Chapter 1

Women, Family, Market and Empowerment- An Analytical Understanding

Introduction:

According to the feminist historian Chakravarti (2009) the outlook of women’s studies has been changed. Previously, scholars like Atlekar (1938) focused on the framework of ‘status of women’ related to property rights, marriage age, enforced widowhood, the participation of women in rituals and other related matters. The emphasis was on the substantive question on women’s subordination and on the factors that determine their coercion. Alternatively, policy makers and political leaders are arguing that position of women in society has been changed and they are empowered due to positive outlook of the Indian state towards women and as well as implementation of certain women friendly public policies in society. In each society, members of society represent an ideal consciously or unconsciously. The individual is the external expression of an ideal to be embodied. In India, we have multiplicity of languages, customs and cultural practices, and hierarchy based on class and caste, and varieties of religions and sects. Therefore, it is not easy to draw immense complexities and heterogeneities together and weave them into a pattern. In consequence, several conflicts and contradictions are prevailing within Indian societal structure. Combinations of all such conflicts and contradictions constitute the societal structure of the nation. It is also moving Therefore, to understand status of a particular group of individuals (here working women) within society, we have to examine the effects of all social processes which co-exist within society and which are dynamic in nature. Among such processes we have economic, gender, political, legal, cultural and so on other processes.

Family is the primary institution of society that helps to socialize an individual within society. That is why; one needs to make a detail study on the liaison between family and society in order to understand the position of women within Indian society.

Family is a web of relationships between the members of family. Its activities of production, reproduction and providing residence in an atmosphere of emotional and affectionate care that cannot be fulfilled by any other institution (Desai and Thakkar
However, family is such a site where security, care, consensus, tension and conflict all co-exist. The family can be formed by various combinations of relationships. Census authority uses household as residential unit in which members generally live, cook and dine together, rear the young and/or care for the old (Desai and Thakkar 2001). Family is a relationship which has been assigned a pattern of expected behaviour amongst the members both by social cultural tradition and law in spite of remaining a residential unit as household. Therefore, family is an agency for socialization of members to accept and transmit the values and the ideology of the descent system.

Like the family, market is such an institution of society whose relevance in the daily life of an individual cannot be ignored. Though family is an important site of society – particularly the private domain of the society, the significance of market in a modern society cannot be ignored. Both family and market shape one’s life. They determine how an individual behaves and learns and works and communicates. In the recent time when world is becoming more and more integrated, the relevance of such institutions of a society is also altering. Rather, this relevance of family and market are quite complementary in nature on life of each male and female member of society in an overdetermined manner.

In Indian context, an ideal women is mother first and mother last (CW, Vol-8). Women’s duties as good daughters, good wives and good mothers are well defined in Indian patriarchal society. Wifehood and motherhood are accepted as pivotal roles for women. Women need not pursue any specialized discipline for knowledge, art and profession (Desai and Thakkar 2001). Women now no longer only run household, rear children, care for aged and sick member of the family, perform economic and non-economic activities within families, but also are to be seen at work in offices, factories and firms. But still Indian society in general devalues women’s work outside their families. “Women’s economic status is linked to their family’s economic status”, and “men are bread winners, so they and not women are heads of the household” (Desai and Thakkar 2001). As the economic scenario is changing, women’s lives are also changing. The scenario in women’s employment has thrown up new challenges of late in the Indian society. Though working women in urban and high income group are vocal, but women belonging to rural and low income groups are engaged in the battle of their daily survival. It is also very difficult to present a cohesive picture of women and works. Different social processes
affect different groups of women differently. Working women belong to different groups and are supposed to play different functions and hold different positions within family under this changing scenario.

In Hinduism ideal family is a place of coexistence of both ‘consensus and conflict’ (Sen 1994) where women experience security and care and also suffer from a lot of tensions. A woman’s entire life is spent in maintaining and sustaining the family physically, emotionally and psychologically (Desai and Thakkar 2001). Among the various family structures, two major forms of family system are matrineal and patrineal family. Each family system has its own class, gender, cultural, political and legal processes that jointly determine the status of working women within family. How these overdetermined effects of social processes determine status of empowerment of women is our prime concern. Moreover, in recent time, some functions of family are now performed by some other institutions of society, like state, market, etc. As a consequence, overdetermined effects of social processes that are prevailing within such institutions are also assumed to exert deep influence to empower (working) women. Under current socio-economic changes, market forces, consumerism and environment degradation, social outlook, ideal and function of family all are getting transformed and they are also facing new challenges. State is yet hesitate to enter into matter of family but wants the individual family to help its member in a crisis situation. Our matter of concern is also to see whether family and market are extending their helping hand towards fair sex to be empowered or want to keep them oppressed keeping previous ideologies? Holding such matter in our mind we want to categorize the working women who perform their working activities both inside and outside the family.

In this chapter we therefore, discuss the characteristics and major functions of family in Section 1 and 2. Section 3 analyses the liaison between society and family and how such liaison executes the concepts of masculinity and femininity. Subsequently Section 4 and Section 5 discuss the changes in the function of family and status of women in both family and market respectively. Section 6 will describes the different concepts of women empowerment Lastly, Section 7 tries to categorize women in the light of over-deterministic approach and explore the effects of the liaison between two relevant institution of society, i.e.; family and market on women’s life from the perspective of over-deterministic approach.
1.1 Family:

Basic characteristics of Family:

Family must occupy several crucial characteristics that help it to isolate from other institutions of society. By family here our reference is for a heterosexual family and living space as is the case under the given norms defined by patriarchy. Following Sharma (1989), the essential characteristics of family can be represented as follows:

i) Permanent relationship among the members of the family: Within the family, there must be a permanent relation of some kind between male and female member of the family. This relationship must have some degree of permanency in all cultures in order to perform the basic functions of families.

ii) Permanent sexual relationship: One essential objective of family is the establishment of permanent sexual relationships. Without marital relationship there can be no family in spite of having several relations. One of the crucial functions of family is upbringing of children which can be expected only when there are permanent conjugal relations.

iii) Existence of blood relations: Another necessary characteristic of the family is that members must have blood relationship among themselves. The members of the family are generally the descendants of the same ancestors.

iv) Common habitation: Generally all the members of a family live in one residence. Otherwise, if the members of a family reside at different places, it would be difficult to call them a family even though they have blood and other relationship.

v) Financial provision for the sustenance of the member: Family must provide financial provision for the upkeep of its members, senior folk, children, women and old. Some members earn and arrange sustenance for other members. In this way members of the family are bound in the ties of duties and rights. Some members earn and others do the domestic chores. This distribution of duties varies in different culture. This is a social division of labour within family based generally on the patriarchal gender processes in a heterosexual family space.
Therefore, in gross we can conclude that family is a group of individuals in which men and women have the permanent sex relationships between them as husband (male) and wife (female – not male), which is distinguished by a name, in which there is adequate financial provision for the sustenance of its members, in which there is attachment of blood relation among the members and who live in a common habitat (Sharma 1989).

1.2 Major functions of a Family:

Sociologist Ogburn (1950) has classified the functions of family differently. Hindu scriptures also defined various function of family (Sharma 1989). Taking clues from the different sources (Sharma989; Desai 2009; MacIver 1949), we can summarize the major functions of a typical heterosexual family as follows:

i) **Reproduction**: According to the Hindu scriptures procreation is the main function of the family. In most human societies of the world the child is believed to be the nucleus of the family. Procreation perpetuates the family. Hindu scriptures permit a second marriage if there is no issue from the first wife. In the rituals of Hindu marriage the groom says to his bride that he accepts her in order to obtain good progeny.

ii) **Regulate and gratify sexual needs**: One of the primary objectives of the family is to regulate and gratify sexual needs. In Hindu scriptures, Manu and Vatsyayan accepted that sexual satisfaction besides reproduction as the main aim of family. From primitive to modern age, it is held that non-satisfaction of sexual needs accelerate the process of disintegration of family.

iii) **Economic function**: A family performs many economic functions. Within family, the work is divided among the members of the family according to their sex, age, status and role. In most human societies the male members generally go out to perform outdoor jobs. The family is the centre of economic activities, consumption, etc. Cooking, housing and clothing are indispensable to the existence of human life. Members of the family make arrangements for an income in an effort to fulfill the needs of all family members. The women generally do the domestic chores while the children and senior folk assist women in their domestic chores.

In addition, family is the primary judge of what property an individual member shall receive, and who shall look after the property and how, and also, who will take other
important decisions related to economic matters. Family is supposed to handle the problem of a member arising out of any socio-economic crisis in which women are in general to play the role of care givers.

iv) **Psychological function**: An individual receives psychological feelings (like affection, sympathy, love, etc) from his/her family. According to Burgess and Lock (1960) “mutual affection is becoming the essential basis of marriage and the family”. The relations between man and woman in the family are not exclusively physical. Profound love, affection and emotional attachment for each other generate what is said to be a healthy space of family of a husband and wife. Male and female by working together in the family and by sharing each other’s joys and sorrows provide in general the continuous social reproduction of the family space (Sharma 1989). This affection is also said to be crucial for the development of the child’s personality.

v) **Protection and care of the children and old**: Children and old members of a family are considered the most helpless and weak members of a family. Therefore, protection and care of them is a necessary function of the family. And this must be performed by the women as mother and main care-givers in the family.

vi) **Social function**: Family is the fundamental and primary unit of society. Therefore, it should perform several social functions. Family imparts learning to the individual on all those matters whereby she/he can be an ideal member of the society. Member of society follows several norms, etiquettes, conducts and thoughts to run the society. Family is the primary unit of society through which social control can be exercised over the individuals. It also tries to maintain the social heritage and hand it over to the future generation. In consequence the social customs, norms, ideologies are transmitted continuously from one generation to the next.

vii) **Cultural function**: A family imparts its learning to the members according to the social culture, so that they learn to live and to behave in accordance with their culture. Family keeps the culture of society alive.

viii) **Religious function**: In ancient Hindu system the main function of the family was the fulfillment of religious duty. Hindu scriptures considered family as the basis of the fulfillment of these duties. The literal meaning of the Hindi equivalent of the word wife (patni) means the woman who accompanies the man in the performance of religious
rituals, which were considered incomplete in the absence of the wife. However, in recent time the religious activities of the family have been materially reduced particularly in urban metropolis (Sharma 1989).

1.3 Society and Family:

*Society is a web of social relationships and family is the fundamental and primary unit of society. Society can never remain static site. It undergoes constant variation. This social change is used to describe variations of any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interactions or social organization.* Whenever one finds that a large number of persons is engaged in activities that differ from those in which their immediate forefathers were engaged in some time before, one finds a social change (MacIver and Page 1949). This apparent alteration in the mutual behaviour between individuals commence from family. Hence change in society has a strong influence on the outlook of family.

Family is one of the most important agencies or instruments of social control. Social control is the control of society over the individual. It creates those conditions in which man and woman can be socialized (Sharma 1989). This differs from state control. Social control is a self control. It keeps on changing in accordance with the changes in society. Family is the first place where an individual is socialized. It is in the family that individual learns the various methods of living, behaviour, conversation, etc. Each family has some laws/conventions which every member has to obey. As a general rule, obedience of these rules is enforced lovingly and effort is made to make the individual understand them but sometimes recourse by way of punishment/coercion becomes essential. In this way, the individual learns to respect public opinion and to be controlled by it. In this way the communal ideals, values and thoughts exercise their influence and control upon him/her. This control of the family over the individual is not restricted within the family but is exercised even outside its precincts. In this way, the family has control over an individual not merely in his/her childhood but from his/her infancy to his senility.

The various aspects of social life are being continually transformed due to the effects of dynamic social changes always. The form of family, marriage, state, religion, culture, education system, and economic and social structures are continually changing and transforming, as a result of which, a change occurs in the life of the individual and subsequently in his/her relation with others (Sharma 1989). There is always conflict and
contradiction in these changes which mutually affect each other viz. family space, social system of marriage, status of religion within family, educational attainment of family members, status of old in a family, social upbringing of children and also the sex-gender relationship within a family including family-based social division of labour within a family. As we have already noted a family is the primary unit of society through which society can exert its control on individuals, the result of social change can be well understood and realized by studying the history of the objectives, structure, forms, importance and function, etc of the family from the early past to the present day.

Basically within the family we have some members who are female and remaining are males. Over the centuries, sexual difference has been interpreted variously. Since men and women possess different genitalia, it was assumed that they are different in all other respect as well. In reality, two sexes become two worlds that are mutually exclusive. Female is conceived as other viz. not male. It is the typical binary construction of gender based on physical characteristics and given social norms guided by patriarchy. Therefore, one is forced to believe that since women and men are so dissimilar and possess perfectly opposite qualities (i.e. man are more powerful than woman, or that women are naturally kinder than men), there are only two options available: either men and women have to learn to see themselves as a complementary pair; or they have to accept that a war of the sexes is inevitable (Geetha 2012). Idea of ‘complementary’ assures women’s role as homemaker and keeper of social and biological reproductive tasks whereas men’s role in the world is mostly outside the home- in the market which make him head of the family. Such notion discredits the arguments for women’s equal rights. The other idea i.e.; the idea of war has a different resonance. This idea claims that men are inherently dominating, brutish and desire to control and subdue women. Therefore women must build a world that is free and independent of men’s control, subjugation and/or coercion (Geetha 2012). Sexual differences are complex and varied. Masculine and feminine modes of behaviour are relevant in as far as they reflect social expectations. Men and women enact different roles, because societies where we live in expect them to act in the ways and reward them if they do, punishes them if they do not. Ideas of masculine and feminine virtues are not fictions. They are real and affect human’s life in very fundamental ways. Human beings do not merely react to strictures; they also respond, invent and subvert rules. Historical explanations of masculinity and femininity are diverse. Their meanings and significance are myriad, dependent on time and place, influenced by social change. Societal thought
and action construct the meanings and significance of gender ideology. Therefore, we have to observe how the effects of social change affect the differences in gender attitude within the family.

In his book *The origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, Engels (1884) suggests that early human societies were egalitarian. There existed a simple and functional division of labour, ‘a pure and simple outgrowth of nature’, between male and female. Men haunted, fished, provided the raw materials for food and made the tools necessary to carry out these tasks. Women cared for the house, prepared food, clothing and cared for children. ‘Each was master in his or her own field of activity; the men in the forest, the women in the house... The household was communistic, comprising several and often many families. Whatever was produced and used in common was common property...the administration of the household entrusted to the women was just as much a public.’ (Engels 1884) Women were at the centre of the communistic household. Sexual relationships within the family were freer than we know them now. The men were visitors who could be asked to leave when the women did not want them. Things changed when nomadic human communities settled in one place for a long time. Once they commenced living in a stable environment, they learnt to grow wealth, store the food items and produce surplus foods. They had now a range of goods at their disposal. Once the production of these goods accelerated, the communistic nature of society altered. Fights between individual started. This created what Engels (1884) called the ‘the first great division of society into two classes’: masters and slaves, the exploiters and the exploited (Geetha 2012). The relationship between men and women changed. Domestic work and the household where women had sole authority over men and the group in general, lost its significance. ‘The administration of the household lost its public character...It became a private service. The wife became the first domestic servant, pushed out of the participation in social production’ (Engels 1884). The growing significance of private property included not only land, animals and slaves; soon it came to include women as well. Men wanted to own women, so that they could gain control over the children who became a source of income in future. When women lost their exalted status in the family, mother-right (i.e. inheriting through mother) too gradually disappeared. Over a period of time, children learnt to identify their descent and inheritance through their fathers. Engels (1884) characterizes the transformation of women into property-less and the disappearance of mother right as the ‘world-historical defeat of the female sex’. Concept of masculinity
and femininity emerged. We therefore found that masculinity and femininity are not aspect of biology or physiology. Neither are they god-given. These aspects are parts of the system of social thought, construction and action which human beings have constructed over centuries within society.

The concept of gender has been shaped by the economic and political power, social dominance and cultural authority. Marxist thought believes that meaning of gender is shaped by the two interlinked material processes: production and reproduction. Production comprises all those tasks and activities performed by members of society to secure their basic needs whereas reproduction refers to the all tasks of bringing children into this world and raising them to adjust to and accept the world where they grow up. These two processes are needed for survival of human being. The sphere of reproduction is the family which efficiently organizes daily living and thereby enables production to go on. However, mode of production (that what is being produced, how it is produced and who produces it) is not static. It changes over time. Women are assigned two types of role in the mode of production. First of all, by giving birth they produce children who go to occupy their appointed roles in production process. Secondly, women sustain relationships, family unity, raise children, and socialize them into accepting their roles in production process and also take care of their husbands and old in the family (Geetha 2012). They do this in many different ways. One of the most effective forms of socialization happens through culture and religion. Women are the protectors of family rituals and religious code. There is another concept which is related to production and reproduction-i.e.; relation of production and reproduction. As per Marxist thought relation in production is of two types: those who control economic resources exercise power and authority over those who do not possess anything but their labour power. Relation of production is determined by different factors like political factor, legal factor, cultural and religious factors. Likewise relation of reproduction is also affected by several factors. There exist also some emotional ties that come from ideology of love. That was why such types of relation are more resilient and stable than relationships of production. Both relationship of production and relationship of reproduction are interrelated and subject to change. Geetha (2012) explained that modes of production are more intractable to change. But family forms change slowly and incrementally. Since it is the site of generational and emotional ties, it has a tendency towards continuity and conservation. Marxists view the human agency as a site for struggle for a better life, and it fails to ensure a better life for
women within family. Engels (1884) opined that the historical defeat of the female sex and emergence of patriarchy led to a devaluing of female tasks, roles and responsibilities, and a consequent valorization of male roles and functions. He suggests ‘the emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require their attention only to a minor degree’.

However, Engel’s theory of gender has several criticisms. Engel believes that reproductive tasks are something pure and simple outgrowth of nature and subordination of women will end only when women enter into social production. Mitchell (1971) argues in her essays, ‘Women: The Long Revolution’ that sphere of reproduction may change – not merely due to changes in production, but in response to change in its own inner logic. Accepting the theoretical viability of the broad Marxist framework some critics argue that in the literal sense Nature intended women to be mother, but reproductive tasks including cooking, cleaning, furnishing, caring, educating children and overall maintenance of family are more than the physical act of giving birth (Geetha 2012). Apart from that not only men, women shared the production tasks with men in the past as well as in the present. Actually studies showed that reproduction itself is a heterogeneous category and its formation varies along the different societies and communities. Sexual division of labour is historical but not natural. Therefore, there are various differing descriptions and interpretations of the evolution of the conditions of women. History proves decisive as different cultures weighted reproduction differently.

Levi-Strauss (1969) and Meillassoux (1981) criticized Engel’s interpretation of the emergence of patriarchy. They argue patriarchy emerge not due to men’s control over production. Rather it is their control over reproduction. Women first came to be controlled by men through an exchange process between different communities. They are socially exchanged as ‘gifts’, for marriage and for ritual purposes. They further argue that the social exchange of women happened at a time when human society was in a state of transition. During the transitional period, the relationship between men and women came to be regulated. Social and cultural taboos dictate the pattern of male–female relationships, as a result of which women remain deprived from their autonomy of making free choice
and women became the object of exchange. This process of social exchange became the basis for coercion over women. Being an object of the process of social exchange they not only lost access to their bodies and sexuality, but their role got reduced to their reproductive tasks. Hence, Engel’s prescription regarding women’s subordination requires rethinking. Levi-Strauss (1969) and Meillassoux (1981) also suggest that men had invented rape as a way of keeping women under control. Owing to the fight and skirmishes between social groups over scarce resources, numerous male members of society died. To compensate the loss of men’s life, the victors forced women from the other side to live with them and bear children. In this way, rape became a weapon to force women into child bearing and to acknowledge and demand male protection. Followers of the same argument address a new concept: patriarchy, or rule by father. They seem patriarchy was seen as a system which existed alongside system of economic exploitation, organizing male control over female sexuality and sphere of reproduction. Geetha (2012) suggests that all these salient features of patriarchy exercised in the interest of male power and gradually got institutionalized at several levels - work, culture, custom, religion and education. Patriarchy thus pre-dated the coming of private property.

However, it is Juliet Mitchell who prescribed that socialization is a crucial component of experience of reproduction. The family does not perform its socializing functions in isolation. This function is deeply attached with religion and culture, community life and customs. Reproduction may change—not merely due to changes in production, but in response to changes in its own inner logic. These changes in inner logic affect gender relationships and redefines norms of masculinity and femininity. ‘The liberation of women can only be achieved if all structures in which they are integrated are transformed. A modification of any of them can be offset by a reinforcement of another, so that a mere permutation of the form of exploitation is achieved’ (Mitchell 1971). Summing-up Mitchell’s outlook, it is clear that though economic liberation of women is central to her total liberation, but this does not establish Engel’s imagination that entry of women into production alone would free them.

Continuing this analysis how changes in society and family affect women’s place in society, we must recall the work of Lerner (1986). Lerner tries to judge Engel’s formulation about women’s liberation in the light of evidence from ancient societies in her book ‘The Creation of Patriarchy’. She also provided the insights of theory of patriarchy -
a rule of father. She accounts that men’s appropriation of women’s sexual and reproductive capacity responsible for subordination of women in society. Such type of appropriation created the basis for the control of their offspring as well as the private property. Later as agriculture spread and kingdoms came to be established, law and legal strictures were invented to perpetuate the patriarchal family system. As men wielded over the mode of production, women could only get what they desired through the sexual ties they had with men. She also shows that women continued to be venerated and worshipped for their creative and fertile power. Still they failed to transcend their sexually and economically disadvantaged situation as patriarchal system systemically excluded them from education and to different sorts of knowledge. Her study has proved influential, for it was one of the first to link historical information with theoretical arguments.

On the other hand E.V. Ramasamy Periyar (as cited in Geetha and Rajadurai 2000), following Engels, argues that after keeping his right to private property, man took woman as a wife into household. This enabled him both to enlist her service to protect his property and supply him with progeny, and to lay exclusive sexual claims to her person. Chaste wifehood became a norm, and motherhood an ideal and virtue. After that Brahmins invented fictions of heaven and hell that came to take hold of the Hindu male imagination. All these efforts was reified by the institution of marriage. Marriage regulates and disciplines women’s familial and reproductive labour, even as it actively denies their desires and rights to a self-respecting life of their choice. Rather marriage helps in restoring men’s access to productive resources and political authority. He advised that women should re-think their attitudes to love, marriage and motherhood.

Following the same tune noted historian Chakravarty (1993) makes arguments in her seminal essay ‘Conceptualising Brahminical Patriarchy in Early India’ that gradual emergence of hierarchical caste and property order and its consolidation marked a distinctive shift in social attitudes to women. ‘Women are regarded as gateways - literally points of entrance to the caste system’. The lower caste male whose sexuality is a threat to upper caste purity has to be institutionally prevented from having sexual access to women of their higher caste, so women must be carefully guarded. The guarding of women was secured through a mixture of coercion and consent. Coercion exercised through her husband, the King’s laws and the priest’s dictums, whereas she consented to be her own moral guard. She too thought that chastity was the most prized virtue for her. It is an ethic,
her dharma, something that she should strive to sustain. Chakravarty (2009) indicates that femininity in Indian context may be understood as an ethic that women had to practice. If they do not, they fail to achieve transcendence, they remain locked in their low, given natures.

Individuals have to adapt themselves to society. Individual’s adaptation to social environment is called social adaptation (Sharma 1989). In this way, a woman on going to a new society adapts herself to it because she wants to concur and to adjust within society. She has to suffer derision and sarcasm if she strikes a note of discord. On joining a new society, women not only acquire the various habits, they also adapt new values and have to obey new conducts. However, for social adaptation, there are every possibility that individual’s wish does have some influence on the former. So, woman is not only influenced by society but she too in her turn influence and affects it. Now here ‘domination’ and ‘oppression’ appear. Women do not influence and affect society, but be an adaptor (Sharma 1989).

From the above discussions we obtain the general status of women in family as well as in society based on patriarchy. Women today encounter a virtually infinite array of contradictions both inside and outside family. It is traditionally assumed that God or Nature created women to remain within the periphery of family because they are unfit physically and psychologically for the outside world and must be protected from unsuitable outer-world. Surprisingly, being intellectually and morally inferior to male, women are given the exclusive role of moral and intellectual guides for their family members as mother and teacher (Fraad et al.2009) and also as care-giver – the latter being adjudged the feminine quality still today. Apart from that, family is putting on women double or triple work burden (housework and child care in addition to outdoor employment). Blumenstein and Schwartch (1983) have shown that even an unemployed husband does less housework than the wife who is working a 40-hour week work outside her home.

Society is not a static object and family being a primary unit of society is also subject to change. Traditionally family performs several functions. It performs economic functions, social functions, religious and cultural functions and provides recreation for its members. In the modern age the functions of the family are changing because several agencies are now taking over its functions. Such changes create a light of hope that position of women
within family may alter in favour of them. That is why in the following section we want to evaluate whether such situation has taken place or women have to walk a still long path to achieve such progress?

1.4 : Changes in the function of family:

Previously family was the centre of economic activities. Agriculture was the primary occupation which was pursued jointly by the entire family. The work is divided among the member of the family. The male members generally do the outdoor work while female member generally take care of domestic chores. All people work co-operatively. The family makes the arrangements for an income in an effort to fulfill the economic and non-economic needs of the family members. Most families also possessed property in the form of house, farm, jewellery etc. The family took care of this property and at times of contingency it also distributed then among the members. What share of property an individual member of family shall receive, who shall look after the property and how - all such decisions were taken by family (Sharma, 1989). In the modern age of explosive population, many of the economic functions which were previously better performed by the family are now being performed by factories, market, government aid and other associations/agencies. With growing pressure of population on arable land, agriculture is no longer the only basic livelihood of the family. Members of the family are forced to join non-agricultural activities which are no longer home based occupations. And here market comes into the picture as individuals (especially men first and then women) are rapidly becoming economic agents in the market to reckon with.

Women who previously used to receive life security from family are now compelled to join the market to earn income to supplement their family income mostly. So many of the functions that were previously performed by women, have been taken over by other agencies like hospital, baby clinics, crèches, baby sitters, hotel and restaurants etc in the emerging urban spaces. This is still not the case in the rural space where women perform still double burden of work – within and outside family. Even if she is confined entirely to family, apart from performing her household chores she is forced provide her labour services as (unpaid) family labour to her husband in the agricultural field and otherwise.

The modern family is no longer a permanent association. It can be rendered void at any time. The most difficult problem within the household is the lack of mutual adjustment
among the members of the family. Women now participate into the outdoor market-based activities and do enter the public space for jobs. Causes behind this participation may be many. They may be compelled to participate and in some cases they have joined as per their own free choice. There may be such a possibility that after adopting the outdoor job in order to save the family and her from economic insecurity/crisis, they became no longer be an adaptor but also be empowered and enlightened. But in lot of cases male have not yet adjusted themselves to this situation. Previously women were confined within the household periphery and family stability survived despite the husband’s dictatorship. But, in this changed circumstances, many husbands have not yet adjusted themselves to this situation. Women who are neither the always privileged nor powerful are facing a distress condition both in market and within the household also. Returning exhausted from their work, does the family show the warm welcome for her in her ‘sweet’ home (!), or she is being blamed for not giving enough energy and time to attend her family member? Being educated, women earn as much as their husband or at least possess the capacity to do so. These, women now demand same fidelity which their men demand of them. When, the men do not want to have women on an equal footing with themselves, the result is a struggle due to which the family tends to become disorganized. It is further argued by Elliot and Merrill in their book ‘Social Disorganisation’ (1934) that marriage in modern time based on romantic love. After marriage, when the dreams of both husband and wife do not materialize in the family, they are seriously frustrated. They start condemned to each other and either live out their life in a state of perpetual strife or break the ties of marriage (as cited in Sharma 1989). More over marriage has been reduced to a mere social contract. Materialism, individualism and rationalism are the causes of paucity of such feeling like benevolence and love etc. From the above information it is imminent that gender and cultural processes which are running within family may undergo some changes/transformations. Patriarchal society has not completely empowered women. But the macro changes in western society that led to nuclear family make more important the development of personal growth and prosperity, an individual’s advance, career, mobility and priorities. The changes have affected various types/strata of family differently. On the one hand there is a loss of joint family, values of duty, control of family on its members. The family size might become smaller, but it does not necessarily mean the fragmentation of family. Joint obligation and responsibilities, norms, control still persist (Desai and Thakkar 2001). This separation is mainly observable in urban areas. However, in rural areas structure of joint family still persist in India. Therefore, it is clear that due to such
variation within family structure we may have social processes with varying combination that exert varying influences on the status of women.

Family as a heterogeneous space does not furnish equal benefits in terms of resources, training, opportunities and entitlements. Such type of socialization ensures separate gender processes that explain the relationship between male and female members within family. Such gender processes teach the members what role she/he should play within family. That gender processes under patriarchal society make women as gendered subjects. In 1955, John Money first introduced the terminology gender. Prior to him ‘gender’ was used for grammatical categories. Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Judith Butler popularized the term in their theories. Within feminist theory, the terminology for gender issues developed over the 1970s. By the year 1980, it was agreed by most feminist writers to use the term ‘gender’ only for socio-culturally adapted traits (Mandal 2012). In the last two decades of the 20th century in gender studies the term gender is used to refer to proposed social and cultural constructions of males and females. Dube (1986) remarked “It should be kept in mind that gender differences that are culturally produced are, almost invariably, interpreted as being rooted in biology, ‘as part of the natural order of things’”. However, gender roles are conceived, enacted, and learnt within a complex of relationship”. So, there may be every possibility that gender process that persisted under the regime before industrialization and modernization differ with the gender process that persists when family fails to perform its traditional functions and lost control over its member. Now women who perform at market place also may be socialized differently. Such type of socialization may also vary along the different income group, across regions, religions, caste, etc. Or there may be such examples which ensure that in spite of macro changes within societal institutions (like family, market), status of women, and their nature of socialization are still alike that prevailed earlier. Sen (1994) found greater morbidity for women vis-à-vis men as a whole and among the slum population in particular. He observes “while the level of health tends to improve with income, the differential of men vis-à-vis women seems to be maintained - even expanded”. Sen (1994) also referred to bias in nutrition and health care against females in North India where women work hard for sustenance of family. In a nutshell, it does not mean that nothing has changed, but the internalization of the traditional gender process by women and the various methods by which they are being portrayed in society still persist.
Along with gender process, a related concept is of entitlements. These are defined as “the ideas, norms, and customs that govern resource allocation in a particular group of society. Thus even a cursory observation informs that there is a gender difference in education, health services, inheritance of property and also access to information.” (Dube 1986) In continuation of this concept, we can say that gender process is a strong determinant of the prevailing structure of class, political processes, cultural processes, legal processes within family. The ideal, norms and customs dictate that whether women are able to appropriate their surplus labour or not that means whether they will belong to exploited class or to non-exploited class. These ideologies further determine whether women can take of their own decision of their lives or not and whether they are entitled to inherit family property rights or not. The class position occupied within households depend upon and shape the definition of gender lived by the member of such household. Gender is also a set of processes that are cultural or ideological processes (Barrett 1980). As these gender processes are cultural and ideological, therefore, these processes have left deep impression within minds of members of family. Dhar and Dasgupta (2014) proposed a shift from ‘gender’ to ‘sex-gender processes’ that could be oppressive for woman and the girl child (or for the boy child or even for man in some particular instances). They further conceptualized ‘sex gender processes’ as oppressive (where there is a objectification of women, where there is exchange of women and where there is an appropriation of women’s labour) and non-oppressive. A particular sex-gender process determines the place of women within the surplus labour focused class processes that exist within the family. Here we use the family instead of household. The functions of family, which are already discussed above, show that great bondage of affection that prevails within the family are very much linked with culture and ideology. A member of a family who stay outside of the household may also exert deep impact or power in the making of crucial decisions of a family. Gender as a process exists in the realm of ideology of family. It determines the relationship among the members of a family. Member of the family bear the responsibilities to produce, distribute and receiver of such ideologies. Moreover, a gender process within societal institution like family and market determines the ideas, norms, beliefs and customs that govern resource allocation among the members of such institution and also govern the process of decision making in which members of the societal institution take place. Here we can relate the concept of ‘empowerment’ with gender process. Empowerment, which seems to be a very modern idea, can be defined as a multi–dimensional social process. Factually “Empowerment refers to increasing the

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spiritual, political, social, or economic strength of individuals and communities” (Mandal 2012). Conceptually, it seeks for positive change and transformation of the existing unequal society. Therefore a gender process that deprived women from entitlement of all types of resource allocation and making decision of their own life make a women ‘non-empowered’. An oppressed sex-gender process may be attached with exploitative class process and lead the women deprived from gaining control over her own decisions and make the women ‘non-empowered’ Further, a gender process can help women gain control over all type of resources and over all decision of their own lives, may make the women as ‘empowered’. Sen (1999) expressed in “Inequality Reexamined” that there are systematic disparities in the freedoms that men and women enjoy in different societies, and these disparities are often not reducible to differences in income or resources. There are several diversities. It is very crucial to take note of all the diversities. Race, caste, religion can be a factor with far reaching influence on many aspects of day-to-day living of working women.

In analyzing the diversities that happen due to the inter-relation among the social processes, Fradd et al. (1994) introduced a new analysis of the class structures within the family and also the mutual interdependence of gender, class and power processes. They have investigated class processes within the household. Class process is an economic process which concern with the production, appropriation, distribution and receipt of surplus labour. So it is the process concerned with the production and distribution of goods and services. Class is not the name for a group of people. Class is an adjective, which qualify particular economic processes which rooted in processes of surplus labour (Dhar and Dasgupta 2014). Dhar and Dasgupta (2014) classified the class processes as ‘surplus labour focused processes’. Women and men participate in such ‘surplus labour focused processes’ in various ways – class processes which could be either exploitative or non-exploitative depending on whether performed surplus labour is appropriated by the performer or by the non-performer. From our class-focused point of view it is clear that unless and until an individual appropriates surplus labour, it is not possible to her/him to construct property and exert power. This displacement of class as noun to class as process of surplus labour helps us to cover laboring activities of women in both outside and within the family. Without such a displacement woman’s labour remains largely unaccounted and invisible. We know several types of class processes that exist within the society. This surplus labour focused class processes may be ancient or slave or feudal or communist.
Ancient and communist class processes are non-exploitative where surplus labour is appropriated by performer(s) of surplus labour. Remaining three processes that are slave, feudal and capitalist class processes are exploitative where surplus labour is appropriated by non-performer(s) of surplus labour. Fraad et al (2009) also proved that linear transformation of society from slave to communist as argued in terms of historical materialism is not observable. Rather, society is experiencing simultaneous occurrences of different class processes at a time. It may be the case that one class process may dominate other. But, we cannot conclude from that remaining class processes do not exist. Therefore, one’s life is shaped by the several class processes which prevails both inside and outside the household. Economy is a decentered, disaggregated space construed in terms of class as processes of performance, appropriation, distribution and receipt of surplus labour and their associated non-class processes (Dhar and Dasgupta 2014). Hence, one can produce a decentered and disaggregated rendition of the economy in terms of overdetermination of class and non-class processes. A society produces multiple gender processes. Individual are pushed and pulled by the contradictory definitions of identities and standardized lifestyles that are projected by alternative gender processes (Fradd et al.1994). Political, legal, economical, religious and cultural processes combine to form different gender processes projecting different conceptions of male and female within society.

Class processes exist both inside and outside (that is market here) the family. Earlier we have discussed that concepts of gender are basically determined within the family. Because, family is the primary unit through which society can exert and control its culture, ethnic and religion and these factors determine the shape of gender processes. Now the class processes that exist within market influence the class processes as well as gender processes within family also. Similarly, how the individuals participate in the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labour inside the family and within market will be determined by conceptualization of gender.

As the objective of this work to understand how the women of the present time live their lives, we want to analyze the role of family (where she lives) and the market (where she works) to frame her life. However, family is not her only living space; it is also her working space. In both these sites she is confronting several social processes that are class processes, gender processes, political processes, legal processes, cultural processes, etc. In
our analysis her living space is the family. Unless and until, a person becomes the member of family s/he cannot influence and participate into the particular sex- gender processes that prevail within family.

Traditionally, we have seen that within family we have some active male and female members with children and older people. Children and older people are less active but they play very important role within family. Members of family have to distribute domestic chores among themselves. The adult male members participate in the market to earn income for family sustenance and for his also. Female adult members work inside the family in the reproductive tasks such as shopping, cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, rearing children, caring older members and so on. In the market, male members majorly face exploitative capitalist class processes where they belong both to fundamental (as producer and /or appropriator of surplus labour) and subsumed (as receiver and/or distributor of surplus labour) class processes. However, women are in general direct producers within the family. She transforms raw materials by laboring with produced means of production. Moreover, her labour is also divisible into necessary and surplus components. She does not produce for her own sustenance but produce more than that. She performs surplus labour. Now her surplus labour is distributed among the family members. She or other (male) member may appropriate and distribute her surplus labour with or without her consent. In the first place woman faces non-exploitative class and non-oppressive sex gender process and in latter case she may face exploitative class and oppressive sex gender processes.

Now the above mentioned exploitative class process is surely not capitalist. Because, the non-performer family members do not buy the labour power of the performing female member by paying her wage, no exchange of commodities occurs between them, nor does he sell the produced stuff or services of women in the market as commodities - the use value she produces. Her surplus labour has no exchange value. Fraad et al (2009) have shown that non-capitalist class processes that will best fit class processes within the family which is mostly feudal. This form requires no intermediary role for market, prices, profits, or wages in the relation between the producer and the appropriator of surplus labour. Ties of religion, fealty, loyalty, responsibility, obligation, culture and tradition and force play the major roles for the existence of feudal class process. Within the family, ideology,
tradition, culture, religions bind the member in such ways which help to sustain the existing (feudal) class processes.

There must exist other social processes (like gender process, political process, legal, and cultural process). The combined effect of these processes restore gender-discriminated feudal class process within family. Now, the class processes and other non-class processes that exist within the market also have strong influence on the existing class processes and non-class processes within the family. For example, if a woman faces gender-discriminated class, political and cultural processes within market, then her experience accelerates the gender discriminated social processes within family. On the other hand, if she is experiencing gender-unbiased social processes within the market, then there may be the possibility that she can raise her voice against the gender discriminated social processes within family. Whether and to what extent social processes dominate each other depends on the relative strength of them. Each of the social processes is continually changing, so too are their influences on the presence and absence of other processes.

Previously, when, women mainly used to do domestic chores and family used to meet her economic needs and provides security; prevailing gender process holds that female are physically, intellectually and morally inferior to male. Females were given burden of housework, child-care and care of older people with the exclusive role of moral and intellectual guides for future generation as a mother, teacher etc. Now, in the recent era of financial crisis, family can no longer perform its role properly that it used to perform in the past. Participation in the market becomes inevitable for all the members of the family irrespective of their sexes. In spite of bearing the biologically determinist notions that they are physically unfit for the outside world, in recent years, the lowering of real wages and the reduction of public services and family assistance, family pushes housewives into the market to earn income from outside family to sustain proper family life. Family now starts to recognize that it is the obligation for women to work hard in the market to support her family and protect it from economic suffering. Previously, sex- gender process within family assures the male’s recognized right and obligation to work hard in the market to support his family and protect it from economic suffering is complemented by the female’s understood right and obligation to work hard inside the family to support and protect her family. Now is there any change in such gender processes with greater female participation in the market (the outside of family)?
Women today face several contradictions both in market and within family. In spite of being a weaker and second sex, she is now bread-winner. She is also performing surplus labour within family. Previously, the male’s responsibilities and obligations to support and protect his family may be exercised inside the family in ways that maximize the female burden of performing feudal surplus labour. He was the master within family and took all relevant decisions of the family. The political processes like rights and obligations of ‘partner in marriage’, the protective legislation for women, laws and informal practices blocking women’s access to birth control and abortion keep women within family. Economic processes generating levels and changes in wages and salaries, job benefits, family pension and security benefits influences the quality of the feudal housewife’s life and her rationale for remaining within family.

Now when a woman has stepped her feet outside the family to earn income to revive her family from economic suffering, she has to adjust her time with weekend or evening meetings, unexpected overtime, pressure of work-load and after-work socialization. Does it possible for her to produce same amount of surplus labour within family after getting exhausted from market? Not only that, women are involved in such type of market-based activities which need extra time that she has to find out somehow for her pre-given activities within family. This may exacerbate contradictions and produce tensions within family. To the degree that women resist pressures to increase feudal surplus labour, families living standard may change. Women may plan their domestic chores or minimize tasks that they dislike and maximize that those they enjoy. Tension may arise among the family members over the quantity, quality, and timing of purchases of such means of production. However, working women may keep or increase the amount of surplus labour by purchasing means of production. In such a case she has to spend a significant amount of her earnings on the purchase of such type of means of production. Now, spending in such a way woman can maintain feudal class position within family. If she fails or resist spending money for these purposes, feudal class process-based family may suffer. If the sex-gender process that prevails within family is oppressive and pressurizes women to produce surplus labour for other family members, then it causes the fall in productivities of women in market and jeopardizes her job. Studies conducted during the sixties and early seventies highlighted the dual or triple roles of women due to the absence of the facilities of crèche, convenient transport, canteen and help in the family (Desai and Thakkar 2001). Empirical data also showed the sad fact that quite often women impose
upon themselves limitation of career enhancement which would entail transfer or more working hours or touring (Krishna Raj 1991). Therefore, oppressive gender processes and exploitative class processes are obstacles to the development of market. On the other hand, if she is facing exploitative class processes and oppressive gender processes within markets which cause low wage and insecurity, she may then become more dependent on family for better living standard. Under such circumstances family can extract same or more surplus labour from her and maintain the same feudal class process within the family.

This is clear from the above discussion that the prevalent class and sex-gender processes which are prevalent within market and family have strong influences on the living standard of women. How the women will react, response and retaliate within these changed circumstances is matter of concern. Not only the class and gender processes, the political, cultural and environmental processes are strong determinants of her conditions of living.

Cultural processes mean the processes of producing and disseminating meanings in society (Fradd et al 2009). Traditionally society exerts the ideology that women should do the domestic chores as women are unfit physically and psychologically for the outside world. Whereas, family must provide her sustenance and security. So, proper womanhood means caring for family and its members while adopting a sub-ordinate, exploited and oppressed position in relationship to the ‘master’ of the family. This ideology however determines the sex-gender processes that helped to sustain feudal family class structures inside the family. Ideologies of love and responsibility have illustrated the particular definition of male and female. Under such ideologies feudal surplus labour production appears as a ‘natural’ outgrowth and this helps to impose on women their servile status and on men their lordly position and facilitate class exploitation within the family. Sustaining feudal family class structures also require that some people be exploited. Meanwhile, the exploited situation of women within family has played its role in generating or supporting oppressed images of women and their proper roles in the family.

By political conditions of existence, we mean processes of establishing and enforcing rules of family behaviour and adjudicating disputes over those rules. Generally, laws punish physical or sexual assault in the market while treating such assault within family more leniently or not at all. Now the political process of establishing and differentially enforcing
laws helps to maintain feudal family pattern in which the rights of women in the family are different from the rights of citizens outside of family. At the same time if laws fail to punish physical and sexual assault in the market widely, then these steps not only encourage the gender-discriminated exploitative class process in the market, it further strengthen the roots of feudal class processes within family. On the other hand if the woman faces favourable political and legal processes in the market, then it may help her to resist exploitation and oppression within family and also, to transform the existing exploitative and oppressive family structure into non-exploitative and non-oppressive one. However, transformation of family pattern is not quick to occur. But if there are laws providing maternity and paternity benefits, low-cost child care centres, free health care for the elderly members, it will create favourable environment for women to compete as equal in the labour market (Hewlett 1986). Evidence suggests that, an individual who has more successful career does less or no housework (Blumenstein and Schwartz 1983).

Further, surplus labour performed by women in feudal family is determined by the access to property. Being property-less may push women more into feudal class process-based family. Women face discrimination in markets or societal institutions that prevent them from completing their education, entering certain occupations and earning the same income as men. When women farmers lack security of land tenure, the result is lower access to credit and inefficient land use, reducing yields. The, Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that equalizing access to productive resources between female and male farmers could increase agricultural outputs in developing countries by as much as 2.5 to 4 per cent (FAO, IFAD and ILO 2010). If laws and economic condition help women to hold property, then this effort becomes conducive to reduce and/or eliminate exploitative and oppressive surroundings for women. This is by no means that political process of ownership itself undermines feudal family. Whether and to what extent it does so depend on all other processes that produce such family. If sex-gender and cultural processes are such that women have to undertake stress for housework and became pride to do so, then she will perform such chores and produce surplus labour and strengthen the root of exploitation. Here women accept the gender notion of their own incapacity for financial management and free control over their property by male. Sometimes they have done it less willingly out of fear of psychological or physical retaliation from the members of the family. Family exploits her feudally without making any payment from her property. Under such ideology of love of living being,
responsibility, self-sacrifice, co-operation, universal brotherhood have been consciously and unconsciously make her unthinkable to use her political power to withhold property or to demand subsumed class payments for access to it. This ideology constrains the family from making payment to women. This may help to understand why in spite of having joint property ownership, feudal structure of family has not altered. Cultural and environment have created differences in the outlook of male and female with respect to risk aversion, social preferences, attitude and choices. A substantial body of research documents stated that not all observed differences in outcomes can be attributed to different opportunities. However, those differences in preferences and attitude are largely ‘learned’ and some time inherent also. Men and women internalize social norms and expectation. Persistence differences in power and status between men and women can become internalized in aspirations, behaviour, and preferences that perpetuate the inequalities. So it becomes unjust to measure gender equality as equality of opportunities. By attempting to equalize outcomes one can break the vicious circle of low aspirations and low opportunities (Sen 1999; Booth and Nolen 2009; Croson and Gneezy 2009; World Bank 2011 as cited in World Development Report 2012). It is difficult to measure opportunities separately from outcomes. Rather they are interlinked tightly.

1.5. Status of Working Women in Market and Family:

The traditional family performed a variety of functions, which may be subsumed as economic, protective, educational, religious, recreational, biological, affection and status giving. This multi-functional pattern no longer exists, except in an attenuated form. The changing society has shifted functions from one institution to the other and has removed first one and then another of its traditional functions from the family, until today it is in many respect a mere shadow of its former self (Madan, 1981). Meanwhile market and its significance within the society have been flourishing. Modern, family cannot breathe without market. The first tremor experienced by the family was the introduction of industrialization and modernization initiated during the Colonial Rule in India which started with the process of de-industrialization forcing workforce engaged in traditional handicrafts industries to agriculture and pauperizing in the process the families of the then working class families. The macro changes in the Western Society led to the formation of nuclear families. Values of individualism and personal betterment encouraged the advancement of personal growth rather than subordination of their ‘self’ to the other. For
the development of personal growth and prosperity, an individual’s advancement, career, mobility, priorities are considered most important. Question is ‘did such macro-changes alter the subordination, exploitation of women within society?’ Did the women who initially joined the market due to economic necessity of their families find any alteration in traditional class, gender, political, legal and cultural processes? Or it has created a boon only for a group of women who are educated, highly paid and belongs to urban areas? Or there has been no significant changes that can affect the status of women within family? To identify different categories of women in terms of their interface with market is our prime objective. Therefore, to determine the status of women in recent time we cannot proceed without market.

Market is a variety of social arrangements that allow buyers and sellers to exchange (the right over) any type of commodities subject to a set of rules. Market is a place which procreates exchange values of commodities. The production processes are characterized by different class processes which are economic processes. Market can also be influenced and shaped by formal and informal institutions. Formal institutions consists of all aspects that pertain to the functioning of state, including laws, regulatory frameworks and the mechanisms for the delivery of services that the state provides (like judicial services, police services, basic infrastructure, health and education).These are all political processes. The informal social institutions mean the mechanisms, rules, and the procedures that shape social interactions conventionally. They by focusing on the gender processes, cultural and traditional processes form the gender role, beliefs, social norms, and social networks. Gender roles provide guides to normative behaviour for each sex within certain social contexts. These gender processes get strength in terms of sex-gender based process of socialization, elaborated in cultural processes and enacted in daily life. The repeated experience of performing gender roles affects widely shared beliefs about men’s and women’s attributes and one’s own sense of identity (Agarwal 1994 and 1997; Fehr Fischbacher and Gatcher 2002; Kabeer 1999; Sen 1990 as cited in the World Development Report 2012). Existing political, sex-gender and cultural processes can affect the bargaining power of an individual in both in market and repeated practices of this power can also strengthen the other social processes.

The, working women who has stepped her feet into the market to earn income and save the family from economic sufferings and also the women who have joined the market to
enlighten herself, face in general huge domestic chores which are left for her after returning exhausted from the workplaces. Do the social norms permit women to retreat from her domestic household chores after the day’s work and her dealings with the outside world and do they allow them to relax, to recoup, and to regain her physical and psychic balance in order to be able to deal effectively with the outside environment again? The answer is both yes and no. It is yes for certain categories of working women today and it is no for the remaining categories of women today.

There is no doubt that women’s life has changed over the past decade. Previously, women used to be envisaged as an individual who should always remain domesticated in terms of social exchange of marriage or otherwise also. But now increasing number of women are in labourforce, in the market, they are in politics. Many of them do not depend a lot on men as it used to be within and outside family. Some of them have some cash/savings for themselves and this assists them for being free from men and to some extent controlling their lives. In all, 136 countries now have explicit guarantees for the equality of all citizens and non-discrimination between men and women in their constitutions. Despite, these positive changes, they now faces many challenges in their daily lives. However, it has not come evenly to all women or across all dimensions of gender equality. The gender inequality that persists in market and within family does matter the development process of society. The World Development Report (2012) argues that there are two reasons behind this. First, gender equality matters intrinsically, because the ability to live the life of one’s own choosing and be spared from absolute deprivation is a basic human right and should be equal for every one independent of whether one is male or female. Second, gender equality matters instrumentally, because greater gender equality contributes to economic efficiency and the achievement of other key development outcomes.

Conversely, when women and men do not have equal chances to be socially and politically active and to influence laws, politics, and policy making, institutions and policies are more likely to systematically favour the interest of those with more influence. Family constraint and market failures that feed gender inequalities are less likely to be addresses and corrected, leading to their persistence. This creates an inequality trap which prevents women to resist producing surplus labour even after getting exhausted from market and simultaneously make an obstacle to take up economic opportunities which enhance their potential as individual, prevail in the market.
Society can never remain static. Social change comprises of variations of any aspect of social processes, social patterns, social interactions or social organizations. These alterations in the mutual behaviour between individual commence from family. It affects all the economic, political, gender, cultural and other social processes. However, these changes are not linear as is claimed in terms of historical materialism.

Statistics represents that so called gender gaps are getting reduced in the market slowly. Outlook towards working women has been definitely changing. Consideration of gender equality issue in the World Development Report (2012) surely indicates that change in attitude, perception, expectations and social norm that associated with the behaviour of women.

In the ancient society women used to perform domestic chores and produced surplus labour for the other members of the family. The men women relationship in such family was constituted in terms of some personal bondage and loyalty which is generally observable in a feudal class-process based production system. As, the requirement of family has changed, women’s working pattern has also changed. Now, in the current age which is predominantly hegemonized in terms of a capitalo-centric worldview, to earn and supplement family income are rapidly becoming women’s liability in a heterosexual family organization. Women become the main adaptor and adjust themselves within these changed economic situations vis-à-vis men. This is not to say that all the family contexts and situations are identical and similar as far as today’s women and gender process are concerned. There are diversities. However, the predominant form remains one of women’s subjugation, double burden of her work and thereby, stress associated with time allocation between household chores and outside income generating activities and also, adherence to the social norms vis-à-vis men as the patriarchy demands.

The changes may be slow for some women or not at all for some other women. A lot of gender disparities including segregation in economic activity, gender gaps in earning, male-female difference in responsibilities for family and care work, gaps in asset ownership, and constraints to women’s agency (differences in societal voice and family decision making) in both the family and market spheres do still exist. These are the results of diversities of social processes as each social process feeds other social processes. Keeping these diversities in our mind in the following section we will make a brief
discussion on matter that how we can define a women as ’empowered’ in the continuously changing social space(s).

1.6. Women’s empowerment:

‘Empowerment’ seems to be a modern idea that was not recognized even two centuries ago (Bhadra 2001). In the twentieth century we observed many examples of political empowerment (Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, etc) in different countries over the world. The perspective of such movement was to expand the base of power of low–power groups (Mondal 2012). ‘Empowerment’ refers to the process by which power is gained, developed, seized, facilitated or gained. “The most common use of the term “empowerment” refers to increasing the power of the low-power group, so that it more nearly equals the power of the high power group” (http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/treatment/empower.htm retrieved on 18th October 2010). The term empowerment can be defined also as “the process of gaining control over one’s own life while supporting and facilitating others’ control over their lives” (Aspy and Sandhu, 1999). The term empowerment has different meanings in different socio-cultural, economic and political contexts. The World Bank defines the term empowerment as “the process of increasing the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes”. Therefore, the term empowerment refers to a multi-dimensional social process and it helps people gain control/autonomy over their own lives.

Throughout the world women as the “other sex” are marginalized. Hence they need to expand their power base through participation in various institutions of society. Throughout the world the issue of women’s empowerment for the positive change and transformation of the existing unequal society is a new concept. ‘Women’s empowerment’ implies a process by which women is equipped with power to enhance their own capabilities, enlarge their own choices, and thus can contribute to and also benefit from the process of development and thereby reduce the glaring disparities prevalent in all spheres of life (Srivastava 2001). Alternatively one can say that women’s empowerment indicates a situation where women gain autonomy over their own lives to improve their personal, social, economic, political and legal conditions so as to achieve greater respect in family, society and market. The extent of autonomy that women enjoy varies in terms of differences in their economic-social and regional and cultural groupings.
So far their role as mother, wives, homemaker are well known, but their role in shifting the entire power relations of the universe is completely new one. It was John Stuart Mill, a British member of Parliament, whose essay “The Subjection of Women” written with his wife Harriet Taylor Mill, made the first attempt in favour of an establishing equality between males and females. Further Mary Wollstonecraft’s in “Vindication of the right of Women” (1792) wrote the struggle for women’s equality (as cited in Mazumdar, 2005).

For achieving complete equality in the society, it is necessary to eliminate domination, oppression, exploitation and discrimination against fair sex by their stronger counterpart. From the sociological point of view, women’s empowerment can be defined as “equal status to women opportunity and freedom to develop herself” (Kapur 2001). Now economists believe that without economic self-sufficiency other rights and scopes remain meaningless to women. SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Association) has emphasized on the economic empowerment of women. It holds that raising voice and visibility is not possible unless there is access to the ownership of economic resources by the poor women. Economic empowerment gains through equal opportunities, equal organizational benefits and equal working environment (Mandal 2012). Therefore, in economic development, the empowerment approach focuses on mobilizing the self-help efforts of the poor, rather than providing them with social welfare. Legal expert and lawyers have envisaged the term empowerment as ‘recognition and enforcement of women’s human right’ (Kapur, 2001). Through the establishment of ‘equality before the law’ and ‘equal protection of the law’, the legal experts want to ensure women’s empowerment. In addition, the qualitative and quantitative participation of women at all levels of governance structure is the highest need of this hour for women’s actual empowerment. In other words, ‘Empowerment is not giving people power; people already have plenty of power, in the wealth of their knowledge and motivation, to do their jobs magnificently. We define empowerment as letting this power out’ (Blanchard et al. 1996). Modern democracy means participatory democracy, where both men and women irrespective of colour, creed, economic and social position should join in the decision making processes. Without political participation it would be hard for women to increase effectiveness, capacity, challenging the existing power structure and patriarchal ideology (Mandal 2012).

In a nutshell, empowerment of women has been viewed as a process in which women gain greater share of control over all type of resources - physical, intellectual, social and economical, control over ideology, beliefs, values and attitudes, as well as control over
decision making in family, market and society. It is a process that fosters power in people, for use in their own lives, their communities, and in their societies, by acting on issues that they define as important. Women throughout the world have been struggling to break all kinds of disparities both within and outside their families. However, none of the definition of empowerment means the acquiring power and use of power and authority by the women to subjugate and dominate their opposite sex or to one group of women by another.

A single indicator is insufficient and incomplete to realize women’s empowerment, which is considered as a multi-dimensional concept in multiple domains in which a woman generally functions and discharges her duties. As there are several social processes within society, therefore we have diversified knowledge on women’s empowerment. Each space defines women’s empowerment using their discipline. So the conception also varies across the spaces. Fraad, Resnick, and Wolff (2009) brought concept of exploitation of women in households using a Marxist language of class. In a household, production, which is mostly non-paid (either in cash or in kind), may take place within a variety of exploitative or non-exploitative class relations (just as it happens in market). They analyze how the activities of working space and domestic space are interrelated to each other through the class (economic) process and non-class (non-economic) processes. From our theoretical knowledge, we can say that when a woman is not exploited, she enjoys the control over her physical resources and has a opportunity to be ‘empowered’. But at the same time she may suffer from gaining control on making decisions that relates to her own life. So from another perspective, she may be ‘non-empowered’. Further, the status of women as can be derived from the point of view of empowerment depends upon the strength of social processes within the household as well as within market. Their positions within households and also in market operate as both causes and effects of each other. They mutually constitute each other in overdetermined sense (Fraad, Resnick and Wolff, 2009). Though it is very difficult to take note of all such diversities, but we have tried to present all such categories of working women in Indian society following the class-focused Marxist methodology as pointed out in recent time by Resnick and Wolff (1987).
1.7 Categorization of Women in the Light of Over-Deterministic Class-Focused Approach:

To categorize the women in the light of over-deterministic approach we have to construct a taxonomy based on plausible different class and gender processes. In this context we attribute surplus labour focused class processes both in market and in family also. Family is not just a space of living. It is a working and gender space as well. Among the separate class process, we consider the feudal heterosexual family where adult male member of the family participates in capitalist/non-capitalist class processes to earn income. There may also be an adult female member of a family who also may participate in capitalist/non-capitalist processes to earn income. Children and older members are supposed to remain inside the family. However, in India we know there are rampant instances of child labour despite child labour being officially illegal. Even old members of family (above the age of 65 years) also sometimes are forced to work outside family in order to either supplement the family income and/or for his/her own survival. Adult (working and non-working outside) female also performs the domestic chores. Feudal form is best fitted with the structure of the Indian family. It requires no intermediary role for market, prices, profits or wages in the relation between direct producer and appropriator of surplus labour. We may also have other non-capitalist family like ancient, slave, communist and communitic. Ancient family consists of a single member family where the member is producing and appropriating her/his own surplus labour. Slave family would consist of bonded type workers being part of the family in the sense of producing surplus labour that then is appropriated by non-producers (may be male or both male and female members of family) who have absolute control over the body and mind of the slave direct producers. Communist household may be envisaged in terms of shared performance and appropriation of surplus labour. Finally, communitic family could be symbolized as a family space where the ‘community’ appropriates the surplus labour collectively while the jobs at the lower level of production process are performed by individual labour on the basis of a clear division of labour. Here no member has the option to do any other kind of work. Another type of communitic class processes where the jobs are done in a shared manner, the surplus is appropriated by an individual (head of the family) or other group of non-performers. Second type of communitic class processes is clearly exploitative. First type may also be exploitative if the decision of appropriation is not held by the consent of direct producers. Exploitative and non-exploitative class processes co-exist in the society.
at the levels of household/family as they exist in the public domain of market. All these class processes are correlated with co-operative or non-cooperative sex-gender process within the family and oppressive or non-oppressive cultural and political processes of the society also. In the Table 1.1 below we have attempted to show how diverse different combinations of class-process, gender process along with political and cultural process may be. In no way, we claim that these different combinations are complete. Rather, it is an attempt to understand how the different combinations of class and non-class processes may produce different understandings/significance for women in market and family at the same time.

Table 1.1

Taxonomy of Families based on Different Class Processes and Gender Processes and other Non - Economic Processes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI No.</th>
<th>Performance in Market</th>
<th>Performance in family</th>
<th>Appropriation</th>
<th>Gender process</th>
<th>Cultural process</th>
<th>Political process</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Empowered Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Semi-empowered Women of high income Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not-empowered/adaptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Empowered Housewife of low income group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Women herself exploiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not-empowered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not-empowered Housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Not exist</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Empowered Woman of Asiatic family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not-empowered, Adaptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl No.</td>
<td>Performance in Market</td>
<td>Performance in family</td>
<td>Appropriation</td>
<td>Gender process</td>
<td>Cultural process</td>
<td>Political process</td>
<td>Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Adaptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Women herself exploiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not-empowered, Adaptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Adaptor women of communist Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not-empowered, Adaptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Empowered housewife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Empowered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not empowered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not empowered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Exploiter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Non-Co-operative</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Oppressive</td>
<td>Not Empowered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Co-operative</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Non-oppressive</td>
<td>Woman herself empowered but also exploiter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: A = Performer of surplus labour, B = Non-performer of surplus labour, C = Collective labour who may be performer and/or appropriators of surplus labour. This taxonomy is constructed taking A, B and C as women.

Source: Constructed by author herself

(1) Woman may face exploitative class processes both in market and within family. Simultaneously, she may encounter oppressive political processes, non-cooperative gender and cultural processes in both market and within family. Here the women may be compelled to join the market to earn so as to supplement (low) family income and may render some security family from economic suffering, but the family extracts the entire surplus labour from her through capture of her earned income in the market as well as produced use-value within the family. Woman under such circumstances could not be able to enhance her perception and may be caught in productivity trap that is working hard on an uneven playing field with unequal access to productive inputs. Differences in access to
inputs may be further compounded by differences in the availability of ‘market’ time which can make same investment less productive for women. Here, women are unable to convey their ability to lead. Different responsibilities for family work means that women lack the flexibilities or time to invest on their market-based activities as well as on political participation, such that they can enhance their productivity, perception and voices. The lack of voices makes it more difficult to ascend their position both in market and family. This trap imposes significant cost on women’s living standard and economic opportunities. Earned income alone are not enough to eliminate the lower capacity of women to exercise agency power. Women are silent adaptor and remain not empowered here. From the above mentioned taxonomy, serial numbers (3, 9 and 20) represent this kind of women. In case of serial 20, women are involved in family business/economic activities but face a non-cooperative gender process, exploitative class process, and oppressive cultural and political processes. Now instead of facing non-cooperative gender processes within family like the above mentioned incidence, women can demand changes that involve an equal sharing of household chores. She may also struggle against the political conservatism and the prevailing gender processes resisting changes in the woman, and also against economic processes which consign women to mere performers of surplus labour, not an appropriator. All these social processes reinforce the feudal option for family. Women in such contexts are silent adaptor within family and also in market.

(2) Family has financial need. Women have joined market to earn income in order to protect family from economic suffering. Family may follow co-operative gender processes. Under such circumstances, even if women face exploitative class processes in the market, she can spend quality time within family to enhance her productivity, perception and voice so that she performs competently in market. At the same time she may face communist class processes where members of family encourage equal share of the performance, management and fruit of domestic surplus labour and all family decision making. Family is the space where women come after a day’s work and may relax and regain/reproduce her physical and psychic balance in order to be able to perform in the market competently. Here, women can use their earned income according her choice. Her decision may be influenced by the cultural processes of co-operation, self-sacrifice, services to humanity, universal brotherhood and like. Here, family faces radical transition from feudal to non-feudal family structure. Women are empowered here. From the above mentioned taxonomy, serial numbers (1, 10, 13 and 16) represent these groups of women.
Under, the above circumstances, if the family is in no need for extra income to be earned by female members, it can pressurize the women to quit the job and produce only surplus labour for family member against her will. The tensions and strains inside traditional households may drive women sooner or later to leave market and resign themselves to live within the feudal family. The communist family structure may re-transform into feudal family structure. Here, the co-operative gender process may not be sustainable and so is women’s empowerment. Political conservatism, gender processes resisting changes favourable to women’s empowerment, economic processes restricting women to produce domestic surplus labour may reinforce the feudal option for family. Women become silent adaptor. On the other hand, there is a possibility that the non-feudal family may leave it to its women member whether to remain domesticated or enter the job market or quit the job. In such cases, women cannot be regarded as non-empowered and the family may remain non-feudal and may get transformed into a communistic family. However, in the job market she may encounter either exploitative or non-exploitative class processes. Even if she faces exploitative class processes in the public domain it may be possible for her to raise her voice as she hails from a communistic or non-exploitative family background which garners necessary support to her to raise her voice in the market and become empowered. Political radicalism, new concept of gender and improving economic possibilities for women are among the possibilities making improved living standards of women. If women are willing to quit job on their own and face the same co-operative gender process then family will still remain communistic and leads to women’s empowerment.

(3) It is generally argued that owning income substantially enhances women’s voice and agency in the family. But if the gender processes which create the image of women as mother and obedient wives, then women may perform more feudal surplus labour without imagining the possibility of using their power and agency to resist their family decision. If the women are unwilling to change the non-co-operative gender processes and remain dedicated to produce more surplus labour for feudal family, then they may be categorized as silent adaptor. Women in this category are represented by the serial number 20 as indicated in the above table. Here, women are not empowered at all.
(4) There may be such circumstances, where the family is in financial crisis but co-operative gender process is the norm within the family. No pressure on women to do domestic chores exists. But family captures her earning and she has no control over her earning from the public domain. Women are here silent adaptor and not empowered. Women of this type belong to category (6, 10 and 17) in the above taxonomy. In case of serial 10, there prevails exploitative communitic class process if appropriation is made by non-performers of surplus labour within family.

(5) Family may have no need for female member’s income. Non-cooperative gender processes demand that women must produce surplus labour for family and do not allow woman to join market even she is willing to join. Political conservatism, gender processes resisting changes in the conception of woman, economic processes consigning women to perform surplus labour - all these social processes make the woman non-empowered. Women of this type belong to serial number (7 and 18) in the above taxonomy. Their quality of life cannot be said to be quite improved under this circumstance where gender process is non-cooperative.

(6) Among the house wives, we may have some women who are facing co-operative gender process and also facing communitic class process (like serial no 15). Apart from that we may also have some women who perform domestic chores without any help but have sole control over her produced used value. These economically dependent women (serial no 4) are empowered women where cultural and political processes being non-oppressive ensure her such environment. Family has no need for female member’s income. Cooperative gender processes demands that both men and women perform domestic chores equitably. Women can freely participate in market if she so desires. Here women are able to convey their ability to lead. Her control over her earning helps her having more voices over family decision. She becomes an empowered woman.

(7) We may have also some women (serial no 5 and 18) who do not participate in outdoor income generating activities and participate sometimes on production of use value (surplus labour) within family, and she may appropriate herself entire surplus labour performed by her depriving other members of family. Here they are exploiter, gender, cultural and political processes that are operating within these families are definitely oppressive, but in opposite direction viz. oppression of men by women.
(8) There may be such family which does not need female income but looking for her active participation in market to raise the social status of family. Woman may be unwilling to join the market. In spite of having co-operative gender processes, woman is non-empowered as she lacks in this case to take her own decision about her life. Serial number 2 represents such category.

(9) Women may also be involved in their family business that creates exchange value as unpaid labour. Under such situation we may have some women (serial no 13) who are empowered by facing co-operative gender process, non-oppressive cultural and political process. Under such situation some women (serial no 12 and 20) may be adaptor and not empowered due to presence of non-cooperative gender, oppressive cultural and political processes. Some (Serial no 14) may face co-operative gender process but exploitative economic process. Last, not the least there are every possibility to have such women (Serial no 11 and 21) who are able to take her own decision and exert control over other. They are empowered but exploited by other member within the family.

Conclusion:

Summing up our understanding of women’s empowerment in terms of class-focused Marxist approach along with different types of gender, political and cultural processes it can be said that women’s empowerment as a process may take diverse images. For example, a non-exploitative class process within family and/or in market for women does not necessarily imply she is empowered as the gender and other non-class processes may remain oppressive for her. Similarly, a woman facing an exploitative class process within and outside family generally also faces oppressive gender and other non-class processes. However, there may be instances where a woman facing an exploitative class process in the market may become empowered if she faces either a non-exploitative class process within her family or non-oppressive gender process within family or both. So, there are diverse and heterogeneous possibilities and conditions for real empowerment of women. And this diversity and heterogeneity pertaining to women’s empowerment as a process gets foregrounded only through the lens of class-focused Marxist approach which renders a disaggregated and decentred vision of economy and society. However, as we have already claimed here in terms of our taxonomy (see Table 1.1) these different combinations of different class and non-class processes are not complete. There may be several other possibilities or combinations.