Chapter V

Gender, Language and Social Class

After a brief outline of the linguistic patterns and usage of both women and men on the basis of their gender, the present chapter aims to deal with language usage with reference to social class. The principal objective here is to explore and identify whether and how social class determines the language use patterns of women and men as well as to correlate the gendered linguistic practices with that of the speaker’s socio-cultural and economic background or more precisely their respective social classes. In the previous chapter, it has been argued that gender division is a fundamental aspect of society, as it is deeply imbedded in social organization and taught to individuals from early childhood to adulthood stages. However, numerous studies also argue that gender categories have changed throughout history and varied depending on specific race, ethnicity, culture, religion, nationality, region, and class (Labov, 1994, 2001; Lakoff, 1975, Wardhaugh, 2010).

Social Class- Definition and Determinants:

Although class is one of the most frequently used concepts in sociology, there is no clear agreement about how the notion should best be defined. In common parlance we can define a class as a large-scale grouping of people who share common economic resources, which strongly influence the type of lifestyle they are able to read. Ownership of wealth and occupation are the chief bases of class differences (Giddens, 2010: 437). Different sociologists have defined social class in various different manners, for instance, for Karl Marx, a class was a group of people standing in a common relationship to the means of production. Weber also saw class as an
economic category, but stressed its interaction with social status and the affinities of ‘party’. In recent times, some social scientists have used occupation extensively as an indicator of social class, others have stressed ownership of property and other wealth; still others are looking at lifestyle choices (ibid: 1113). As Rosemary Crompton has pointed out, there are a number of different ways in which the term ‘class’ is used, both by sociologists and in everyday discourse:

1. To refer to groups, ranked in a hierarchy, which are formally unequal and have legally defined rights,
2. To refer to groups ranked according to social standing or prestige,
3. To refer to structural inequalities - to the unequal resourcing of groups - which are the outcomes of competition for social resources in capitalist societies,
4. To refer to actual or potential social forces competing for control over scarce resources.

We could also argue that the term ‘class’ also refers to the cultural values, dispositions and lifestyles attributed to those occupying distinct social positions. In this sense, class is used to refer not simply to economic resources but also to ‘cultural capital’ (Bourdieu, 1984) acquired through education, socialization and participation in particular social networks (Abott, 2005: 65).

In this study social class has been dealt with two different dimensions, viz. there has been the attempt to identify the social class of the respondents as well as to throw light on the perceptions of the respondents about class and its determinants. Since this study has emphasized the lived experiences of women for unearthing their perceptions about their own lives, their linguistic practices and also about their surroundings, narrative analysis has been adopted for the interpretation and analysis of the study. Thus here, the qualitative opinions of the respondents are not only pertinent but also have led the research to move on to further directions regarding gender, social class and linguistic practices.
Here, social class has been operationalized in terms of economic income, education, occupation and also the socio-cultural as well as socio-economic background of the respondents’ families. The respondents interviewed for this research belong to both middle and upper classes of the society. The categorization of middle and upper has been done on the basis of the income of the respondents or their families or both, and their educational qualification, family background, types of occupations are also considered for determining and defining social class. It is always kept in mind that of the principal social dimensions sociolinguists have been concerned with (i.e. social class, age, sex, style, and network) social class has probably been the most researched. Moreover, social class differentiation is often assumed to be fundamental and other patterns of variation, such as stylistic and gender variation are regarded as derivative of it. Many sociolinguistic studies have started by grouping individuals into social classes on the basis of factors such as education, occupation, income, and so on, and then looked to see how certain linguistic features were used by each group. Similar methods have been adopted and followed here, which focuses on the linguistic practices of the women respondents belonging to different classes and also on their perceived notions about the relationship of class and language use with special reference to the speakers’ gender.

According to most of the respondents social class is an important dimension of our society or rather stratified society. Class though is considered as an ‘achieved status’ in comparison to ‘caste’ as an ‘ascribed’ one, but one’s class is often determined by and reflect the class of their families. Thus very often if the individual is born to an existing upper class family, he/she is considered as a representative of that class. This is true for all social classes, the major categories along with their transitory ones. Class is also said to have enormous influence on the behavioural patterns of the incumbent individuals, their dressing patterns, educational exposure
as well as more specifically their linguistic usage. It is commonly believed that one’s social class is primarily dependent of their wealth or money followed by factors like family background and status, education, occupation etc. Here, some narratives will help us better to understand the dimensions and nuances of class in present day society.

Mohua (31 years, Lecturer in college): I think the bases or indicators of our social class are firstly status - mainly family status, then education, wealth and income and also employment.

Mayuri (19 years, B.A 2nd year student): Social class is determined by income, status, origin, family background, region etc.

Saswati (34 years, Govt. Service): In my opinion assets, family income and educational qualification determine one’s social class.

Lalti (31 years, Teacher in Govt. School): social class is mainly dependent on money or income, education and also power.

Soumyosree (23 years, M.A. student): Language, dressing sense, their dwelling place, club memberships these all indicate class difference. Today also many persons are very conscious about their class. Although they mix with people of different classes, but they are often aware of the class they belong to.

These narratives along with other responses reflect that social class is not a fixed and unidimensional category. It is dependent on several factors and individual’s class awareness also helps them to define and interpret social class in public consciousness. While determining one’s class positions, class awareness or identification also plays an important role. Class awareness examines the class labels (if any) that are commonly used in popular discourse; the extent to
which people personally identify with these labels; which factors determine identification with particular classes; and the implications of class identities for broader political orientations and social behaviour generally.

When asked about the impact or influence of social class in using language or while speaking to others, most of the respondents agreed that through language often our social class position becomes evident. Actually the fact is that what we are saying, our behaviour, values etc. reflect primarily our social identity of who we are, where do we belong to and of course our familial and socio-cultural background. However, it has also been noticed that people often control their linguistic usage or even their speech while interacting with others, especially when their social position is under scrutiny. Whereas, where their social position is not judged by other speakers like in a general friendly gathering, they are more free and frank and say whatever they feel. But in general, the way individuals talk is more often determined by their social position or rather more specifically social class, though language does not as well as can not always depict the speaker’s social position in an evident way. For instance, if a man or woman speaks in a very degrading manner by using derogatory, gendered and even sexist language forms, often they are looked down upon for not using the so-called ‘proper and standard’ language. However that person can actually be wealthy enough to determine almost a large proportion of things in the society. But in that case, though the person because of his/her economic wealth may be considered to have belonged to the upper class, but the use of language does not ideologically support the situation. Thus, not only wealth, but proper education, personal viewpoints as well as socio-cultural milieu also become significant in understanding and resolving the issue of the relation between class and language use.
So, in this study as perceived and put forward by the respondents, income, education and occupation as well as family background have been taken into account as the determinants of social class. In this research the onus is on ‘middle’ and ‘upper’ classes of Bengali women. Therefore, proper theoretical knowledge regarding middle class is essential also. As Jaffrelot and van der Veer state that “the middle class is a notoriously elusive category. It is defined almost by default, as ‘what-is-in-the-middle’, between the upper layers of society and the plebian masses” (2008:11). Leela Fernandes states that the boundaries of the middle classes are “delineated through a set of public discourses, cultural narratives, and economic shifts” (2006:31). As André Béteille states, “the class we are dealing with is not only very large but also highly differentiated internally to such an extent that it may be more appropriate to speak of the middle classes than the middle class in India” (2001:73). Even within the category of the urban middle classes, there are distinctions between those who refer to themselves as middle class. A critical element of this distinction is that while they may self-identify as middle class, they may not perceive each other as middle class. For example, the students in all three schools I went to referred to themselves as middle class, although there were significant differences in the income and occupation levels of their parents. Thus, as Ortner says, class “must be examined within a discursive field of related terms of social identity and social difference” (1998:3). Although her work was based in the U.S., like Ortner, I operate at the level of “culture, ideology, discourse, habitus” (Ortner 1998:7), in the “realm of discourse, that is, of how people talk about themselves and others, and of the larger shape of the discursive field from which people draw their categories” (Ortner 1998:7). In terms of commonly used parameters, the middle classes may be distinguished by income, occupation, language, and cultural practices, including consumption. Rachel Dwyer (2000), for example, uses the term “middle class” to cover a wide range of groups, including bureaucrats,
professionals, and small and large businessmen. She identifies three sub-sections of the middle classes in India: the old middle classes, which are the professional or service elite, are dependent on an earned salary, and have a lot of educational and cultural capital, usually having an advanced education. She says that they are generally English-dominant, control India’s cultural values, and legitimize this control through the institutions they operate and control, such as governmental and educational institutions. The second section she identifies is the new middle classes, which are rich, have high-consumption patterns, and have risen from the lower-middle class. She says that they have economic, but not cultural, capital. They know English, but speak other languages such as Hindi, or they use “Hinglish” and code-switch frequently. She also comments that they self-identify as upper class, though the old middle classes call them ‘nouveau riche’. The third section, which she calls the lower middle class, has smaller assets of cultural, educational, and economic capital. It is, though, marked by aspirations to increasing such capital. Its members try to achieve these aspirations through self-help, education, English acquisition, and specific consumer choices (Dwyer 2000).

**Income, Class and Language Use Patterns:**

Income has always been considered as the most significant attribute or indicator of social class. Starting from Marx to many other sociologists and sociolinguists also, economy including wealth, income and material objects or assets determine and reflects one’s social class. However, prior to 2001, feminists in the English speaking societies and elsewhere had continually challenged the long-standing practice by which many women were thought to have a derived class position, determined by the occupational experiences of the man with whom they lived. They argued that not just that the classification of women by the class of male heads of household was sexist, but that the basic assumptions on which this position rested were false.
Sheila Allen (1982) for instance pointed out that a wife does not acquire her husband’s education on marriage, nor does she automatically acquire a socially or politically powerful background or network (which even if she does can often be lost on divorce or widowhood). There is considerable evidence to suggest that women’s social class position cannot be ignored or treated as derivative from the social class position of husbands, partners or fathers; not only does this fail to explain their social and political behaviour, it often leads to mistaken conclusions about the social mobility of men and the structure of class-based stratification for both genders (Abott, 2005: 69, 70).

Class differences also often influence one’s linguistic practices, even often irrespective of their biological sex or social gender. Here, language differences are also intra-gender differences along with the inter-gender ones. That implies that, differences in language are found not only among women and men of different or even same income groups, rather within common income groups linguistic style and attitude also differ in case of both men and women. Though income is one of the most important factors affecting one’s social class, but it does not alone influence an individual’s linguistic practices. These views are represented by most of the respondents, whose narratives will definitely make us understand about their point of views regarding language use and the influence of social class.

Ratnabali (39 years, Textile Designer): I don’t think that all women of same income group speak in the same way, because even if their income is same their occupation or profession might be different, which is reflected in their differential linguistic pattern. For example, the language used by a teacher or a writer of similar income category might be different from that of a woman who is in business and earns almost the same amount. That means language differs between women of same income category on the basis of their profession. On the other hand, men of
same income group often speak in the same way because I believe that the language use pattern of men in general is almost same.

Debapriya (33 years, School Teacher): It is not necessary that women of same income group will speak in the same way. Differences may occur due to different family background, upbringing etc. Since orthodox and open families are different, we also find differences in the language use patterns of the speakers of these families. Here income does not matter.

Sucharita (31 years, Govt. Service): No, women of same income group do not follow same linguistic patterns. Like individual differences are there, e.g. one can be softer, one can be stronger, one can have a broader worldview, another can have a narrower one and they speak accordingly. These actually depend on their grooming, their respective worldviews that how they will talk.

The young student respondents also expressed similar opinions with of course some exceptions. As presented by Debannita (22 years, B.A 3rd year student): differences in language mainly depend on the person’s educational qualifications, their surroundings, individual personality and also on the specific context they are speaking in. Income hardly matters here.

Rikta (21 years, B.Tech student): Even if income is same, occupation might be different and due to this there will be individual differences also. That is why women and men of same income group might not speak in the same way.

Srijita (25 years, M.Phil student): No, it is different. Actually it does not depend on money or income, but more on one’s education and family background.
However, some respondents also believed that being in same income category women mostly speak in the same way.

As put forward by Sudeshna (32 years, Govt. Service), “What I have noticed is that people of same income group speak more or less in the same way. I did not find any difference there.”

Then another young respondent Payel (19 years, B.A. 2nd year student) said, “I think that their language use patterns are almost same because they are mostly engaged in similar kind of institutions or associations, however there might be slight differences if someone earns a little higher.”

Besides, as Sarmistha (41 years, School Teacher) stated, “To some extent, yes women of same income group do speak in the same way. It actually depends on their relationship with each other and also because they often have a common lifestyle pattern.”

In this study, the respondents were also asked for their opinions regarding the language use patterns of both women and men, belonging to different income groups. Here also varied responses were obtained, out of which some concluding remarks can be drawn for a more comprehensive understanding of the overall linguistic practices of women and men in relation to their social classes. It is already being noted that same income group may reflect similar social standing. But differences in language use may exist because of different social contexts and also diverse occupations. Since not all individuals are brought up or socialized in the same way, their learning of societal norms as well as the socially prescribed ways of behaving and acting also often differ from each other. And of course, language is no exception here, due to which we find that an individual’s personality, personal perceptions and surroundings often influence their linguistic usage in both private and public sphere. Now another important dimension of the
relation between language and class that is to be taken into consideration is that whether women and men of different income groups speak differently or in similar way. Here also multiple replies were obtained, which primarily reflected that income alone does not have absolute influence on the language usage of men and women. However, when combined with education or occupation that means as social class in the most concrete sense it is influential to a large extent. In this context again the use of certain narratives will lead us to move forward for understanding the language and class nexus.

Gargi (25 years, M.A. student): No, talking differently does not depend on one’s income. Income can vary between individuals, some may earn more and some less but that does not at all influence their language or way of talking. It is possible that a person with higher income may use rough language, whereas another person with a lower income might not talk that roughly. So income, whether same or different, does not determine people’s language use patterns.

Neetu (22 years, M.Sc. student): I don’t think that men and women of different income groups talk differently. That actually depends upon individuals. Before talking to someone, one does not know what is his/her salary and vice-versa. They just talk like themselves as humans and talk with each other out of respect.

Sarmistha (25 years, M.Phil student): To me, income does not matter so much. Differences in income do not always create differences in language usage of men and women. Actually the differences in language use patterns can be due to the differences in education, culture, background etc. all of which can influence our way of talking. On the basis of all these our language can be either good or bad, and also language can be changed based on our environment or surroundings and of course the various social contexts.
Not only the young student respondents, but also many working women have expressed similar opinion.

For instance, as Nandini (30 years, Lecturer in college) has stated, “differences in language use are not at all determined by differences in incomes of individuals. Rather it actually depends on their mentality, social upbringing and also on their progressive thought that how they will talk in different situations with others.”

Debarati (42 years, IT Consultant): Previously when I earned less I used to talk the same way as I talk now. And I have noticed that in my office those who earn like me or less or even higher than me they also talk in similar way. But difference occurs when two individuals get same salary but are in two different occupations. It actually does not depend upon amount of earning, rather on what kind of job they are involved in.

Though these respondents and some others perceived that income disparity does not lead to language differences several other respondents opined that people of different income groups often use different language for interacting with others.

Subhalaxmi (19 years, B.A. 2nd year student): If income is different between two males or two females some amount of differences are visible in language usage. Those who earn more they use a kind of ‘hi-fi’ language and their language often projects that they know everything. But on the other hand, those who earn less they often feel insecure because of their lower income. Though these differences are mostly seen among males, some differences are also found among females e.g. between the maids and the call centre employees.

Pujashree (24 years, M.A., B.Ed student): If I consider our income group and that of our maid, then definitely there is a difference in the language. The way my mother talks to the maid and
they give the reply both are different from talking to our neighbours. However, in case of males if there is a huge difference in the income group then only the difference in language usage is seen.

Manashi (35 years, Assistant Professor in Engineering College): In different income group the confidence level and the language pattern will change obviously. Speaking pattern here may be same but thought may differ- that depends upon particular individuals.

Sweta (39 years, Doctor): If it is a same income group, then often women and also men might speak in the same way..it actually depends upon how one is talking to others and does not depend on income. It is true that in equal income category not much difference is seen in linguistic practices, whereas in unequal income categories sometimes differences are evident. However, if the speakers are friends then money does not matter and also it is not reflected in their interaction.

Sanghamitra (30 years, Lecturer in College) also shared similar views. According to her, “Our society is structured according to income and financial background. So therefore a person, who is rich, not necessarily educated or polished, might behave or speak in high handed manner.”

Thus, it becomes evident here that almost all respondents agreed that language use is not only dependent on one’s income. Income along with education, occupation, family background and status as well as the socio-cultural milieu determine one’s social class, which in turn influences the speaking style and linguistic practices of both women and men in private and public spheres as well as in same or different income groups. The findings of this research work reveal that the respondents’ differential income background does not always determine their linguistic usages i.e., that they do not use different language with reference to their different income pattern. For
instance, it is being noticed that a respondent, whose family income is not only meager to survive, run the family or even supporting the respondent’s education the linguistic practices do not reveal anything about her background. Neither does she herself use any abusive language nor her parents, because they believe that it is education, which actually makes the difference. They like reading books, working hard to make life better. However, she also felt that there are many people, who belong to the low income group in our society and are mostly involved in various manual or laborious jobs, who are more likely to use the huge variety of swear words. So the respondents primarily were of the opinion that income alone can not decide any person’s socio-economic as well as cultural background as well as their language use patterns.

**Education and Language Use:**

Language as discourse involves role relationships, values, attitudes, social and cultural norms as well as different textual conventions including content, form and style as well as knowledge and understanding of the context and operates at different levels of abstraction. But language is also integrally linked with both the expression and exercise of power, implying thereby that language does not exist in vacuum, it is intrinsic to the lives of individuals and groups as well as the production and reproduction of culture within the broader context of society. The relationship between language and education is a two-way and complementary one, where while language as a medium of instruction and communication helps in acquiring education, education on the other hand also plays a significant role in determining language use of human individuals. In sociology as well as in other social sciences like sociolinguistics, education has always been regarded as one of the most important attributes of social class. Though often class has primarily been conceived of as determined by economy (e.g. income, wealth or property etc.), but in the most lucrative sense of the term, it has been associated with several other social factors like education,
occupation or profession, socio-cultural background of particular individuals etc. In this study also, we have seen in the previous section that in opinion of the respondents also, income alone can not determine one’s social class. The role of education has got pivotal importance in this respect. If we trace back to Basil Bernstein’s pioneering work ‘Class, Codes and Control’ (1971) we will be able to find out that the working-class environment of the low-income children created a verbal deficiency responsible for subsequent low educational achievement. According to him, since children of lower income group do not get enough social exposure they develop among themselves what is called ‘restricted code’, which is highly contextualized or context-specific. On the contrary the children of middle income group because of their high exposure to prevailing socio-cultural environment use ‘elaborated code’, which is highly decontextualized.

Now, in this study a good number of respondents of both the age groups have agreed that education in true sense does make a difference in the language use pattern of men and women. Though it can not be stated in absolute terms that highly educated people use more refined and polished language rather than relatively less educated or uneducated people, but some reference can be made in this regard, which often proves that education influences one’s language use pattern. Most of the respondents opined that in present day society social class is determined by education to a large extent and though education primarily refers to the qualification and credentials, but regarding language usage education is beyond that. Here value education as well as the socialization pattern and process also matter to a great extent. In this context some narratives are worth mentioning.

Kakali (39 years, School Teacher): Education of course is an important factor here. But what is more important is how one is internalizing and accepting education. As it is commonly seen that
bus conductors often use coarse language, it is also sometimes found that educated people also use slangs.

Mousumi (36 years, Accounts Department, Govt. Service): As class indicator education plays an important role, then comes culture, economy etc. I think those who have similar education use same kind of language and often polished language. I have seen this in my office. However, the educational degree is not everything; there are many educated people, who do not follow a good style of speaking.

Tusni (38 years, Private service): yes, with education people’s language becomes more polished, but I think it is somewhere there in one’s mind. Like the way my driver talks and another person who is involved with several social clubs often differ. There is a basic difference in mentality due to which they speak differently and which often reflects their level of education.

Tandrima (21 years, B.Sc 3rd year student): language use is often determined by one’s familial education as well as school education. But that does not mean that people of same education level speak similarly. There might be differences on the basis of their mentality, family status etc.

These actually support the fact that education, though often influences one’s linguistic practices, but here full-fledged education along with family background do play the most significant role. However, education itself is also influential. From our childhood we learn and internalize the behavioural and speech patterns of our family members and then in the broader institutional setting we learn and pick up from our teachers as well as peer group. It is also seen that from the very beginning a kind of resistance is being made especially among the women, due to which they avoid using coarse or gendered language in both private and public settings. That means
most of the respondents believe that education alone is not so important, rather culture and family also play an important role in determining the linguistic usage of human individuals. The respondents also expressed their views about the role of education in relation to the use of gender discriminatory language or ‘gendered language’. According to them education has nothing to do with the use of gendered language. It depends entirely on the individual’s mentality as well as on their socio-cultural background.

Thus as Lalti (30 years, School Teacher) shared, “Education obviously has a special quality. It teaches us to use proper and refined language in particular situations. However, this is not always the case. Thus the way the educated teachers speak to their students and use language is quite different even from that of an educated owner of a factory.”

Actually, since individuals are born and brought up in different socio-cultural environment, they are exposed to different things in the society and therefore often their social position differs, even if their education level is same. Depending on that the language of two women or men can be same or even different in specific social context. Since they often possess same degree and level of education, sometimes their linguistic usage might be same. As postulated by George Yule (2006:206), although the unique circumstances of every life result in each of us having an individual way of speaking, a personal dialect or idiolect, we generally tend to sound like others with whom we share similar educational backgrounds. Among those who leave the educational system at an early age, there is a general pattern of using certain forms that are relatively infrequent in the speech of those who go on to complete college. Expressions such as those contained in Them boys throwed somethin’ or It wasn’t us what done it are generally associated with speakers who have spent less time in education. Those who spend more time in the educational system tend to have more features in their spoken language that derive from a lot of
time spent with the written language, so that threw is more likely than threwed and who occurs more often than what in references to people. The observation that some teacher “talks like a book” is possibly a reflection of an extreme form of this influence from the written language after years in the educational system. However, on the contrary it is also found that on the basis of their individual personality and familial surroundings people’s language usage, style of speaking might also be different, even if they have same educational background.

Similarly, it can not be presumed that different levels of education always reflect different ways of language usage and speaking. They can talk in the same way as well as in different ways also. According to the respondents, women in general have a tendency to adhere to the societal normative structure and behave and speak accordingly. They are more inclined to use soft and polite language irrespective of their educational background. However, the more educated a woman is the more polished language is used by her in comparison to the lesser educated women. Though exceptions are there also because what we, people with a certain level of education think of as ‘refined’ and ‘polished’ are actually relative terms. The lesser educated people might not think in the same way like us. Therefore there are often differences in the selection of words, style of speaking and also in the attitude of speakers while speaking with others. Thus, for instance we can here refer to some narratives again to establish this argument that despite the significant role of education in guiding and shaping one’s life, their linguistic practices are not always determined by their educational level or background only. Here the existing cultural setting along with the family background and the social learning also impact a lot.
Himeli (30 years, Assistant Professor in Engineering College): language actually depends on one’s environment, the family setting and culture that they are in regular contact with. How they will talk also depends on the education of the family members.

Thus education is said to have greater influence on shaping one’s outlook, the way they behave and talk in the social setting. Education makes one’s life more polished and more refined and above else they become gentle too. However, whether people belonging to same education level or background will speak in the same way or that people of different education level speak differently actually depends on how they perceive education in their lives, and how much influence their social learning has on their behavioural pattern and linguistic practices in the practical field. Besides, another important point here is that ‘regional difference’ also creates linguistic differences. In our society even today, rural people in general are lagging far behind than that of the urbanites. In urban or even sub-urban areas, exposure to various socio-cultural as well as economic amenities is much higher than it is in the rural areas. Since the educational facilities and job openings are less accessible in rural areas, the overall development of the rural people is often at a very stagnant position. Due to their lack of education they not only feel insecure both economically and socially but also that they are unaware of several dimensions of the dynamism of our society. This undoubtedly affects their language use patterns along with their dressing and food habits, mentality and intellectual capabilities adversely. This is the reason why we find differences between the educated and uneducated people around us.

For instance as one respondent Sucharita argued, “the language we use and that used by our maids or farmers or people, who are less educated is quite different. What we think of as polished and refined forms of language may not be the same to them. They often are unable to speak in the ‘standard’ variety of the language, rather use more colloquial language. However,
that does not mean that they always use coarse or harsh language, but of course there is difference. That is why I think that if education level is different then language of the concerned speakers also might be different.”

Thus we can say that education level does have an impact, since education creates different expectation levels within oneself about how to act, behave, talk and interact with others. But yet again social position, family background and the upbringing process also seem to have significant influence on one’s language usage and also whether and in which profession or position that person is employed has a more definite impact.

**Occupation and Language Use:**

In this research since language use is said to be determined by one’s social class, so apart from income and education the particular role of occupation should also be discussed. The primary aim here is to investigate whether occupation or profession, also referred to as ‘job’ or ‘employment’ has any impact on the way language is used by both men and women.

Social class indicators are numerous in number, especially in this postmodern globalized world. Today we do not consider economy (income, wealth etc.) to be the sole determinant of social class. Rather other associated factors are also significant here, among which education and occupation are the most researched ones as well as most influential also. Realistically speaking, all these dimensions are correlated and can not be separated from each other. Occupation depends upon one’s education to a great extent, which in turn influences one’s income pattern. So, while analyzing social class social scientists prefer to consider all the contributing factors in order to explore the authentic picture of the entire scenario. As put forward by most of the respondents, linguistic practices of individuals often reflect their social position or more
specifically their job pattern. Here, with the help of some narratives the researcher has been able to make certain conclusions regarding the influence of occupation in using language.

Madhurima (30 years, H.R. Manager, Pvt. Service): I think that the type of profession might determine the language pattern and not gender. For example, people in teaching profession is conceived of having a particular pattern of speech and people in IT sector is said to have a different pattern of speech and gender has no role to play in this.

Barnika (34 years, Lecturer in college): In my opinion occupation or profession definitely influences one’s linguistic practices. Language differs according to varieties of occupation and also regarding the use of gendered language or rather sexist language profession matters a lot. For instance, those men who are in sales or in some hard work often use slang language. The language of a doctor or teacher is much better and comparatively without expletives, whereas an engineer working on a ‘site’ with labourers are more used to deliver slang language.

Ananya (18 years, B.A. 1st year student): Yes, occupational difference also creates language differences, like the language use pattern of a doctor is different from that of a teacher.

Sarmistha (25 years, M.Phil student): Since in professional field people of different class and educational level are present, therefore their way of talking and language use might not be the same.

Initially though it is being observed and felt by majority respondents that language differences are very often determined by their respective occupational background, but disagreements are also there regarding the fact whether people from same occupation use same linguistic forms and vice versa. While some respondents argued that being in same profession people are often influenced by their colleagues and thus often pick up or adopt certain behavioural characteristics,
linguistic forms, style of speaking, but for others despite being in the same occupational field since people are not same with reference to their mentality, upbringing, educational level etc. several differences are being found among them in their language use pattern. These arguments can best be understood with reference to some narratives.

Mousumi (36 years, Govt. Service): I have noticed in my office that people, who are in same occupation, speak in the same way. They use a more polished kind of language, they usually work together, sit on same bench and that is why their way of speaking is quite similar.

Lalti (30 years, School Teacher): Since those who are in same occupation spend quite a long time of the day together and interact frequently with others present there hence we often find similarities among them regarding their language usage. Besides, their problems are often same and so the solutions also.

Rubina (19 years, B.Sc. 1st year student): I think even if very little, but occupation does have an impact on one’s language usage. Women and men, who are in same profession use more or less same language pattern. Those who are in higher professional position are less likely to use bad language.

Chaitali (22 years, B.A. 3rd year student): Language use differs with the type of job. But in a particular profession since almost all people come from similar background and they have a common feeling and understanding, they are more likely to use similar kind of language.

These statements can be supported by both the studies conducted by William Labov (1966) and Peter Trudgill (1974). As adults, the outcome of our time in the educational system is usually reflected in our occupation and socio-economic status. The way bank executives, as opposed to window cleaners, talk to each other usually provides linguistic evidence for the significance of
these social variables. In one of the earliest studies, Labov actually combined elements from place of occupation and socio-economic status by looking at pronunciation differences among salespeople in three New York City department stores. They were Saks Fifth Avenue (with expensive items, upper middle-class status), Macy’s (medium-priced, middle-class status) and Klein’s (with cheaper items, working-class status). Here Labov found that the speaking style or speech pattern was specific and unique for the three departmental stores, which actually implied that being in the same occupational place for sometime people start to develop a particular style of speaking as well as using specific linguistic variables. Trudgill’s research also found same results. Their studies have also discovered that when speakers in a middle-status group try to use a prestige form associated with a higher-status group in a formal situation, they often have the tendency to overuse the form. This has also been explained in terms of the effects of social ambition among the middle class to be ‘better’.

Many other respondents also supported this argument, whereas almost another equal number of respondents opposed the view. According to them, occupation does not at all affect one’s linguistic practices, and also that people of same occupation do not always follow same language use patterns. At the same time, those who are not in same profession do not always speak differently. But in many cases we find differences among both women and men regarding their language use and style of speaking. As we have already mentioned in the previous section that notable educationist and sociolinguist Basil Bernstein (1970) put forward the hypothesis that lower income group people use more context-specific language (restricted code) whereas those in the middle income group use more decontextualized (elaborated code) language, we also can refer to his work in this context with regard to people’s occupation. Bernstein theorized on lower income group, who are also in ‘working classes’ and similarly the middle income group in the
‘middle class’. So here one’s occupation also gets pivotal importance because income is dependent upon a person’s occupation as well as on education. In this context we can also refer to our society, where the language forms of the uneducated or illiterate lower ‘working classes’ often differ to a great extent from that of the educated middle and upper class of people. Thus as conveyed by the respondents, most of the people belonging to working or labourer class, servants or maids are more prone to use harsh language and speaking style as compared to other people. It might be due to their type of job, which demands excessive physical labour, their lack of education as well as the feeling of ‘relative deprivation’, which gives rise to a feeling of inferiority and isolation among them. Besides, the use of colloquial language and ‘local regional dialect’ is quite higher among them. Occupational difference also demarcates their language and thus the language patterns of the factory labourers, maids or domestic help vary largely from that of the teachers, lawyers or businesspersons. This claim can be supported with the help of several narratives.

Madhurima (21 years, B.A. 3rd year student): Language differs with regard to occupational differences. Here personal nature also matters a lot. Like I have seen the maids talk very loudly or even shout and they generally have the tendency to talk very aggressively. But we generally do not use the same pattern.

Anita (19 years, B.A. 2nd year student): Occupation wise language can be different, actually language will be same, but the approach might be different, selection of words can be different. For example, a person who sells fish or rice in market and another person who is either a teacher or an officer- their language will obviously be different on the basis of their education, family background, surrounding etc.
Subhalaxmi (19 years, B.A. 2nd year student): Language is often different on the basis of people’s occupation or profession. For example, my father is in Police service, so often for the sake of his duty he uses certain language, which we do not use at home.

Another point to be noted here is that according to some respondents, linguistic differences are not only created and found among people belonging to different occupational background. There can also be differences in same profession on the basis of the incumbent’s position. Thereby ‘hierarchy’ is often maintained here, because of which both women and men follow differential language use pattern, where persons in higher posts often look down upon their colleagues of relatively lower posts.

Soumi (21 years, B.A. 3rd year student): I think, in an organization different type of people work together. They might be coming from different linguistic backgrounds. So there might be difference, and another point is that professionally there might not be any difference. But difference can be due to the varied positions and grades of the particular profession.

Saswati (33 years, Govt. Service): during work all are expected to maintain a minimum decorum in the workplace. But after work, many become informal. However, if someone is much younger than other, then a difference in talking is noticed. Similarly when I talk to the teachers in various schools, the hierarchical relationship is being maintained. There I speak and they listen.

Tania (32 years, School Teacher): Job or profession influences language use patterns. For example, those who are in higher posts, they often talk in a commanding and dominating manner with their subordinates.

The reference of hierarchical relationship leads us to another concept embedded in our social structure, i.e. power. In this context we can also refer to French philosopher and sociologist
Michel Foucault (1972), who has considered discourse as both possibility and constraint and even predetermined within certain power relationships. Specific discourses determine what is understood and what is understandable. Foucault believed that knowledge itself does not necessarily reflect any particular truth, but rather it is discourse that reflects who has power and, therefore, knowledge. Foucault’s view is that those who are dominant in any institution or group or community maintain their power and position through the use of specific discourse(s); they establish the boundaries of knowledge and they do this primarily through language use (Jule, 2008: 29).

So, here we find that language use pattern depends not only on one’s occupation, but also on one’s family background, proper education, mentality and individual perceptions. In reality the fact is that, none of these factors contribute to the formation of social class alone. Class formation depends upon all these and also upon one’s learning or socialization, socio-cultural environment etc. Though we have found that linguistic differences are often evident because of differences in social class position, but how gender is related in this context is yet to be explored. From the accounts of the respondents, it has been observed that class differences also reflect the tendency to use gendered language in both private and public contexts. As has been represented here, women of lesser education and also low-profile job are more likely to use swear or coarse language more than that of their fellow women. Basically, women because of their soft and sober nature do not only prefer to be ‘silent’ but also that they always think before they speak and try to present their argument logically and politely. Besides, since highly educated women have vast knowledge and their horizon is broader and wide too, it not only teaches them to avoid harsh language, but also guides them to always use language keeping in mind the existing socio-cultural context. Expletives or abusive language is used mostly by women of either very low-
educational and income group or also often by very high ranked professionals. Here the only difference is that while the lower class people use these very arrogantly and openly, the higher class women prefer to use in a much more sophisticated way. But in general among women the use of so called ‘sexist’ and abusive language is lesser than that of their male counterparts. Women of higher educational and income background also are more inclined to speak ‘standard’ forms of language, whereas men have the tendency to use more colloquial ones. Besides, men of all educational, occupational or income groups in general are more likely to use language in a dominating way. They follow almost similar patterns in both private and public spheres and that they also use swear words more than women. The more casual and frank nature of men do not always reflect their social position, whereas it is comparatively easy to decide about a woman’s status or position by her behaviour, speaking pattern and linguistic practices, dress etc. So, social class is often reflected through the linguistic usage of women more than men.

In this backdrop, we can trace back to American sociolinguist William Labov (1966), who while attempting to understand different demographic groups, had found that men speak with more variation, more vernacularly (casually) than women do. This observation led to the view that men are more at ease in their social settings (that they are freer to adjust to situations), and that women are more anxious and less at ease in social situations because of their need to achieve or maintain social status. On the other hand women use more standard language because doing so grants them access to legitimacy, whereas men can be creative with language because they are already considered ‘legitimate’. Similarly, Peter Trudgill (1974) argued that women claimed to use more standard speech than they actually did, while men claimed to use more vernacular speech than they actually did. He suggested that rather than reflecting actual speech patterns, perceived differences may be the result of social attitude about the acceptable behaviour
of women and men. In other words, since we believe women to be more status-conscious than men, we interpret their speech patterns this way. We always tend to think that women need to secure and maintain social status, and that they use language as a means of doing so. On the contrary, we also tend to praise men in terms of their occupation and earning power. We do not regard men as using standard or formal language to secure their social position, because it is already relatively secure. So, in general we are more likely to think of men as being more autonomous, and women as more supportive of others. Consequently, this is what we tend to see when we analyze their speech.

Many sociolinguistic studies have also always supported this proposition and often have claimed group differences in the way language is used by women and by men. It has been noticed that across social classes, ethnic groupings and age-groups, women consistently use more linguistic features associated with standard language. Since in recent times intersectional approach, focusing on ‘multiple-axis framework’ has made a major breakthrough into gender research and has also prompted a number of theoretical and conceptual discussions about how to understand gender in combination with other social categories, my research findings have also been analyzed from the intersectional viewpoint. Here language intersects on the one hand with gender and on the other with social class. It has been observed in earlier feminist theorizations as well as in present empirical instances that women do never form a homogeneous group; rather the diversities and heterogeneity in their nature are reflected in the various unequal positions they are placed in. Thus, the multiple unequal positioning of women in various socio-cultural as well as economic and other spheres essentially figure out the ‘intra-group’ differences.

Based on education, income, occupation and life-style patterns women are accorded their respective class positions, which also dictate them how to talk, act and behave in both private
and public domains. According to most of the respondents social class is an important dimension of our society or rather stratified society. Class though is considered as an ‘achieved status’ in comparison to ‘caste’ as an ‘ascribed’ one, but in present day society one’s class is often determined by and reflect the class of their families. Thus very often if the individual is born to an existing upper class family, he/she is considered as a representative of that class. This is true for all social classes. Class is also said to have enormous influence on the behavioural patterns of the incumbent individuals, their dressing patterns, educational exposure as well as more specifically their linguistic usage. It is commonly believed that one’s social class is primarily dependent on their wealth or money followed by factors like family background and status, education, occupation etc. In this study as perceived and put forward by the respondents, income, education and occupation as well as family background and life-style patterns have been taken into account as the determinants of social class. Social class has always been considered as the most important dimension in intersectional paradigm. Here, also the intersection of gender, language and class actually aims to explore and unearth the underlying, hidden situation of how inequalities at multiple levels not only oppress people or more specifically women, but also lead to their marginalization in various fields of existence.

According to the respondents, women in general have a tendency to adhere to the societal normative structure and behave and speak accordingly. They are more inclined to use soft and polite language. However, from an intersectional perspective our departure point should be to look for places and situations, where major differences are found even among women in their linguistic usages. Thus, e.g. the more educated a woman is the more polished language is used by her in comparison to the lesser educated women. Though exceptions are there also because what people think of as ‘refined’ and ‘polished’ are actually relative terms. The lesser educated people
might not think in the same way like us. Therefore there are often differences in the selection of words, style of speaking and also in the attitude of speakers during conversing with others. Here apart from education, the existing cultural setting along with the family background and the social learning also impact a lot.

The narrative given by Sanchita (21 years, B.A. 3rd year student) explains: I think education often plays an important role in determining one’s language usage. For example, I guess those who are teachers or professors use a better language than the servants or maids. Their language is very rough, they quarrel more with others, whereas the educated people in general think twice before saying anything and they mostly speak logically.

In our society most of the domestic-helpers or maids come from either sub-urban or purely rural areas, where even today people in general are lagging far behind than that of the urbanites. In urban or even sub-urban areas, exposure to various socio-cultural as well as economic amenities is much more than it is in the rural areas. Due to their lack of education and exposure they not only feel insecure both economically and socially but also that they are unaware of several aspects of the dynamism of our society. This undoubtedly affects their language use patterns along with their dressing and food habits, mentality and intellectual capabilities adversely. This is the reason why we find differences between the educated and uneducated people around us. For instance as one respondent Sucharita (31 years, Govt. Service) placed it, “the language we use and that used by our maids or farmers or people, who are less educated is quite different. What we think of as polished and refined forms of language may not be the same to them. They often are unable to speak in the ‘standard’ variety of the language, rather use more colloquial language. However, that does not mean that they always use coarse or harsh language, but of
course there is difference. That is why it is believed that if education level is different then language of the concerned speakers also might be different.”

In this context we can refer back to notable educationist and sociolinguist Basil Bernstein (1970), who put forward the hypothesis that lower income group people use more context-specific language (restricted code) whereas those in the middle income group use more decontextualized (elaborated code) language. Elaborated and restricted codes were aimed at capturing something fundamental about groups’ orientation to meaning. ‘Elaborated codes were considered to regulate a greater range of combinatory possibilities than restricted codes and their syntactic alternatives were considered less predictable’ (1990:96). Bernstein stressed that he was not attempting to capture anything relating to linguistic competence that would allow the charge of a deficit model of language use for some groups to stand up. Instead, what he had differentiated was, ‘how sets of social relationships in which people were embedded acted selectively on what was chosen from common linguistic resources’. He was concerned with the organization of social contexts and how these organizations oriented groups to different ranges and different kinds of meanings (Wodak et al. ed., 2013: 44). We also can refer to his work in this context with regard to people’s occupation. Bernstein theorized on lower income group, who are also in ‘working classes’ and similarly the middle income group in the ‘middle class’. So here one’s occupation also gets pivotal importance because income is dependent upon a person’s occupation as well as on education. Likewise, we can also think about our society, where the language forms of the uneducated or illiterate lower ‘working classes’ often differ to a great extent from that of the educated middle and upper class of people. Thus as conveyed by the respondents, most of the people belonging to working or labourer class, servants or maids are more prone to use harsh language and speaking style as compared to others. It might be due to their type of job, which
demands excessive physical labour, their lack of education as well as the feeling of ‘relative deprivation’, which gives rise to a feeling of inferiority and isolation among them. Besides, the use of colloquial language and ‘local regional dialect’ is found more among them. Occupational difference also demarcates their language and thus the language patterns of the factory labourers, maids or domestic help vary largely from that of the teachers, lawyers or businesswomen (persons). Other salient points of concern here are the dynamics of urbanity and rurality. We know by now that our population is now more urban than rural. In several parts of the country as well as the world, many urban centres are not only plagued by poverty, minority youth often faces language discrimination, language prejudice and extreme gaps in the quality of their education. In our society linguistic and educational inequality is particularly high in rural and /or developing areas and particularly for women. Most of the time women face discrimination in educational and job opportunities, especially if they were raised in rural areas speaking an indigenous language. As dynamics of rurality and urbanity change around the world, the intersection of literacy, education and status attainment persist as a central arena in research on social stratification. It is also added that in most of the cases linguistic changes including that of change in pronunciation are brought about by women to a large extent and another significant observation made by him reflects the fact that sounds which are appropriate in rural settings are not often appropriate in the urban ones. His observations have been supported by many modern sociolinguists.

Thus, another important point placed by some respondents reflect that linguistic differences are not only created and found among people belonging to different occupational background. There can also be differences in same profession or income group on the basis of the incumbent’s position. Thereby ‘hierarchy’ is often maintained here, because of which both women and men
follow differential language use pattern, where persons in higher posts often look down upon their colleagues of relatively lower posts. The reference of hierarchical relationship leads us to another concept embedded in our social structure, i.e. power. Thus reference can be drawn to French philosopher and sociologist Michel Foucault (1972), who has considered discourse as both possibility and constraint and even predetermined within certain power relationships. Specific discourses determine what is understood and what is understandable. Foucault believed that knowledge itself does not necessarily reflect any particular truth, but rather it is discourse that reflects who has power and, therefore, knowledge. Foucault’s view is that those who are dominant in any institution or group or community maintain their power and position through the use of specific discourse(s); they establish the boundaries of knowledge and they do this primarily through language use.

Men generally have the tendency to enjoy and use ‘power’ physically, psychologically as well as linguistically. As a result of which women further lack power in various socio-cultural as well as economic fields, experience multiple inequalities and oppression due to which they are jeopardized and marginalized at numerous levels. Nevertheless, we find that not all women experience life in the same way. Here in this research, the women respondents have also opined that women ‘belong to’ as well as ‘achieve’ different social classes, based on their education, occupation, income, life-style patterns etc. And their unequal, varied class positions undoubtedly affect their linguistic practices. Thus, women of lesser education and also low-profile jobs are more likely to use swear or coarse language quite frequently. On the contrary, since educated women have vast knowledge and develop a wider and broader horizon, it not only teaches them to avoid harsh language, but also guides them to always use socially acceptable gender-appropriate language. Expletives or abusive language is found to be used mostly by women of
very low-educational and income group. However it is also often used by educated, high-ranked professionals. However, here they differ from each other on the basis of sheer sophistication while using various language forms. It has also been observed that ‘swear’ language used by a lower class woman is expected as well as accepted by the mainstream society.

In reality the fact is that lower class women often fall into a double bind. On the one hand they can not mix with others especially from the upper social classes because of their learned social behaviour including their linguistic practices, attitudes towards others etc. as well as their socio-cultural milieu that is different from the rest of the sections. On the other hand their social class positions actually create certain limitations before them, due to which neither they can have access to the basic and essential resources available in the society, nor can they overcome their position and learn something new. The language that a lower class young girl learns from her surroundings does not allow her to join groups where other girls talk in a refined way. Besides, this also limits her access to go to a good, reputed school for acquiring education, which in turn becomes responsible for her unequal and differential educational background. Since formal educational curriculum and procedures leave a huge positive impact on the individuals through which they learn how to live in the society with others, the lack of education does create major differences among individuals. And thus, being denied of equal opportunities in education, workplace, social status etc. these women from the lower social strata are more likely to use the ‘non-standard’ variety of language in everyday life. That is why they are often looked down upon by men and women of their own society, which in reality creates a paradox, whereby on the one hand they are easily accepted as the non-standard language user; on the other hand they are jeopardized for being representative of their respective lower social class positions. Besides, society also always constructs different frameworks to judge people. Thus, women of higher
educational and income background are always expected to speak ‘standard’ forms of language, avoiding the colloquial ones. So there is always an expectation especially from women to use gender-specific as well as their respective class-specific language forms, which can distinguish them from their male counterparts and also other fellow women. It is at this point that if they fail to perform accordingly, they are labeled against very easily, which of course marginalize them to a large extent. Thus, the substantive ‘second-grade existence’ of women as well as their marginalization has always been accentuated by the facilitating roles played primarily by gender, followed by their language and social class.

Conclusions: In this chapter the primary aim was to correlate language with gender and social class. Based on the subjective views of the respondents it was revealed that language use of both women and men differ to a great extent on the basis of social class differences. Emphasizing the role of education, occupation and income as the major attributes of social class, it was finally concluded that all these dimensions are equally important in determining social class and thereby influencing one’s language use patterns. Even today, language is fundamental to gender inequality, where language used about women, and also used by women places them in a double bind between being appropriately feminine and being fully human. In addition, women’s social class positions based on their education, occupation, income and lifestyle patterns also further their domination giving rise to ‘multiple oppressions’. Class has also been related with gender in this context and gender specific use of language has been found in some class positions more in comparison to others. Class has not been dealt with alone here, rather in intersection with gender also. The research findings have suggested that class differences do affect individual’s linguistic patterns even along gender lines. Since not all women or men in the society form a homogeneous group, we find differences in their philosophy and specific discourses. Inter-class differences are
also supported by intra-class differences, whereby language use patterns can not be easily generalized. However, some general trends have been identified and analyzed here with the help of qualitative-interpretative paradigm to reach a general, tentative conclusion. This chapter has also included the feminist intersectional perspective to decipher the interrelationship between language, gender and social class. It is being observed also that women in both lower as well as middle class generally have the tendency to identify more strongly with women from the next social group than with men from their own group. As suggested by several sociolinguists and also observed by the researcher in the study, women’s speech is characterized by the use of more standard forms of language in comparison to men because of their consciousness of and eagerness to maintain their social status. Though standard speech is primarily associated with higher social status, women of lower social status do so in order to claim such status. That is why the lower class women in our society often try to listen to as well as imitate what the women of their higher social strata are saying or using in their daily conversations. Thus we often find that the maids are trying to pronounce English words, even if they are unaware of the meanings inherent in them or even the relevance of using those terms in particular situations. Moreover, more public exposure also influences both women and men to follow certain linguistic principles. For instance, as people working in the same field for a long time influences each other’s linguistic usages, also often they are influenced by the language use patterns of people above or below their particular social position. Thus, as one maid learns some ‘polished, standard’ forms of language from her employers, the employers also often come to know about several colloquial linguistic forms from them. The only difference here is that they do not use such forms because of their education and childhood socialization, which undoubtedly expects from them to behave and speak in certain ways. So, finally it may be concluded then that in this
section it has been reflected that women’s language especially of the educated upper and middle class project use of more prestigious and standard forms in comparison to men’s dominating way of using language that is rife with more swear words, vernacular forms etc.
Quantitative Data Analysis

Univariate Tables on Demographic Profiles of the Respondents

Table 1. Educational Qualification of Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Qualification</th>
<th>No. Of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pursuing Graduation</td>
<td>27 (33.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduation Completed</td>
<td>14 (17.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pursuing Post-Graduation</td>
<td>7 (8.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Graduation and Above</td>
<td>32 (40%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 80

As the above table presents, among the 80 respondents of my research 27 i.e. 33.75% have been found pursuing their graduation. Since 40 respondents of this study are in the age group of 18-25 years, we find most of them studying in colleges. There are students studying in B.A. Hons and General course, B.Sc Hons. Course, in Engineering etc. Most of these students come from middle class as well as upper middle class background, with few respondents belonging to the lower middle classes.

Along with the students pursuing graduation, I have also interviewed 14 respondents (17.5%) who have completed their graduation either long back or in near past. That also implies that some of these respondents are graduate and now they are in paid jobs in various public and
private concerns, whereas among the younger age group many of the respondents, who have just completed their graduation are waiting for enrolling themselves in higher education i.e. in post-graduation. Besides these, 7 (8.75%) respondents have been found pursuing their post-graduation in both science and humanities streams. Rest of the respondents i.e. 32 (40%), which is also the majority of the respondents are highly qualified academically, i.e. they possess either a post-graduation degree or above. Thus I have come across respondents who are post-graduate, doctorate or even hold post graduate diploma in business administration etc. Thus a large number of students in higher education lead us to think that in the present day globalized society there has been enormous increase in the number of women professionals and academicians, which has been possible because of women’s active participation in higher education institutions and finally due to their empowerment.

Marital Status of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>No. Of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried</td>
<td>52 (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>25 (31.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Live-in)</td>
<td>1 (1.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 80

Data on marital status reflects that most of the respondents (52, 65%) are unmarried. Among the 40 students all are unmarried, while among the 40 women in paid jobs only 12 are unmarried.
This implies that unlike traditional society nowadays women do not always get married at an early age. Previously women in Indian society used to get married after attaining the age of puberty. Women’s role in the household or within the private sphere was not only expected but rather it was almost mandatory for them to get married, to reproduce and finally to take care of the children along with other family members. Whereas in the light of the 21st century, in a globalized postmodern world women are now accorded equal status both in the private and public sphere vis-a-vis their male counterparts. Feminist movements and increasing awareness among both women and men regarding women’s education, occupation etc. have paved the way for independent decision making for women. Now marriage and reproduction are not only the ultimate destinations of women. Now women can decide on their own whether they are ready to get married or not, or even whether they want to walk out of the institution in certain situations, where they opt for divorce. Moreover, during the study it was felt and observed that women in present times possess a very liberal view also regarding the selection of their partners. Thus one respondent was confident enough to assert that she lives-in with her partner and she was not trying to conceal it or hide it. She also expressed about the feelings and opinions of her family, which was not always in her favour, but the way she spoke and used language definitely reflected her confidence, self-esteem and decision making power.

Types of Work/Job

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Work/Job</th>
<th>No. Of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public Service</td>
<td>16 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Service</td>
<td>24 (60%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 40
Among the 40 women in paid jobs, 40% i.e. 16 women were engaged in public or government services, whereas 24 respondents (60%) were in various private service occupations.

The types of Public Services included teaching in schools and colleges, nationalized bank, primary education department as well as civil court etc. On the other hand private services included IT sector, private engineering college, private school, corporate sectors etc.

Monthly Family Income of the Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Categories</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upto 25,000</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25,001-50,000</td>
<td>46 (57.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,001-75,000</td>
<td>11 (13.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75,001-1,00,000</td>
<td>6 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,00,001- 1,25,000</td>
<td>6 (7.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,25,001-1,50,000</td>
<td>3 (3.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,50,001-1,75,000</td>
<td>3 (3.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,75,001-2,00,000</td>
<td>2 (2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,00,001 and above</td>
<td>1 (1.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 80
In the table above the monthly family income of the respondents has been presented. It is being inferred from the table that most of the respondents i.e. 46 (57.5%) belongs to the income category 25,001-50,000. This category represents middle-income group, whereas people belonging to the category of 75,000 and above and more specifically 1,00,000 onwards represents the higher-income or upper-income group. The income distribution has primarily focused on the middle and upper class people, whereas lower class and upper-upper class people have not been considered for this research.

Types of Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Families</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Joint Family</td>
<td>20 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear Family</td>
<td>59 (73.75%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Live-in)</td>
<td>1 (1.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N= 80

The above table projects that majority of the respondents (59 i.e. 73.75%) live in nuclear families, whereas 25% live in joint families and only respondent lives in with her partner, which is considered as ‘others’ here. From this table it becomes evident that family patterns worldwide as well as in India have undergone major changes. Starting from the impacts of industrialization followed by urbanization and more recently forces of globalization have left huge impact on the nature and patterns of family. While many respondents live in nuclear families out of their choice, some others live there due to some compulsion like for pursuing higher studies and for getting more exposure to work in urban areas they have often left their natal/parental residences
and have set up own separate households. Data also revealed that the mind-set of the educated young individuals has also changed and which is why they are often even staying with their partner without being married. Thus here we got one respondent, who is in a live-in or live-together relationship with her partner. So, in a nutshell the changing patterns of family were quite evident from the data collected for this research.