will be seen to behave linguistically in a way that fits the writer`s view of what is desirable or admirable; women on the other hand will be blamed for any linguistic state or development which is regarded by the writer as negative or reprehensible'.[195] The predominance of such rules necessitates the research on the relation between gender and language. Consequent research happened on language and gender could be seen as influenced by the mode of discourse analysis that concentrated on the language functions along with the language forms, structures and semantic systems. With the poststructuralist perspective, feminist criticism maintains that language is a site of the cultural production of gender identity.[196] Mary.M.Talbot explains this in a clear way.

> Rather than dealing with a notion of static, fixed gender identities, it presents
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> identities as an effect of discourse, constantly in production and therefore

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[194] Castelli, Elizabeth A., ed. With assistance from Rosamond C. Roadman *Women, Gender, Religion: A Reader* ,PALGRAVE, New York, 2001,   p.76. Also see, Deborah, Cameron., "Why Is Language a Feminist Issue? Introduction to *The Feminist Critic of Language,* Routledge, New York, 1990.
[195] Gamble, ed., 1998. p.140,141
[196] Ibid., p.146

changeable. Gender is a process and verbal interaction (both speech and writing) is where it takes place. Individuals take up positions as gendered subjects in their enactments of discourse practices. This marks an important shift away from commonsensical categorizations and points towards the study of how people gender themselves and others.[197]

This stream of theorization has apparently unearthed a wider and deeper insight into the inquiry on the problem as to how people get gendered. In view of that the language is a main gendering tool. Only by the breaking of the use of male-centered language, one can overcome the gendering process. Starting from the everyday colloquial language unto the progressive and academic language, the anti-woman elements are still followed unconsciously. A conscious deconstruction of language and its usage is an indispensable way to act against the gendered concepts and practices. The French thinker and radical feminist theorist Monique Wittig has been principally concerned with the problems of gender and language. She calls for a revolution in language as the first condition for social change.[198]

She writes about the devastating examples of language use beginning from the words like 'mankind', and 'he' to refer to men and women alike which perpetuates an abstract, universalizing idiom that is denied to women, making men its sole

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[197] Ibid., p.146.She quotes very interesting example of examining the institutions and finding the role of verbal interaction to position men and women. It is about the study by Elinor Ochs and Carolyn Taylor on the patriarchal family structure. They examine the dynamics of dinner-table talk in white-American families. 'It does not reveal monolithic patriarchal power wielded by fathers over families, but practices establishing fathers in positions of dominance much more subtly , including the collusion of mothers in maneuvering fathers into positions of panopticon-like control and invulnerability.'
[198] Glover, David., Kaplan, Cora., *Genders*, Routledge, London, 2000, p.xxix

beneficiaries (Wittig, 1992: 60).[199] From a careful analysis of any language, we can find not only such words but appalling usages that are apparently andocentric. These are, according to Wittig, actually the means of entrance into the dominant discourse of male and female, which derives specific gender identities. She has been trying to establish the need for transcending the linguistic categories that make the traditional identity, to disengage identity from gender and to enact a new form of subjectivity within the language system. Her strategy was to elevate the feminine plural to the same status as masculine and to set up a 'sovereign subject'. In her view,

> Gender relations can never be equalized, for the categories of 'man' and 'woman' are defined as asymmetrical or hierarchical from the outset. Language plays a crucial role in sustaining this imbalance, for by learning to call oneself a woman one is also implicitly differing to the privileges enjoyed by men. By installing a basic division at the core our being, the heterosexual imagination denies women the capacity to act as subjects, something that can only be achieved by taking control over the ways in which language is used. To become what Wittig calls a 'total' or whole subject one must first break with the assumptions embedded in the grammar of heterosexuality, that system of linguistic positions which conventionally assigns women an identity only in relation to men.[200]

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[199] Ibid.
Monique Wittig has also given exciting analysis of some French nouns and pronouns. And it is doubtless that every language has such words, as we know we have such words in our familiar languages.
[200] Ibid., p.xxx

Family: Conceptualization and Theorization

Although its origin is more provisional than evidential, family has been regarded as the basic constituent of the society and has undergone various kinds of analyses. Many sociologists have considered family as the cornerstone of society.[201] The anthropological explorations have donated a lot, to view family as an institution among others. The lineage or descent factors such as kinship and marriage have been indispensable parts of the discourse on family. And according to the anthropological view, some aspects of the kinship are universal cross-culturally beyond the basics of biology.[202] Larger structures of family based on notions of kinship exist in many parts of the world which are the ties between the generations. Henry Lewis Morgan`s was the first grand theory in terms of the treatment of kinship in anthropology which explored the relation between kinship terminology and social organization.[203] He was the only purveyor of the matrilineal hypothesis and its linking to primitive promiscuity.[204] Claude Levi-Strauss has written profoundly on the conceptions of family and has revolutionized anthropology with his structural theories of myth and kinship.[205] He claims the anthropologists saw the image of institutions that could have existed even in the prehistoric periods, in the modern institutions. And with

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[201] Mathur, Deepa., *Women, Family and Work*, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 1992, p.50
[202] Parkin, Robert and Stone, Linda. Ed. *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd., USA, 2004, p.viii
[203] Ibid. Also see,
Morgan, Lewis Henry. *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, 1870
…………..., *Ancient Society*, Holt, New York, 1877
Morgan studied the native American tribes and Australian etc.
[204] Ibid,p.9
[205] Levi-Strauss, Claud. *The View From Afar*, Trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss, Penguin Books, London,1985, p.39
………, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1969

extensive fieldwork, he explores the family practices and even makes a conclusion that the family is no more the basic element of the society but is a product of it. This is drawn by seeing the types of family as patrilineal and matrilineal. According to this argument, society can exist only in opposition to family as no society can maintain itself through time if women do not give birth to children and if they do not benefit from male protection while carrying, nursing and raising their children.[206] Although his main work were upon the division of the families mainly as out of monogamous and polygamous marriages, his estimations on matrilineal and patrilineal forms are worth referring. Not only his ideas like the above are contradictory to sociological conceptions but are attacking to the traditional anthropologists as well, against their tendency to see modern monogamous family as civilized and to make other forms such as polygyny and polyandry as savage systems.

The family is a unique institution in the sense it is at one and the same time both a private and visibly public institution.[207] The system of marriage and its linkage to family was under sociological studies in provisos of changes according to the economic and cultural developments. But the development of a trenchant feminist analysis of male domination inside and outside the family and the pressure for the legitimation of alternative ways of ordering sexual and parental relationships had the great advantage of permitting to think in a different way around the concept. Jane Jorgenson`s reflexive study reveals how the construction of family happens with the

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[206] See, Ibid., P.60
[207] Patel, Tulsi.,(ed). *The Family in India: Structure and Practice*, Sage Publications India Ltd. New Delhi, 2005. p.19

conceptions the members hold about it.[208] Such deep scrutiny into the family that continued to be a caring and nurturing institution was carried out by the analyses arbitrated by the concept gender.

The concept of family cannot be understood without the assistance of the concept of marriage. Marriage may be defined as a culturally approved relationship of one man and one woman (monogamy), or of one woman and two or more men (polyandry), or of one man and two or more women (polygyny), in which there is cultural endorsement of sexual intercourse between the marital partners of opposite sex and, generally the expectation that children will be born of the relationship.[209] Although marriage is defined and legitimated as sexual relation between opposite sex recent queer theories have intervened into this concept, to redefine it and get legitimacy to same sex relationships as well.[210] In anyway legality seems to be a necessary condition for marriage and family formations from the sociological point of view.[211] The marriage as a social arrangement assumes kinship, creates and preserves the affinal relationships between the kinsmen. The system of marriage alliance was discovered to be the basic form of networking as it could either link family units formerly unrelated and thus reinforce the economic status of a family through in-

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[208] Jorgenson, Jane. "Co-constructing the Interviewer/Co-constructing Family" in Steier, Frederick. ed., *Research and Reflexivity*, Sage Publications Ltd., New Delhi, 1991

[209] Hutchinson,H.N. Ed. by Dharam Vir, *Marriage Customs of the World*, Crown Publication, New Delhi, 1989, p.2. Also see, Robert F. Winch, "Marriage: Family Formation" in David L.Sills (ed) *International Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, The Macmillian Company and the Free Press, Volume 10, 1988

[210] See for details of 'queer' theories, politics and movements. Narrain, Aravind. *Queer: Despised Sexuality, Law and Social Change*, BOOKS for CHANGE, Bangalore, 2004. Foucault, Michel. The History of Sexuality Vol.I, Penguin,England, 1976

[211] Hutchinson, 1989, p.2

marrying or could maintain the caste/race and class boundaries. And intergenerational mobility along with economic stability was also of great concern in the conceptualization of the family. These ideas were appeared to be vital in the marriage system prevailed. This would show how concepts of filiation encroach on the rules of inheritance and thus on property structures. And, this points out the significant role played by the family in the production of local power structures.

The impingement of family with many different aspects of life shows its importance as a functional concept. At the same time, the same reason brings up the need to be analyzed from all the view points. Family being a very commonplace and as a space everybody would hold in one way or other, it has ever been taken-for-granted. And to see it as parochial would ever be considered as insane in the cultural sphere. Tulsi Patel (2005: 19) quotes Patricia Uberoi, to show how the smoothness of the family would be affected by a critique.

> It is as though critical interrogation of the family might constitute an intrusion
> into that private domain where the nation's most cherished cultural values are
> nurtured and reproduced, as though the very fabric of society would be undone
> if the family were in anyway questioned or reshaped.(Uberoi, 1993: 1-2)

Uberoi points out the intrusive fears that make the family studies too sensitive to be critical. Her point proves to be true with a glance at the earlier sociological studies on the family which took it as a soft subject. Patel (2005) thinks it might be the high status accorded to the family in early Christianity that influenced the genre of family

studies in that period. And the growth of Marxist, structuralist, psychoanalyst mode of criticism and the feminist intervention reclaimed the study of the family from a functionalist perspective. It shows the family studies had its cradle in the West even in the early ages, but it was not critical in the beginning. Levi-Strauss' structural analysis on family followed two powerful polemics, which destroy all the liberal clichés about race and culture, and the inflated comments of sociobiology.[212] He draws the point that cultures were the production of hybrids of crossbreeding between human groups and so that one can trace the culture but not the race. His arguments about the arbitrariness of inherited characteristics by putting the possibilities of genetic blends are interestingly going into the kinship matters as well. He observes that many societies are particular in assigning children to either mother`s or father`s kinship group and succeed in sharply distinguishing the two types of bond, in order to recognize one to the exclusion of other or to assign them discrete areas of rights and obligations.[213] Tulsi Patel elaborates about the rules and behaviour regarding relationships both by descent and alliance, which are structured by the institution family that is intertwined with marriage and kinship.

> These principles and rules are routinely acted out in the family and the household. Some how this dimension of the family happened to be glossed over, despite Fortes`(1958) view that the domestic group is the workshop for kinship and marriage. It is worth serious consideration that the family is, to use Goffman`s (1958) dramaturgical notion, both the back stage and the front stage

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[212] Levi-Strauss, Claud. *The View From Afar*, Trans. Joachim Neugroschel and Phoebe Hoss, Penguin Books, London,1985, p.4

[213] Ibid., p.48

of a very substantial part of people`s behaviour. The family as an omnipresent

institution stages and witnesses the drama of life as it unfolds throughout

people`s lives.[214]

Even though one can understand family as an omnipresent phenomenon, the concept

is too problematic to comprehend with a single meaning or definition. The usages of

the two terms 'family' and 'household' themselves gives confusions for a serious

inquiry. The conceptual distinction between the kinship-oriented family and the

residence- oriented household has led to a great deal of analytical clarity in the

understanding of the family, both as a social ideal and a social fact.[215] There are

numerous values and ideas about what a family should be like, and what kinds of

living arrangements acceptably merits the term 'family'. Harding (1996) says as

there are diverse family forms in modern society such as single-parent, cohabiting,

step-families and married two parent nuclear forms, and as the notion of family

overlies concepts such as household, kinship, marriage and parenthood, it may also

be used metaphorically to describe a nation, collectivity or group.[216] There is the

argument that the state as a set of government and quasi-autonomous

institutions/organizations, which are not necessarily in consonant with each other and

do not necessarily reflect one ideology, resembles the family. This clever metaphor

would facilitate to see even the family as an institution that is a cluster of institutions,

perceiving every individual involved as an institution. Flowering from the

postmodern identity theories the individual could be perceived as a gathering of

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[214] Patel,ed. p.20,21
[215] Ibid., p.28
[216] Harding, Lorraine Fox., *Family, State and Social Policies*, Mc. Millian Press Ltd.,London,1996.
p.xi

multiple identities and thus the metaphor institution proves to be meaningful. But generally the term family appears to be used to connote 'the married-heterosexual two-parent –gender differentiated –stable through time –ideologically united-institution'.

Lineage elements such as marriage and kinship are the important factors in the functioning of the family. Marriage is a partnership between a man and a woman formalized by either a religious or civil ceremony and having a particular status in law as well as in social custom (Harding, 1996: 48). However the marriage customs or practices are no doubt different in different places. Hutchinson gives an elaborate reference on marriage customs in different countries saying all forms of human societies exhibit definite rules and regulations on marriage.[217] For instance, in India there were eight forms of marriage accepted by some custom, having prescribed by the ancient texts that are considered to be sacred. Marriage was considered as a holy event and still that continues to be so, but the marriage among the lower castes has become more secular.[218] All the forms of ancient marriage are not in practice at present, except the normative married-heterosexual two-parent – gender differentiated –stable through time –ideologically united- institution and even that has become a marketing institution in the society. There are studies that show the institutionalized marriage is not the only norm in the West. The decline of formal

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[217] Hutchinson,H.N. ed. by Dharam Vir, *Marriage Customs of the World*, Crown Publication, New Delhi, 1989,

[218] Ibid., p.5

marriages, increased divorces and alternatives of man-woman relationship like cohabitation, has affected the family systems in the West. [219]

According to Hutchinson,[220] kinship has played essential role in regulation of marriage and has been discussed in terms of the unequal distribution of resources in the family. Deviating from the family history tradition, access for individuals to the material as well as immaterial resources got into debates with the introduction of the concept kinship. Though it seems to be more fitting into the investigations in the Eastern context, Margrit Pernau`s study shows it would be applicable in the Western family context as well.[221] According to the observation made in the study, it holds true everywhere that most of the resources an individual could obtain is from family, and the access to them is not equal, but mediated by gender and age. This clearly shows the internal power relations as well, within the family regulated by age and gender differences. Pernau quotes Leela Dube, who argued for the enclosure of kinship into gender studies:

> Kinship will be seen as providing the organizing principles that governs the recruitment of individuals to social groups and their placement in them, the formation of the family and the household, residence at marriage, resource distribution including inheritance, and the obligations and responsibilities of members of the group in the business of living. The very notion of entitlement

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[219] Harding, 1996, for detailed description. pp.48-88

[220] Hutchinson, 1989

[221] Pernau,Margrit.,Ahmad,Imtiaz.,Reifeld,Helmut.,(ed.), *Family and Gender: Changing Values in Germany and India,* Sage Publications India Ltd.,New Delhi,2003. p.16, 17. The study is a comparative study on family in India and Germany. But it tries to trace it in an Asian and European context.

–whether to membership of a family, to access to strategic resources, to food and nutrition, to health care, to education, or to authority or decision- making- cannot be understood without accepting that the kinship system to a large degree provided the language for it and gives it legitimacy. (Dube, 1997:5)

As Leela Dube puts it, in the recruitment of an individual into the social groups, the family may play an important role. It may be seen in another argument of the same type by Pierre Bourdieu`s theory of 'habitus'. 'Habitus' which is 'constituted by a whole system of predispositions included by the material circumstances of life and by family upbringing' (Bourdieu, 1976:118), could be conceived as the mediator between structure and practice. It endows with a conceptual command of the internalization and reproduction of kinship and marriage structures by actors and agents in the family. According to Bourdieu (1979), not only is the economic capital getting transferred from one generation to the other but the social and cultural capital as well. But, with a commonsense of class concept, it could be argued that this theory is applicable only with people having enough capital in the families. The role of family in the constitution of an individual's social position is remarkable, but there are possibilities that it would affect in the opposite way too. The leeway of a lay person thrown into the society, to develop herself/himself as an individual cannot be taken as just out of the family name or inheritance. The respectability or being a countable person in the society might germinate from the sense of lack of inheritance as well.

The negotiation of members of a family for the achievement of resources and thus producing status is a grave issue to be addressed. The family system in the existing manner is a mechanism of 'reproduction of social inequality'[222] and this familial process is strengthening and maintaining the class formation in the society. The transition from arranged marriage to love marriage could be observed as an alternative where importance of alliance might not be based on inheriting economic or socio-cultural capitals. However, as Gunilla Budde points out, even love marriage rarely crossed the borders of social endogamy, the family retaining a strong influence, if not in the selection of the actual partner, then at least –through the inculcation of an aesthetic which defines attractiveness – in the definition of the circle of persons deemed marriageable.[223]

The compelling task of understanding the changes happening in the conceptualization of family, would lead us to a plentiful of other elements. 'The change in gender roles and relations, reproduction - defined to include care and socialization of children as well as physical procreation-, ageing and pattern of relationship between generations, the changes in heterosexual couple relationships- including marriage, divorce, remarriage, single parenthood ,cohabitation, births outside marriage- are those points to be taken into account. Conversely, all these points may not be necessary to illustrate the changes in family in all regions. It may differ according the cultural and social systems prevailing in different regions. For

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[222] See ibid. p.21,22, and see, Betteille, Andre. ed. *Equality and Inequality: Theory and Practice, Oxford University Press,* Delhi, 1993: 435-52.
----------, *Empirical Meanin and Imputed Meaning in the Study of Kinship*, Dpt. Of Sociology, University of Delhi, Working Paper No.6, 1993
[223] See ibid.,p.22

example, especially when the studies are in the Eastern countries (like India, where the culture prevents the possibility of cohabitation, births outside marriage, single prentship etc.), such aspects of the life might not affect much of the changes in the family forms. But in the West the changes happened over time have been strongly accompanied by all these factors.' [224]

The arresting comments made by Margrit Pernau ascertain the tarnished linkage between the family and gender.[225] Accordingly, the sharpening of the concept gender is inevitable for the constructive changes of family that was conjured up as the 'naturally' given ties of blood. It is suggested that no longer should we regard the family as an anthropomorphic entity which plans and acts 'with one voice'. It should be good for every single member of the family as a space of harmony, instead being the space of power relations. The process of transforming family in a woman friendly way, cannot be culled out from the procedure of gender sensitization inside and outside the institution of family. Family is an institution which unites two humans, needs such a generic disjunctive nature and culture,[226] and so the traditional images of family keeps on changing with the cultural as well as socio- economic changes. But the speculative audacity to analyze the family as a gendering and gendered space is still stipulated.

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[224] Harding,1996, See, p.1
[225] Pernau, Ahmad, Reifeld, (ed.), 2003. See, p.9,10,17,18
[226] Zimmerman, 1953. In Patel, ed., 2005. p.57. The word 'nature' he uses as a symbol for types of causes such as the early 'instinct', 'primeval habit', the statistical explanations of monogamy in terms of almost even numbers of persons in both sexes, of jealousy, of long infancy, and so on. 'Culture' is the learned aspects of human life.

Family and Gender: Tracing the Patriarchal Geography

Inspired by the women's movements and feminist perspective in the recent decades, anthropologists started addressing the question of the male dominance as cross-cultural universal and the reason for such a social fact if any. [227] Studying gender and kinship tried to solve the puzzle of difference between men and women in the biological as well as social meanings. Questioning analytical dichotomies such as nature/culture (Ortner,1974), domestic/public (Rosalsdo, 1974) and reproduction/ production (Harris and Young,1981) was one way of understanding the structure of relations between men and women that constructed the universal form of sexual inequality.[228] The nature/culture opposition draws on a Levi-Straussian symbolic-structuralist perspective and the domestic/public opposition is more in line with a structural-functionalist perspective.[229] The definitions of culturally meaningful social relationships were androcentric by the process of constructing the consciousness of men and women. Feminist scholars in social sciences have addressed this issue by problematizing the 'taken-for-granted' social unit family. [230] By an alliance with antikinship school of symbolic anthropology the feminists not only tried to denaturalize and deuniversalize but tried to deconstruct or dismantle the categories of

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[227] Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko and Collier, Jane Fishburne. "Toward a Unified Analysis of Gender and Kinship", in, Robert Parkin and Linda Stone (ed.) *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, Blackwell Publishing, USA, 2004
[228] See Ibid.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Ibid. P.280. Also see, Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko. "Family and Household: The analysis of Domestic Groups" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8:161-205, 1979. Collier, Jane Fishburne., Yanagisako, Sylvia Junko, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, "Is There a Family? New Anthropological Views" In Barrie Thorne, ed., with Marilyn Yalom, *Rethinking Family: Some Feminist Questions,* New York,1982. Harris, Olivia." Households as Natural Units" InKate Young et. al.,eds., Of Marriage and the Market: Women`s Subordination in International Perspective, London, 1981

kinship, marriage and family along with the putative and natural and universal subordination of women and children to men.[231]

Patricia Uberoi raises the point that India engages a special place in comparative sociology of the family as a textbook case of the working of a 'joint family system'.[232] She says this 'familism' as distinguished from 'individualism' and its value system are under threat alien values and alien ways of life. The works of Henry Sumner Maine, Law Member of the Council of Governor-General in India from 1862 to 1869, contributed a lot to put the Indian family on the arena of comparative family studies and shaped the Indological approach to Indian joint family.[233]

> Relying on the classical textual sources of Hindu Law, read along with contemporary ethnographic and administrative reports, Maine projected the India joint family as a living example of the earliest or 'ancient' form of human family whose outlines could also be discerned in the legal system of ancient Rome as well as Celtic and Slavic survivals of earlier forms of social organization (Maine [1961] 1972). Maine termed this type of family the 'patriarchal family' for the reason that it was constituted by a group of persons

[231] Scheffler, Harold W. "Sexism and Naturalism in the Study of Kinship" in, Robert Parkin and Linda Stone (ed.) *Kinship and Family: An Anthropological Reader*, Blackwell Publishing, USA, 2004

[232] Uberoi, Patricia. "The Family in India", in ,Adam Kuper and Jessica Kuper (ed.), *The Social Science Encyclopedia,* Routledge, London, 1996, p.276 . Also see,
Goode,William J. *World Revolution and Family Patterns*, Free Press of Glencoe, London, 1963
------,*The Family*, Foundations of Modern Sociology Series, Englewood Cliffs, NJ:Prentice-Hal, 1964
[233] Ibid.

related in the male line and subject to the absolute power of the senior-most male member.[234]

Research on family has been primarily taken over by anthropology and then by sociology in India and has seen ups and downs over decades starting from 1950s.[235] Recently it has flourished into the interdisciplinary areas such as social anthropology and cultural anthropology too. Yet, we have to say that academic and philosophical reflection on the family has been uneven,[236] especially in the case of adding gender perspective. Leela Dube`s works in social anthropology has been significant by intersecting gender and kinship.[237] She disentangles the family-household as a site and source of gender bias and shows the cultural embeddedness of it and the ways in which the major axes of stratification such as caste, class and gender intersect within it. The relation between cultural diversity and gender inequality has been a topic of her concern. Her studies are the best referential to understand the women`s situations in the culturally constructed gender disparity in South Asia.

 M.N.Srinivas has also noted the gender aspect with the caste and class aspects into his studies on India village-families, raising the point that gender has become crucial after 1970s in such studies.[238] While raising the dowry component in marriage he says segregation of sexes is more visible in the traditional societies. A.M.Shah

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[234] Ibid. Also see, Maine, Henry Sumner. *Ancient Law*, Everyman edition, London, [1861]1972
[235] Patel, Tulsi. (Ed). *The Family in India: Structure and Practice*, Sage Publications India Ltd. New Delhi, 2005.
[236] Ibid., See , p.31
[237] Dube, Leela. *Anthropological Explorations in Gender,* Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2001
[238] Srinivas, M.N. *Village, Caste, Gender and Method: Essays in India Social Anthropology*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi. 1996.

claims the idea of householder has received considerable attention in the studies happened in India during last decades.[239] He also slightly recognizes the fast growing gender relations in India has contributed evidently to an examination of intra-household gender relations highlighting particularly the deprivation and subordination of women. He identifies the issues of studying the patriarchy with the man-centered category as a main analytical tool.[240] He calls the patrilineal kinship relations beyond the three-or-four generation family as lineage relations and maintains that the anthropological works in recent years on lineage and clan has influenced historians greatly in analyzing the political system in India beginning with most ancient times.[241] According to Romila Thaper, in the Indian situation lineage society gave a shape and form to caste structure and the lineage elements such as kinship and marriage rules are important to caste.[242] She claims through the *varna* framework an attempt has been happened to draw the forms of social stratification together into a holistic theory of social functioning.

Ancient texts such as *Sutras, Smrtis* and *Dharmasastras,* have preached the ideals and forms of patriarchal households and have thus given some conceptions of family in India. K.M.Kapadia states that these post-Vedic literatures provides us with ample material about the family organization of the time and the modifications it was undergoing.[243] He interprets the way of property distribution as per *Manusamhita*

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[239] Shah, A.M. *The Family in India: Critical Essays*, Orient Longman Limited, Hyderabad, 1998. Also see, Madan, 1982; Gray and Mearn, 1989; Gray, 1995
[240] Ibid. p.8
[241] Ibid., P.9 . Also see, Romila Thaper,,1984, Shah, 1986
[242] Thaper, Romila. *From Lineage to State*, Oxford University Press,1984, p.18
[243] Kapadia, K.M. *Marriage and Family in India*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1955

and maintains that it was clearly patriarchal.[244] Following the ancient concept, 'patrilineal system is the presently prevalent one in India and the traditionally matrilineal groups also are moving towards it'[245]. Although the transition from joint-family to nuclear family has caused the modern individualism inside the institution of family, the status of woman remained secondary. This may be of many reasons that threw confusions on the meanings of the terms family and household themselves and the discourse on it. The term family referred on the one hand to the genealogical models without any definite indication of the activities or functions of the persons composing the model (as in 'nuclear family' and 'extended family')and on the other hand to social groups having certain activities or functions, without any indication of the persons composing the group(as in 'family' in the sense of 'household' and in 'joint family' in the sense of property-holding group).[246]

 The studies on kinship, marriage, divorce and domestic violence etc. have been topics of study in sociology and social anthropology in recent Indian academia. Tulsi Patel (2005: 31) claims, the awareness hatched by the studies, of such crises, has challenged some kinship and marriage systems and has messed up the neat categories of endogamy and exogamy, as well as the agnatic, cognatic and affinal structures and organizational principles. There are views that traditional literature of pre-British India, including the *Vedas, Smrtis,* Epics*, Puranas* and other literary works cover mainly the marriage customs and kinship of Hindus, forming the

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[244] Ibid., p.220
[245] Shah,1998.,   p.7
[246] Ibid., p.3

family.[247] Although the marriage was more secular among the lower castes of Hindus and though the structure and function of family has changed a lot over time, it seems to be in need of alternatives in terms of gender measures, even at the present time. It was not only in the case of Hindus but even the marriage and family customs of Muslims in India also has undergone drastic change, especially due to the impact of Hinduism over centuries.[248]

According to Margrit Pernau, early British investigations into the concept of Hindu joint family were of a practical legal nature, and aimed at establishing property rights and above all, the responsibility for the payment of revenue. Orientalist perception is that the authentic Hindu law was to be found in the ancient sacred texts and the joint family was established as the norm.[249] Even if it is contradictory to some other arguments on the relation between the *Smrtis* and the establishment of the joint family,[250] it bears out the belief strongly that the *Dharmasastras* or *Smrtis* have influenced the conceptualization of family in India. Anyway it proves to be true that the ancient mode of formulation of household and family life with proper rules and regulations prescribed by the sacred texts, have swayed and followed until the present time. By the fact that the textual authority given to the joint family household model have paved the center-stone for the present day family system in India, the

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[247] Hutchinson, 1989, p.8

[248] Ibid.

[249] Pernau,Margrit.,Ahmad,Imtiaz.,Reifeld,Helmut.,(ed.), *Family and Gender: Changing Values in Germany and India,* Sage Publications India Ltd.,New Delhi,2003.
See Introduction by Pernau, p.14,15

[250] There are arguments that, the household in *ManuSmrti,* refers only to the husband, wife and a son or a daughter. So that, it suggest nuclear family but not joint family. See the keynote address in , Archak, K.B., ed., *Manusmrti and Woman* (A Collection of Research papers) ,Sambodhana Series-10 (ed. Dr. D.N. Shanbhag) ,1998.

texts are worth to be taken into a serious discussion on family. Whilst, the colonial influence and the modernization process prove to be unforgettable in the transformations of family in India.

During different development periods studies have been carried out on family. Saradamoni states that the household surveys were not a recent phenomenon but the purpose of survey seemed to be different over different times.[251] The household surveys were for the census taking, in the early days. She explains the Bible records some nine censuses made or attempted, of the Israelites. In all the Biblical surveys, the able bodied warrior and the tax-payer were the targets, but not the household or the hearth and the word 'family' used in relation to them means 'not so much the co-residential unit as the lineage, set within the tribe, set within the kin and only vaguely differentiated from them'.[252] The mode of surveys on households have anyway changed a lot according to the needs of socio-cultural transformations happened during different periods. And the interference of gender studies has caused the blooming of research on the status of women in the households, going further long way from the realm of socio-economic surveys.

Nevertheless the family studies in India were carried out in the rural villages by the anthropologists` concern, it prospered later into the urban areas as well. The comparison between the studies done in different regions belonging to rural and urban natures, gave rise to a different dynamism in the field. Pernau (2003) observes

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[251] Saradamoni, K.,(ed), *Finding the Household: Conceptual and Methodological Issues*, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.,New Delhi, 1992, p.17
[252] Ibid.

two distinct movements as part of the dynamic studies on family, referring Uberoi`s then forthcoming work. One is the deconstruction of the historical continuity from a distant past to the present and the consequent necessity to rely on empirical observation of behavior rather than on the interpretation of ancient normative texts.[253] This approach outlined by M.N Srinivas, extended to A.M Shah (1973, 1998) and Imtiaz Ahmad (1976) is to be counted as much fruitful and forceful, proving the problems addressed in a socio-philosophical inquiry also may better perform with texts as well. With this attempt, also one would be able to analyze on the unchanging foundation of empirical experiences such as norms, rituals and use of language. The second approach put forward into the family studies is also the main interest for a study like the one we do at present, which is the reintroduction of history into the framework aided by the parallel historisization of gender. Even though it was unimagined in the time of Kapadia (1956), Desai (1956) and Aiyappan (1955) etc. who wrote historical anthropological accounts on family, recently written works by Leela Dube (1997), Uma Chakravarti (1998) and Tanika Sarkar (2001) etc. on the gendered kinship, widowhood and shifting concepts of conjugality, would facilitate an understanding on the drift of difference the family may make in the future.

In India the Joint Family has been a major concept for sociologists and that endures extensive debates during recent decades. Recent studies allege that the concepts of joint family and nuclear family are actually Indological and sociological constructs.

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[253] Pernau,Margrit.,Ahmad,Imtiaz.,Reifeld,Helmut.,(ed.), *Family and Gender: Changing Values in Germany and India,* Sage Publications India Ltd.,New Delhi,2003.

And the question about how to determine them in the changing context, seemed to be conflicting for the sociologists for long. Although with the conceptual vagueness, the contest over the decline of joint family seems ever important for India. The transition from joint family to nuclear family has been a main study model in India to know the changing family structures (Shah, 1995). And it is a fact that in the fields of such studies, the researchers ever had a basic question 'whether belonging to joint family or nuclear family'. This kind of empirical study faced queries raising the limitation that the people may use the term with different understandings. Tulsi Patel (2005) clarifies this in a really interesting ontological point of view.

> While the sociologist`s categorization deals with the structure of residence derived from its composition, people`s categorization is based on the context of the ego`s residence vis-à-vis other household and/or family members. A household in itself is neither joint nor nuclear, but becomes either of these by virtue of its being in a state of progression and regression in a developmental process. For example, a married son`s moving out of his father`s house in a patrilineal society makes the son`s house nuclear, or rather separate. This act may or may not simultaneously make his father`s house nuclear. This dimension of behaviour, projecting the residents as living together or as separate (in joint or nuclear residence), has to be investigated further. It is here that the family is seen not just as a noun but as an adjective, comprising actors and agents. (Patel,ed. 2005:23)

Thinking about the actors and agents encompassing the institution family, compulsorily would take a study to the conceptual level. The identity and agency

might probably play a focal role in the understanding of the phenomenon 'family'. And as Patel mentioned, it may also become a central issue that in what all conceptions are the key-terms like joint-family and nuclear family, are being used. The conceptual ambiguity that the terms could provide in the usage in different times, contexts or spaces by different people, might be seen as a major problem with the empirical research even though the data collected at a particular time from a particular area is pertinent in a way. The sociological and social anthropological interventions into 'family' were with a critical mentality towards the studies of the Indological School and Orientalism that based on legal or liturgical texts.[254] But the above mentioned kind of troubles themselves may assert the equal requirement of conceptual analysis based on texts and discourses. And the demand for seeing the 'family' as both noun and adjective at the same time suggests the importance of language and linguistics in realizing the terms and their meanings and usages along with the concepts. Accordingly, the present study may seem meaningful as it turns back to the texts and concepts yearning for a deeper understanding of family.

From the previous quote itself the issue of ego and its importance in conceiving the household and family is obvious. The ideal of joint family entails the discrimination and oppression of women in every term and the ego of a woman are not at all under consideration in the patriarchal family model existed in India, no matter it is joint or nuclear. The patriarchal joint family traces descent and inheritance through male and encourages related men to reside and bring wives in from outside.[255] Thus the system

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[254]See, Patel, 2005, p23
[255] See, Pernau, Ahmad, Reifeld, ed., 2003, p.37

helped to keep up the men`s ego and authority over women. Within the joint family, structural hierarchy is primarily governed by the position and relationship of the individual in the kinship structure and gender.[256] Imtiaz Ahmad says this situation is much more precise in India than those in the West (Pernau, Ahmad, Reifeld, (ed.), 2003, p.40). The consideration of girl children as temporary members and boys as permanent members clarifies the low position women held in the natal patriarchal households. The status of women in the husband's family is according to the dowry she brought, the functional roles and the number of sons she delivered. According to Imtiaz Ahmad the differential value of sons and daughters, and the unshakeable association between marriage and the departure from the natal home is complemented by the notion of intrinsic purity of pre-pubertal girls. And he notes from Kashmir to south India, the custom of worshipping and ritual feeding of virgin girls on special occasions is widespread.   He cites the importance of various religious texts that propagate the moral concepts and hierarchical structures among Hindus, Christians and Muslims. All these three main religions in India seem to be holding almost the same sort of concepts about the woman, making the codes of hierarchy and morality, by their own holy texts.

> For long time, ancient Indian literature was used as information to sustain the
> belief that the joint family was the rule in Indian society. This information was
> of two kinds: (a) pertaining to property in Hindu law, and (b) pertaining to

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[256] Ibid, p.39. Also see, Seymour, 1999:272

certain family rituals such as death rituals for ancestors. Hindu traditional law was not uniform and varied greatly from one part of the country to another.[257]

The exigencies to see the regional differences in the family laws in India show the difficulty in generalizing any structural prevalence. But the misogynistic laws and social codes on 'womanizing the female human beings', propagated by the ancient texts especially like *Smritis*, might seem to be influencing the Indian society even in this era of nuclear family and urbanized life style, with no regional restrictions. Patricia Uberoi`s editorial intervention into the papers in the book '*Family, Kinship and Marriage in India*' (1993), suggests the matrilineal system among Nayars of Kerala might contribute to the search for a universally applicable definition of marriage. The French anthropologist Levi-Strauss has written the same idea seeing the Nayar matrilineal family system on the Malabar coasts of India represent the most consistent systematic and logically extreme case.[258] This is evidential to the fact that the family has been disappointedly patriarchal not only in all most all parts of India but universally in a way.

The studies on family and household, compiled by Saradamoni elaborate the male-centered constitution and character of family in different regions such as Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, and China.[259] Jeanne Illo (Saradamoni,ed., 1992) says, the mixed

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[257] Ibid, p.44

[258] Levi-Strauss, 1985, p.41. He elaborates about some other human societies who restrict the role of conjugal family. For e.g. Among the Masai Chagga tribes in Africa, Boror and other tribes of central Brazil, Muria and other tribes in Assam,India.

[259] Saradamoni, K.,(ed), *Finding the Household: Conceptual and Methodological Issues*, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.,New Delhi, 1992. If we look at the studies on families in different regions, in most cases the sharing of responsibilities was in the stereotypical way in the families, so

cultural heritage that the Philippines, received from the Spanish and American colonial regimes caused a more restricted life for the women. It is quite surprising, as in India, the women enjoyed more egalitarian society in the indigenous culture in Philippines as well. As the British rule produced the kind of Victorian morality which led to the monogamous nuclear family in India the Spanish intervention into the Philippines adulterated the aboriginal practices causing the subordination of women. The increasing sexual inequality was the product of colonial male-centered ideology and it was manifested in the family dynamics and the power relations involved in the family. According to Oakla Cho (Saradamoni,ed., 1992), in Korea in a patrilineal household women had only a low status and they had less access to the resources. Cho suggests that women would have to fight, as the Chinese women did, for the rights for economic resources from each household from related kin groups. This is evidential that in China also women's situations were not different and the women there faced discrimination in the families. Also the study by Katie Curtin shows women had to fight the low status in marital relations in China and how the Communist party supported it and how it was withdrawn when it got Stalinized.[260] The traditional Chinese cosmology of *yin/yang* dualism itself had caused the discrimination between man and woman. According to that philosophy which

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that women got the domestic work and men did the works in public. Studies done on the headship of the family also supported the low status of women as it was the man who headed the families. Women's situations were not different in general and the women faced discrimination in the families. Polygny was encouraged in some places and a woman could be beaten up or ill-treated by her husband and his family. In case of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, the woman was cruelly punished and her family had to pay the fine. A young widow, if she did not remarry, was conferred the title of 'virtuous lady' by the society.

[260] Curtin, Katie. *Women in China*, Pathfinder Press, NY, 1975

dominated all the institutionalization, the *yin*, the female, stood for all things dark, weak and passive and the *yang* ,the male stood for all things bright, strong and active.

Le Thi notes the statement from a fifteenth century Hong Due Royal Code , showing that it gave women in Vietnam, the right to family inheritance after the death of her husband and had the right to use it either for he children or to build her new life .[261] Le Thi asserts this textual influence explaining the Confucian principle of 'three obeyances' such as 'unmarried, she has to obey her father; married, she must obey her husband; and when a widow, obey her son'. This resemble the Indian text the 'Codes of Manu' that traditionally influenced the social and familial set-up and the women`s status by similar verses. The dictum about the protection of the woman, 'the father protects in adolescence; the husband, in the youth: the son, in the age-old' invariably spears into the Confucian ideology that ruled the Vietnamese feudal state. Thus it is noteworthy that there was a relation between the colonial interventions and the change in women`s status in varied Asian countries. Albeit there was not much notable atrocities happened particularly against women in British-colonial India, there is a homogeny visible between the colonial experiences among the Eastern countries in terms of the regulation of the lives of women. At the same time one can see a homogeny in the regulation of the lives of women from the incredible indications of historical transformations in the structure of family in the West as well.

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[261] Saradamoni,ed., 1992

From the ancient times family crises inspired Western sociologists to reflect on the institution and they took the family as such for the research. But the twentieth century research prolonged into the mode of addressing the immense social implications of the family predicaments. Zimmerman says, crises in the family system are not new but recurrent in the cultural history of the West. [262] But he mentions, in all the Western intellectual history, only a few like, Augustus, Jerome, Theodora and Milton have really approached the many facets of the recurring problem. And also it is remarkable that just like the Eastern countries, in the West also the studies were taking the family as such, in the beginning .But the analysis of the changing trends grew up rapidly in the West than in the East. There are denigrations on the family studies in the East for being just historical or anthropological descriptions. Those studies give relevant information but don't provide any trends as they haven't presumed the changes during time.[263]

Wide ranges of critiques on modern conjugal family have emerged in contemporary Western societies showing it as an oppressive bankrupt institution. Even in the twelfth century there was in fact a very strong antimarriage current in the West and women were not baby-making machines and property of men at that time.[264] 'If women had souls', was no longer a question at that time as the women intellectuals strengthened the liberation of female human beings. Then the dominance of

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[262] Zimmerman, 1953. In Patel,ed., 2005. p.51
[263] See the discussion from the different papers in Patel,ed., 2005
[264] Le Goff, Jacques. *Intellectuals in the Middle Ages,* Trans. Teresa Lavander Fagan, Blackwell Publishers, USA, 1993, p.39

rationality in the industrial and scientific revolution subordinated women as objects of irrationality. The recent decade of the 1960s stood for a key moment of change in family values and sexual mores (Faith Robertson, 1996). Revolution on relationship was a sound movement both in academic and general realms. To get at least a diminutive picture of Western families, it would be rousing to understand some points on the family leanings in the United States, Russia and Europe along with a little historical account from the ancient period.

During its three thousand years of written historical experience, the Western society witnessed a great deal of documentation of family structures as well. According to Zimmerman the academic consideration of marriage and family that have arisen at present should be seen as a contemporary manifestation of a recurring historical fact. If we look at the history of the regions, what we call by the term West, the starting would be in Greece. In the formative stages of Greek civilization we have the epic works of Homer and Hesiod which directly concern family philosophy.[265] After some centuries the famous philosophical era in which Socrates, Plato and Aristotle were born, also produced plentiful of family philosophy. Plato called for the abolition of marriage and family through his book Republic. During third century B.C., Plato put forward the model of a state in which there is no private property right and thus not any family concept. Plato`s communism suggested two ways for the abolition of the family. One is the prohibition of private property in the form of house or land or money, even to the rulers who are supposed to live in the barracks and eat on the common table and the second is the obliteration of a permanent

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[265] Zimmerman, 1953. In Patel,ed., 2005. p.52,53

monogamous sexual relation and establishment of regulated breeding at the behest of the rulers of the state, for the purpose of securing the best possible offspring. It is emphatically notable in the Greek thought that Aristotle criticized Plato's communism on the ground that it would not in fact produce the unity desired. Plato`s idiosyncratic idea of demolition of family might appear to be in favour of women, seeing that he demands equal education and status for women in the service of the state. He blames that the women's resources are gone astray in the state service because of their domesticated situation.

After first century A.D. of the Graeco-Roman civilization, Zimmerman`s survey views, in the middle of the power of Christ church very little family nature was discussed except some anti-familial implications in some texts like '*Diephosophist*' and 'Attic Nights'.[266] But, the fourth and fifth century A.D.witnessed creative questioning of family literature. He mentions Saint Jerome and John Milton as significant in the people who have given changing notions of the family ideas, and goes on surveying the Renaissance and Reformation periods leading to the modern era. The attack on Jerome's family sociology by Geoffrey Chaucer around the 'Prologue to the Wife of Bath' gives the comment upon the topic of the virtue of a wife, during that time.[267] It was Shakespeare's play 'Trolius and Cressida', which suffered another discussion. By going through such a survey, eventually we would find the family conceptions through history were becoming gender sensitive only

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[266] Ibid.
[267] Chaucer`s works were during 1400 A.D.

during recent centuries. This would be further evident as we go on to take a look at the studies in different regions in the west as well.

In the United States, several sociologists have shown interest in studying the family.[268] Family changes were occurring in a vast manner and especially since about 1900, are rather well documented, as regards the basic structural and functional aspects (Ogburn and Nimkoff, 1955; Ogburn and Tibbetts, 1933).[269] Some studies show that the social change in the USA with the industrial upheaval affected the structure and nature of the family system too. It is also visible from the fact that, in 1950 about 95 percent of married couples occupied separate residences. [270]

> In the West, and especially in United States, the extended family with its emphasis on kin has been largely replaced during the past two centuries or so by the small, independent family revolving mainly around the marital pair and their offspring. In every society, there are family of procreation (the family which ego forms) and family of orientation (the family in which ego grows up), but the crucial question is the nature, number and closeness of ties, reflecting the distribution of emphasis, whether on the blood ties or the marital ties. This change in the west from a predominantly consanguineous family system to a conjugal system is associated with the transformation of society from an agricultural to an industrial economy.[271]

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[268] Khatri, 1961. In Patel, ed. 2005. p.64
[269] See Nimkoff, 1959, in Patel, ed. 2005. p.72
[270] Patel, ed., 2005. See p.71

[271] See ibid.

The phases of an individual's life and the two kinds of families that she/he would have to experience were not much discussed. The problems of ego and the nature in which it affects one's family relations are some serious topics drawn into family studies. It is problematic to determine which one of the blood and marital ties is functioning more strongly. This is more complicated as the power structures may conflict with the individual egos. The thought in this rout might make a feeling that even the concept of family itself was a problem. May be this is why the society suffered drastic change in past decades along with a stunning advocacy on the drink-of-water theory of sex relations. This theory has challenged the desirability and utility of family and marital sex monopolistic ideals in the US.[272] Zimmerman observes, the married couples underwent severe social experiences and twentieth century witnessed high number of the divorces. He adds, there are studies which showed the divorces tend to be a psychosomatic shock and that would reduce the life expectancy, alter the personality, increase the tendency to suicide and mental disease and increase juvenile delinquency rates among children. These all factors necessarily have affected the family patterns and functions in the United States over time. Maegaret Mead has extensively written on the issues of male-female construction, marriage, divorce and child upbringing etc. as a cultural anthropologist in the US.[273]

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[272] Zimmerman, 1953. In Patel,ed., 2005, p.52

[273] Mead, Margaret. *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, William Morrow, New York, 1935
Mead, Margaret., *Male and Female*, Hyper Collins Publishers Inc. New York, 1949

It may be pertinent to think of a position about it, as the kinds of family problems need some solution, but striking is the radical strategy that Russia took after 1917 revolution.

> …Russia attempted to destroy its domestic system by legal elimination of the five basic mutual family monopolistic powers –those between husband and wife, parent and child, sibling and sibling, family and kin, and inner members as against the outside world of strangers. The inner core of the family – relations between husband and wife and parent and child – was reduced to the status of private, momentary, voluntaristic skeleton. The one basic hitherto inviolable index of all family life – incest- was redefined so that a person was legally prohibited only from sex relations with parent or sibling.[274]

In Russia, Zimmerman says, this kind of an attempt at drastic family remodeling and interdiction lasted about a generation. But, the Soviet family law was totally inverted by 1944, so that even a divorce has now become more difficult to obtain than in any other time in Western History. This illustrates that the huge changes took place in almost every decade in the family patterns and it was not actually just growing loose. Alternate period's observed the ups and downs in the structure of family in terms of its rigidity.

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[274] Zimmerman, 1953. In Patel,ed., 2005, p.51

In Europe considerable amount of studies were done on family out of the interdisciplinary efforts of social history, social philosophy, social anthropology and then cultural anthropology and the changing trends have been analyzed vigorously. But, Mary S. Hartman holds a critic's mind by saying that the proponents of social history and its several offspring- especially family and women`s history- might nonetheless have been expected to embrace the discovery of the aberrant family-formation pattern.[275] Louise Tilly also explains why neither of those then-emerging subfields made a priority of tracking just the demographic, household economics and sentiments.[276] Anyway she observes many of the early practitioners of women`s history have analyzed family as 'a central institution of women`s oppression'. Hartman has given stunning elaboration about the riddle of Western family pattern, beginning with the classical feudal Europe. Her investigation into the women`s situations in the Western households is also equally striking.

The developments during late sixteenth century in England started from the clothing of women. Hartman observes, the incidents of women wearing men`s cloths in 1570s was a rather new one, recognizable as one of many reactions to domestic arrangements that were bringing women's and men's lives ever closer together and prompting a new unease about shifting boundaries between the sexes. The controversy of cross-dressing was linked to a debate between women's detractors

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[275] Hartman, Mary S., *The Household and the Making of History,* Cambridge University Press, U.K, 2004. See , p.8

[276] Ibid. p.8-9. And also see, Louise A. Tilly, "Women`s History and Family History : Fruitful Collaboration or Missed Connection?" *Journal of Family History*12, No.1-3 (1987):303-15

and defenders that had long been featured in courtly features in the Continent. [277]
The distinctive family regime and the historically grounded gender hierarchy were
being questioned in many ways starting from the cross-dressing. A great amount of
recalcitrant literature on the 'real behaviour' concepts on man and woman has been
appearing from this period which caused much influence in the European society in
the next centuries as well.

According to Gunilla-Friederike Budde, it was only very gradually the development
of the 'modern European family' took its course.[278] Budde reminds about the
limitations to sketch the family conceptions and its shifts because of the traditional
differences they hold according to class, social group and cultural area. At the end of
eighteenth century the wake of industrial capitalism replaced the agrarian economy
and this caused great social change including that in family. Budde says, the concept
of family shaped by the Aristotelian *oika,* as a location where economic and personal
elements were fused, experienced a shift that affected its very core during the
industrialism. Thus the dawn of the modern European family could be seen as
bourgeois phenomenon. Baron von Knigge, demonstrated his almost seismographic
feeling for social change earlier in 1788 and described family in its increasing
privatization. 'The members of the same family inclined to harmony and attached to
one another by sharing similar organization, the same upbringing and joint interests,

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[277] See Ibid.,pp.202-207
[278] See, Pernau, Ahmad, Reifeld, (ed.), 2003, p.64

feel for one another what they do not feel for strangers, and the stronger this circle becomes, the more strange other people appear to them (Knigge,1977 (1788))'.[279]

In rural Europe the economic form of large household family known as 'whole house' even including family servants, persisted for long time. Apart from England, Europe was mainly characterized by agrarianism until well into the second half of nineteenth century.[280] The preponderance was peasant households that mainly produced to cover their own needs and only a few surpluses were bartered. They made every tools and clothing on their own. But these factors don't support any agrarian romanticism that the different generations in the 'three generation households' lived and worked together in communal harmony under one roof. There were tensions between the family members especially between different generations which might have had seeds for the social changes.   Buddhe observes, on the threshold between early modern and modern period, a fundamental transition occurred which affected the size, composition, function and distribution of power within the more or less closed form of community.[281]   The three generation household -'whole house', with the hierarchically disciplined patriarchal system underwent transformations during industrialization and urbanization and this caused the grounds of the nuclear family.

> The gender-specific division of labour in peasant families was determined, on
> one hand, by the criteria of proximity to the house and the social regulation of

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[279] Ibid.
[280] Ibid.,p.65
[281] Ibid.

care for small children. On the other hand, it was also decided by the economic significance of a particular task and –not insignificantly- by the power relations between men and women. The farmer`s wife had considerable areas of authority within the peasant household, but had to endure almost total discrimination against women in the strongly male-dominated locations of public life in the village…………………………………………………….

In contrast to the peasant family, the typical 'home-workers' family did not distinguish strictly between the field of work of the woman and that of the man. For hardwork at the loom, spinning or toy manufacture, it was less of gender and more of immediate practicalities of everyday life that decided which parent would look after the needs of the smallest children. [282]

Buddhe thinks, with all these opinions, the 'family cooperation' has something to do with the conditions under which the people live. The marriages of that time among the rural families were 'marriages of convenience', arranged by the families. As the young people knew about the economic factors they preferred this marriage system. It was in the modern family only people started to do marriages funded on affection. A strongly endogamous pattern determined European marriage pattern across class boundaries.[283] And there was a move to reduce the number of children and this attached some progress with the role of motherhood by narrowing women tasks and the perspectives with regards to the so-called 'feminine vocation'. The concepts of the 'natural' duties of women on childcare and housekeeping that pervaded everywhere in the world was corrected in little by little.

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[282] Ibid., p.67
[283] Ibid., p.69

In Europe it was during the emergence of the modern family the perspectives on the 'characteristics of the sexes' were questioned in the family. 'The active rational man and the passive emotional woman'- conceptions were interrogated deeply. The definition of the private as the feminine and the public as the masculine was no more discernible. The special separation of spheres of work prevailed earlier ended as more people started to live in the urban areas working with industries. It is an astonishing fact that, the three- generation family still continued as a place for the mothers, sisters, aunts for their confinement. The orphaned children of relatives were taken there, needy widows were housed there and even growing daughters were taken there for marriage preparations.[284] Thus family rituals, customs and idioms were revived and the more or less regular contact with the extended family was maintained. Like in India, in Europe as well, there was the belief that the female family members were expected to endeavor at preserving the sense of family.

In the twentieth century more families lived in the cities and considerable changes happened in the family concept also. The structure of family was affected immensely after the two world wars due to the labour shortage. Women had to work and the traditional family model didn`t sustain then.  The self confidence and independence of women`s lives gave rise even to women headed families. Increasing number of divorces initiated by women and fatherless families were the features of this time period. Buddhe finds a backlash in the Western Europe, as the result of the 1950

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[284] Ibid., p.72

'money miracle' that made women again becoming dependent wives and mothers.[285] The recuperation of this widely accepted model and normative framework laid down roles of men and women and women were still to do the 'natural' work at home. Even the Eastern Europe, where the socialist ideas were prominent, the family responsibility meant primarily female responsibility. It was about 1960, a counter-model of family emerged in Europe with the trenchant feminist interventions.

> The protagonist of women`s movement saw the family model that had emerged that in the nineteenth century –with its rigid, gender-specific division of tasks- as a major cause of their subordinate and restricted social position. New life styles outside the traditional family model of mother, father and child were proposed and tried out. The demand for individual happiness, now for the first time being made by women too, heightened the expectations they placed in relationships- as a partnership- in professional fulfillment and generally in personal choice (Frevert, 1986, pp.272f.).[286]

And the possibilities of living outside the family structure or without a family also started being attempted then. The cohabitation outside marriage- before, after or as a substitute for marriage- had by then achieved a high degree of normality.[287] The ideas of 'new fathers' were brought up for further practicability of child care and the division of family task was restructured. These moves might be as tough as the twenty first century would demand them in high degrees due to the increasing

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[285] Ibid., p. 75-76
[286] Ibid., p.77
[287] Ibid.,p.78

uncertainty and complexity. Mary S. Hartman calls the contemporary family to be ever more fragile entities, ceaselessly reacting to change generated outside their porous boundaries.[288]

Summary

Gender proves to be a very capable and inevitable category of analysis for the study of the conceptualization and institutionalization of family. Family, being a cluster of men and women in kinship, seems to be exercising much hierarchy everywhere in the world. The plethora of theorizations on gender and its recent intervention into the concept and practice of family, illustrates the androcentric nature household and family, as a common living place for the male and female human beings in different kinds of relationships. The construction of family discriminates women, no matter to which class, caste/ race/ nation/ ethnicity the family belongs to. From the review of literature done in this section, it is also derived that gendering process might be finding agencies such as religion, culture and language.

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[288] Hartman, Mary S., *The Household and the Making of History,* Cambridge University Press, U.K, 2004. See , p.8