Chapter 7
Women Journalists, Marriage and Motherhood

7.1 Introduction

Women have been performing dual-responsibilities of professional and domestic spaces. The ideals of womanhood have not been transformed to include the modern woman in Indian society which is a contradiction (Channa, 2004). A woman often cannot ignore her domestic responsibilities which demand her time and engagement. Gender stereotyped professions like teaching, care and hospitality industries are considered suitable for women. Journalism is taken to be a non-conventional choice of profession for women. Gender based division of labour makes women more responsible towards her family and child care duties compared to men. For women the clash often begins with marriage followed by family and motherhood. The position of a woman in a family as a wife or a mother and her domestic life controls her professional life. This chapter focuses on how women’s career in journalism is influenced by cycles of life: marriage, family, motherhood and ageing.

A woman often has limited choices between the irreconcilable spaces of domestic responsibilities and her job. Making a choice to have both family and a career at the same time brings severe consequences resulting in complicated situations for a woman. Her multiple roles in a family like being a daughter, wife, mother, daughter-in-law keeps her in chains of domestic responsibilities demanding that she prove herself as a good house-maker and a good professional too. This chapter discusses aspects of a woman journalist’s life in the context of marriage, family, motherhood and age, the creation of the socially made image of a superwoman, and the pressures to prioritize her domestic responsibilities over her career. Over the years it has been observed that “Mothers are tired of trying to be 'superwomen' and have decided that high achievement in the labor force is not compatible with a successful home life” (Deogun, 1997; Jacobs, 1994; Morin, 1991; Tailor, 1991 cited in Whittington et al., 2000). This chapter tries to understand how these women journalists balance between journalism as a career and motherhood in
a family life. It asks how these women negotiate for their space amidst domestic responsibilities.

Understanding ‘ageism’ as a social perception which is a category to define worth of a woman is an important aspect studied in this chapter. This section aims at discussing ageism and gender relations in journalism which is a social construction. Acknowledging multiple social perceptions of ‘age’ being operated strongly in journalism, this section argues that age-hierarchy is constructed among and within women journalists. It critically raises that how women’s experience is discounted as she gets older whereas men are seen as achievers with experience as they age in the profession.

7.2 Journalism: “Anti-marriage” Profession?

Marriage is viewed as an essential, sacramental, and irrevocable event in Indian life at large (Kapadia, 1966 cited in Davis et al., 1989). A large body of research on dual-career families shows that there are conflicts between professional and parental roles are especially demanding and stressful for the female spouse (Bryson and Bryson, 1978; Heckman, Bryson and Bryson, 1977; Holahan and Gilbert, 1979; Johnson and Johnson, 1976 cited in Gilbert et al., 1981). Scholars have barely examined on how marriage affects women’s education, though there are a few who argue that early marriage/childbearing and parenthood do have a negative impact on women’s accomplishment of education after marriage (Teachman and Polonko, 1988; Hofferth et al., 2001; Hango and Bourdais, 2007 cited in Dutta 2016). Women pursuing their professional aspirations have to face difficulties after marriage as personal and domestic responsibilities keep them bound. Thus family ties are considered as detrimental to job as well to career achievement for professional women (Carrier, 1995).

Working as a journalist has created the impression that this job does not have fixed working hours thus for a woman it is assumed that it will be difficult to continue her journalistic job after marriage. Moreover, it is not because of the nature of journalistic work which makes a woman quit her job, but also the existing patriarchal social boundaries which do not liberate her. Arguably, the historical shift towards an industrial
economy has altered the economic role of women as they leave home to work (Boserup, 1970; Tilly and Scott, 1978; Degler, 1980 cited in Roos, 1983). Women’s marriage and child-rearing responsibilities have been increasingly affecting their professional outcomes as more married women entered the paid workforce (Roos, 1983).

It is important to understand that whether it is the profession of journalism which does not let a woman continue her personal life with marriage or it is the patriarchal institution of marriage which does not liberate her. Dutta (2011) argues that any analysis of marriage must be firstly located within the paradigm of social change. The consumption-driven new economic order entails economic benefits of marriage including both in the form of dowry or earning wives.

The kind of professional and temporal availability that journalism demands often means that journalist’s personal lives are secondary. For women this means being unavailable for family commitments, something which is frowned upon especially after marriage. According to South African National Editor’s Forum (SANEF 2006) report, women experience that they are treated with distrust when having to tend to children and women have to work twice as hard as men to prove their professional worth. Women in media also experience that maternity leave means taking time off and after their comeback in profession will be questioned twice as much as before. This report also unravels that women have to abide by gender roles like family responsibilities are major prohibitive factor to attain journalistic career goals. The SANEF report states that “marriage shortened the careers of many women” (p, 25). Given the Indian social structure, many women leave their journalistic job after marriage because working women is still a less accepted identity. Indian family system is still upholding its basic character of traditional patterns of life (Kurian 1961, 1971, 1974; Singer, 1958; Vatuk, 1972 cited in Rao et al., 1982). Quoting Kurian (1974), Rao (et al., 1982) informs that Kurian insists on the fact of sacramental nature of marriages which is still dominating in the form of arrange

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marriages in Indian society. This practice reinforces the conventional hierarchy with unequal power relations between man and woman.

One of the respondents shared that

*Jyoti:* After marriage challenges increase more for a woman, she has to prove more at both social and professional fronts. Ultimately she becomes sandwich between personal and professional responsibilities dealing with the every minute proving scanner.

Thus usually after marriage a woman chose desk work over reporting and limits her professional aspirations. It is really challenging to continue job for a married woman as already there is very strong anti-opinion about them. They are stereotyped on the basis of no longer being a proficient and dedicated professional. Does a man ever face such comment after his marriage that as being married now you lose your professional efficiency, skills and dedication?

The symbols of marriage like Sindoor, Manglasutra bring all attention to you and dragging everything to being married. At work place the males are keenly interested to track down your daily routine and to pick a fault in your professional performance and relating it to one’s married life.

Working on any assignment is not a big deal but coping with everyday invasion in private life is a constant challenge which we woman live with. The “lobbying culture” is so rooted that if you behave disciplined you are radically excluded from normal chit chat and become the target for all kinds of arrogant labeling like self-centered, egoistic. Or if you take interest in lobbying and mingle with them they label you as a loose woman. I cannot understand whether Journalism has problem with married woman or it wants all woman journalist to stay single to reach heights in journalism. If it is so, all men should stay unmarried first of all to do well in this profession rather than invading private spaces of their female colleagues.

Jyoti’s narrative explicates the boundaries beyond professional spaces where women face difficulties in maintaining the privacy at the workplace. For a woman it becomes more challenging to work after marriage where she is under even more pressure to prove her competence.

It is not the journalism which seems reluctant towards female journalists but it is the embedded patriarchy which asses worth of a woman based on social parameters. A woman is more tied to the family and its responsibilities whereas for a man it is never required to give more time to home and family. Patriarchy makes women more home-bound thus her professional freedom is seen with less importance. Here, the paradox of
free life seems more under socially-bind role for a woman where she finds it difficult to continue her profession after marriage.

Our social structure ensures that women are the only responsible entity to take care of their family life while considering it as the first duty. Marriage is seen at the ultimate attainment of social worth in a woman’s life where the symbols of marriage made it more traditionally announced her limited role towards her professional and personal choices. Perhaps the workplace and home both is equally patriarchal to remind her home-bound images through discriminatory treatment.

Moreover, the use of social symbols of marriage like Mangalsutra, sindoor, Bindi, Bangles, toe rings have been traditional signs for a woman indicating that she is not free or she belongs to a man. Malhotra (2002, p. 116-117) critically mention “the constant invocation of the pativrata now shows not only the timeless appeal of the mythological pativrata but also the manner in which the notion was recharged and made to fulfill the ambitions and need of contemporary society. Indeed the idea of the pativrata grew into ideology on the basis of which a familial life giving due deference to the hierarchies of gender and age could be organized in changed circumstances.” Hindu marriage does not brand a man as married at all whereas for a woman these symbols are mandatory to control her sexuality and mobility in the name of protecting her from other man. These are patriarchal symbols of marriage only for woman to keep herself unavailable from any kind of sexual overture from other males. This narrative opines the debate around the Hindu marriage-symbols to keep women conventionally in shackles on contrary freeing man completely from any such traditional commitment through such politics of symbols. Such socio-religious norms meant for women only to demonstrate her non-availability confirming her fidelity and loyalty to her husband whereas such norms has never been forced upon men.  


Sangeeta: For last five years my career graph has seen a downfall after marriage. As after marriage, multiple social responsibilities made me to compromise with my journalistic job. My husband is also a journalist, it makes a little easier to continue with job but can’t ignore the household responsibilities at all. And there I find very less supportive presence of him.

This profession is time demanding and still marriage is the biggest barrier for the growth of a woman as a media professional or you decide to marry a person of the same profession to keep the difference of jobs to avoid clashes. But it’s really a threat for a woman because once she is married it’s so discouraging social environment because then working conditions start playing against you and you are supposed to prove more as a married media professional. And survival after marriage is really a big challenge for a woman.

Sangeeta’s narrative describes that the social identity of a woman never lets her be completely free from marital responsibilities and thus a woman finds marriage an obstacle for her. The role of a husband seems supportive as his wife is an earning member but there is no participation from him to extend his help in any domestic responsibilities. The acceptance of a working wife can be considered by a man as a husband but sharing responsibilities in cooking, child-care and other household work is often not something could be accepted by a man here. The respondent is trying to point out that partner could be a superficially supportive husband but still be one who has never shared the burden of household responsibilities especially childcare. Also, her being an earning member neither reduces her domestic responsibilities nor makes her husband an equally contributor in domestic work.

Despite having a husband from same field of profession doesn’t ensure equality in domestic life because ‘husband’ is more patriarchal term which certainly doesn’t see any role in domestic sphere and has an easy escape through conventional gender based division of labour. Whereas employed women have more power in comparison to non-employed women in making of decisions (Blood and Wolfe, 1960; Lupri, 1969; Safilios-Rothschild, 1970; Bahr, 1974; McDonald, 1980; Ferber, 1982 Cited in Ramu, 2003). In Indian context this power is highly regulated and controlled by patriarchal brahmanical forces where ultimate authority is male. Narrative of the respondent reveals that within marriage there are multiple hierarchies which subordinate woman at both professional
and personal spaces. It is a social prejudice where a man is entitled to stay away from all domestic work and a women’s economic status cannot be translated into her liberation.

Her narrative ends with highlights on working conditions to prove more as a married media professional. The tension shifts from domestic sphere to professional space wherein a woman is judged more once she is married. It is over-burdening attitude of patriarchal society which idealizes a woman performing at every level like a superwoman. Usually it doesn’t happen with man after their marriage but perhaps the social conditioning awaits woman failing at her choices to reinforce the patriarchy thus unreasonable performance pressure is built in professional field with social biases.

_Apeksha: Still, only women are to manage household work and rearing kids. To continue in journalistic field one needs to have family support as this field doesn’t have fixed working hours. It requires a partner who could understand the functioning of the journalism and its working timings. Society has very negative notions about woman in this profession because of their nature of work which has less personal life.

Marriage and family is seen as hurdle because if you are out of process and not updating yourself, you are not of any use for this job. Now in this era of social media things are changing at fast pace thus one need to stay in competition. Journalism is a profession where one has to be on foot for every news and events to be covered. You can’t afford to be an early home-going woman because you are married and having a family._

The lack of family support especially after marriage weakens the possibility for a woman to continue her work. The nature of job based on uncertain working hours which do not support routine to run a family engagement in a system. Precisely, women journalists are seen as bold character which might not consider family and its responsibilities as per generalized social understanding. Being relatively independent in their professional life, women know needs of the professional arena to keep going which clashes with their good-woman image constructed by social norms. The working hours in journalism doesn’t allow one to go home early and follow the familial routine which generally results into raised eyebrow of the in-laws in family.

There are studies which examine influence of family structure on career advancement and success (Kir chmeyer, 2002; Schneer and Reitman, 2002; Stroh et al., 1996 cited in
O’Neil et al., 2008). Studies on work-family conflict (Netemeyer et al., 1996; Osterman, 1995 cited in O’Neil et al., 2008) and work-family culture (Thompson et al., 1999 cited in O’Neil et al., 2008) suggest link between the pressure of multiple role and organizational support for promoting employee’s job commitment with satisfaction. Marriage seem bringing more challenges in a professional woman’s life. In a controversial study Hewlett (2002 cited in O’Neil et al., 2008, p. 731) informs that “many high-achieving women have sacrificed their ability to have children in order to meet the demands required of them to advance in their careers. She proposed that the career advancement clock and the maternity clock are out of sync, resulting in many high-achieving women focusing on their careers and postponing their families.”

These women through their different interviews echo their efforts to manage both family and work. They have support from their partners for their professional life but not in domestic responsibilities. It opens the ground to understand the nature of relationship which is not having an equal base to get along for sharing equal responsibilities. Having a partner from same journalistic field does not help a woman to liberate herself from family and parental responsibilities.

*Ritu: A woman needs to be mentally prepared to accept the nature of the profession. In this profession a woman journalist can’t give time to her family and has no social life. She has to compromise with her personal life and family responsibilities. Marriage is not a hurdle for this profession if you have a cooperative husband. In this profession it doesn’t matter whether you have family, relatives and friends because you are told to be first for your journalistic job.*

*Bhavna: In print journalism, time frame is important to be managed with your personal family life. Print media doesn’t have fix working hours. All types of journalistic jobs are time demanding. Already women working with print media is less thus chances of their working in higher position is rare. After certain work phase, there is a pyramid in this profession too where it narrows while reaching up in the position having almost no woman. There are many factors involved in this profession too. A female has to prove doubly while being in a higher position. One can manage with family priorities while remembering that this profession is not 9 to 5 job. Especially while being in higher position a woman has to sacrifice her family responsibilities and personal life.*

*It is an irony that if a man is getting married he is all eligible to receive increments in salary as he will be having a family now but a woman is asked to*
make a choice between her job and family life. Family also doesn’t accept a woman journalist in other social roles like daughter-in-law. There are rarely women journalists seen who are leading successful married life too.

Understanding the nature of journalism further ask women to adjust more to be in the profession at cost of her being less available for her own personal, family and social life. It’s more like a professional adjustment expected from a woman because a male is totally available for his job because gender-based division of labour already made him free from domestic responsibilities and household labour. These narratives raise an important argument that the struggle to give time to family does not end even if a woman reaches to the up in the ladder. In process of career making in reality very few women manage to get into higher positions and there too they are required to prove themselves even more because now they are lone performers as an achievers at the top. It is an irony that the higher position makes a woman more loaded with performance pressure and lacking support to raise issues like time to be given to family and domestic life.

These narratives carry a mixed response where a woman’s presence is much desired in her family prior to her job. But a man finds it easy to remain less available because structure emphasizes his role as ‘bread-winner’. Taking man as socially approved earning member gives him a privilege to receive increments before his marriage which means that professional space reinforce the gender based division of labour. For a woman there is always a compromising choice even if she chooses to stay in apparently journalistic job, she gets added family and parental responsibilities where her presence is posed more needed. The respondents also find it up to the ‘adjusting capacity’ of a woman to manage between her family and job which still doesn’t raise any critical questions towards patriarchal society.

Marriage brings a whole chain of dependency for a woman which seems a vicious circle to stay fix in social relations made by society for woman. Her work and economic independence does not help free her from domestic space and responsibilities. A woman is held more responsible for household work over her professional work which reinforces the patriarchal division of labour.
7.3 Family and Motherhood: Colliding Institutions

Recognizing the embedded challenges and threats while taking up career and marriage together brings a huge amount of pressure on women. The sexual division of labour is based on socially determined levels of living and is responsible for changing social organization and mode of production. There is a varied interplay of socio-economic and cultural forces existing in the base of the sexual division of labour (Mazumdar and Sharma, 2005). The sexual division of labour has been subordinating women tying them to domestic space. Desai and Jain (1994, p. 117) write that

“In our preoccupation with the supposed conflict between children's need for care and mother's need for income (both for herself and for her children), we tend to ignore women's other domestic responsibilities. Domestic labor consumes a tremendous portion of women's time in poor areas, affecting both their care of young children and their opportunity to participate in the labor force.”

Pursuing professional choice of being journalist cannot be separate from uncounted domestic services for being a mother and homemaker. Woman in a family is considered to be responsible for maintain domestic space and its values while limiting her own individuality. In the domestic space woman is supposed to be more responsible for all kitchen and child rearing work. Thus she is rarely free from these domestic chains in families which are often traditional and conventional spaces. Jain and Banerjee (2008, p. 411) write that

“Family with father and mother or husband and wife, the rituals that have gone into marriage, the rules of behavior, and the role allocations that have been spelt out, sometimes provide and impossible barrier to equality between the sexes. Thus it is a common phenomenon all over the world and across history – that, as women begin to feel their way and wish to affirm some autonomy for themselves, some freedom to choose and fulfill their individuality, the first institution that begins to crack is the family. It is understandable that today, women, whether in the first world, the socialist world or the third world, often attack the institution of the family as one of the strongholds of female oppression and want to challenge this concept, and ask for space to create new families.”

Family is an institution where roles and values are assigned as per the sexual division of labour making a woman bound to domestic work. It is the site of expectation and
subordination of women in different forms in the name of family-responsibilities. “The family occupies a strange position in analysis of various kinds of attempt to locate effectively of that formation within a social totality, historically, or with regards to the structural subordination of women.”

The paradox between women’s liberation and her embedded dependence because of her reproductive body keep her ultimately stuck in domestic space with child-bearing and rearing responsibilities. Respondents narrated their experiences which suggested that they rarely find a liberal space for them despite working and being economically independent.

Anita: I have been working in this field for a quite longer period. I have a daughter. I had to face tough professional time as the newspaper I was working with had no provision of maternity leave. I have supportive in-laws with good family support for my work. But still being a woman you can’t avoid kitchen and certainly cannot leave your child at their responsibility. I had no choice but to give more than required attention after my daughter’s birth. Somewhere, managing the family and its uncounted responsibilities never make a woman free at all. I had to be home to look after my daughter for quite a few months as I myself wanted to give more time to her. It’s not easy to leave your child at home at in-laws responsibilities because they too find it more like a burden after a point which results always into suggesting you that “is it really necessary to work, your job cannot be more important than your daughter” such words try to put you in guilt making you feel as if you are doing an injustice to your own daughter. You cannot be direct with your in-laws because the boundaries of being a working daughter-in-law has a condition to stay silent not to answer back, if you really want to continue work. Perhaps you can manage at your work space but such guilt-trap at home shows so many layers to target as a working mother. Working but remaining good is difficult combination because if you are a working daughter-in-law meaning still I choose not to get in to argument with my in-laws otherwise you are a bad person.

Her experience is an exemplification of the complexity of relations within a typical patriarchal family wherein ‘the social identity of a woman is constantly evaluated on the bases of her performance in particular social space or social boundary.

In a family, working daughter-in-law is considered as more responsible to look after her husband’s family because she is working, going out and she has to repay this freedom given from family in terms of being more dutifully engaged in domestic space. She is trying to point out that leaving her child home with her in-laws makes her doubly accountable where on one hand she is curtailing her role as mother while giving less time
to her child and on the other she is leaving her own responsibility on her in-laws who cannot find it acceptable according to their moral values.

Her daughter is her responsibility, is reasserted by her in-laws thus she has to struggle more to ensure not to leave her child completely as their responsibility otherwise the guilt-trap for not giving full-time to her daughter is used to target her emotionally by her in-law. Amidst all these situations, a woman is constantly reminded that her role as a mother above than her own identity an individual which ultimately conditions a woman to keep herself silent. The inducement of guilt by elders in family for not attending to her daughter and continuing work is a regressive emotional attack on a woman who has been trying to make her way in tight rope of the patriarchy with her silence and tolerance. Her endurance is not openly challenging the order in family but her choice to work is itself a resistance towards the stereotyped vision of housewife, daughter-in-law or mother.

Moreover, her narrative is trying to tell that the cost to continue work is always taken as work more than required pleasing your family members which actually make a working daughter-in-laws work more challenging and loaded. The notion of being a good woman is attached to the ‘silence’ of the woman in any situation in a family. Her silence is considered as patriarchal victory for not receiving any vocal challenge from her and that’s how a suppressed voice in the form of silence is maintained in families.

Despite being a working and earning member she has to constantly struggle to place herself as the woman in her family where her economic-identity is dissolved in her silence. She does not assert herself beyond being a woman or daughter-in-law because her earning economic independence does not empower her to assert herself. The price is silence paid by a working daughter-in-law to negotiate her work which does not liberate herself as a strong independent woman who can actually speak her mind freely in her family. The identification of the ‘self’ of a woman does not get space even if a woman is an earning member of the family. The social control is strongly imposed through constructed values of being a good-woman, good daughter-in-law and mother which does not let her economic power challenging the boundaries.
Her negotiation for her professional freedom and motherhood is not something for a period or duration, it is a permanent struggle to avoid being labeled as bad mother who prioritizes work over her child. Repression of an economically-independent working mother is patriarchal value and especially in traditional families where a woman is chained in multiples social identities.

Anita’s narrative has strongly brought out the term ‘working daughter-in-law’ which gives social limitation to her choice of work and identity as a professional. It is undeniable that the use of term ‘working daughter-in-law’ is more socially laden than the term ‘working woman’. Perhaps the ‘working woman’ emerges as a stronger identity for a woman challenging patriarchy thus family tries to dilute it while using it with more socially acknowledged identity like ‘working-daughter-in-law’. In a family, a woman’s economic role is easily reduced by making her feel guilty for not fulfilling her responsibilities of being a mother, being a daughter-in-laws or being in any other socially acknowledged location in her husband’s family.

The assertion of the identity with the term ‘working-daughter-in-law’ precisely reinforces the social identity of a woman over her economic status as an earning member. With a direct control through traditional roles of woman are used as a tool to keep them under patriarchal kinship of network.

‘Silence’ as a metaphor socially used as a quality of a ‘good woman’ has been another sign of an unshakable patriarchy which has been reinforcing itself through gaining silences from working daughter-in-laws. This structured silence is deep seated in family where a woman is not allowed to give her opinion no matter how independent and capable she is. The role of a working mother is again more to prove her capabilities of doing maximum because she has chosen to work.

Unacknowledged economic role of a working woman is a struggle going parallel to her uncounted household work also. Somewhere patriarchy brings up the whole blindness for an independent working mother while ignoring her economic role as a professional and her already underrepresented domestic work. The rigidity of conventional boundaries makes location of women more critical to negotiate on either front.
The women journalists who are mothers find it challenging to meet their professional and personal commitments. They are given choice of either continuing or quitting from the profession of journalism. Similarly on family front also they have to face the same challenge to manage at their own. The Motherhood also seems to clash with professional engagements which demand dedication to work equally for both the organization and family.

_Sangeeta:_ Presently I am working with print media which I can manage with my family life. I have two daughters, I got busy with new responsibilities with journalistic job and somewhere I had to compromise with my profession.

In my family I had to negotiate to get a cooperative environment. I have two daughters, my first daughter is born through cesarean. After two months I was given offer to join a local TV news channel at that time there was Municipal election in Jabalpur. When I was given offer, my passion for journalism rekindled and I decided to join. My family and my husband have contributed for the decision. My husband is also a journalist and he never stopped me from being in this field. We have a joint family; I used to do household work also with my office work despite all odd working hours. I used to take my daughter to my workplace too. The green Room for Anchor became a “Creche” “Palnaghar” for my daughter in local TV channel office. Many people raise their eye-brows and became satiric that now channel office has been transformed into a “palnaghar”. But I told my Boss, that I will bring my daughter along with me as I can’t leave her at home, she was just two months older. It was not easy to convince my boss to allow me to bring my daughter in office. Yes many people at workplace tried to disturb things and polluted my boss’s mind not to allow me to bring my daughter.

Later my boss got influenced and asked me not to bring my daughter at workplace and suggested that we can increase some amount to your salary so that you could afford a maid to look after your daughter at home. But I was adamant to bring my daughter to work place and I convinced my boss and finally understood my situation. It was not possible for me to leave the job or to leave my daughter with my-in-laws because my child became the responsibility of ‘only’ me. The lack of support and need of that time made me to choose work while taking my daughter to office. I have tried to raise this issue that there should be crèche facility too at workplace or nearby office so that a working mother can manage both her work and child without burdening others in any way.

Commendable aspect of her narrative is that this journalist was able to negotiate bringing her daughter at her workplace. It has been a major issue which has been raised by many a women journalists but rarely received any serious attention. The need for crèche for

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86 Palnaghar is a Hindi name for Crèche
working parents have been highlighted but woman are always made to take up this job as lone individuals and this remains an unheard aspect in journalism. It is never considered as a right for working parents.

There has been concern raised for the need of crèche, day-care centers at workplace to support women. The legislation on crèches in India begins with the Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme\textsuperscript{87} for children of working mothers. This covers tribal, rural and urban children. In 2013, a resolution was passed by Ministry of Women and Child Development (No.16-1/2012-CW-1) to further promote crèche and day care facilities for children of working mothers, mothers belonging to poor families, ailing mothers and single parents.

Recently government has announced that it will give six and half month’s maternity leave and has asked private companies to ensure crèche facility. The government will make it mandatory for companies employing 30 or more women to provide the crèche facility at workplace or within 500 meters of the location.

Ironically, when it comes to mothers working in journalism they find it difficult to raise her voice in regard to their need for the crèche. They rely on family support for their child care which gives a base to choose either work or family whereas the crèche or childcare facility is a need at workplace. Newspaper organizations have their own Human Resource policies which are not universal to consider maternity leave and need for crèche facility. Sangeeta’s experiences reinforces the assumed responsibility of a mother to look after her child thus she choose to take her daughter with her to her workplace. Struggling through her professional limitations and social location as a working mother brings the hard life for a working woman. The lack of cooperation from in-laws made her to defend her choices because such patriarchal system is not offering any space to live her choices in her ways. Securing her professional work and negotiating for a space to bring her daughter at workplace unfolds the structured blockages for a working mother where she is left with no choice but to perform more at her own risk and will.

Choosing to take her daughter to her workplace is a strong intervention to take charge of her daughter’s responsibility on her own. For a working mother who is told by her in-laws that her daughter is her responsibility thus she does not mind to load herself further while not leaving her daughter at home. She continues working and faces difficulties at her workplace too where she is told not mix office and crèche because she is claiming her right as a working mother at her workplace too.

Ammu Joseph (2000) in her book ‘Women in Journalism Making News’ describes the narrative of various women journalists that the issue of balancing work and family continues to be a challenge and least discussed issue. One of the journalists interviewed in Joseph’s work mentions that things will change in the profession with the increased participation of husbands and fathers in family life. The need for crèche has been an important concern which has been under discussed in journalism.

For a woman the negotiation for her choices remain a constant fight to go forward where her social roles and professional roles are seen in clashes with operation of patriarchy in different forms. Anita was asked about that what was the urgency to join the job at that time when her daughter was just two months old and why didn’t she hire a maid to look after her daughter, she said that

“I cannot take the blame of being a bad mother, bad daughter in-law; it is my love-marriage so I cannot hurt emotions of my in-laws. Also as it has been marriage of my own choice I have to stay economically independent to support my husband too because journalism pays very less which is why we have to be working.”

Women internalize to stay in social definition of being ‘good’ which remains unbreakable even after they become independent and they assess themselves on the social parameters of performing their social roles. Their uncritical acceptance towards husband’s family makes them subservient to a patriarchal set up which it generally means in lack of support from in-laws family. The journalistic jobs pay less to its employees thus in her case her choice of continuing her job becomes a necessity too. Because her earning is contributing an economic help to her partner too which she finds a strong point to defend her choice of marriage and continuing job on the basis of her need too.
The need to work is also important to claim her space which demands to be an independent economic member thus a woman gets some degree of power. “It is frequently argued that women's concentration in the private or inside sphere leads to their loss of power within the family by reducing their opportunity to earn income that is independent of their husbands or other kin” (Acharya and Bennett, 1983; Omvedt, 1980 cited in Desai and Jain, 1994).

Being in a marriage of her own choice tells her getting into another patriarchy while accepting in-laws’ convenience on the basis of traditional values and roles to be in a joint family. Ramu (2003) argues that normatively, in a joint family which has patriarchal and patrilineal character, woman has little authority. It reinforces the domestic ethos that a woman must be dependent on her husband. Chakravarti (2005) writes that marriage was traditional a sacrament among Hindus where consent is an irrelevant issue. If a woman asserts her choice, it is considered as disruption of entire caste and class system. Desire, choice and love are separated from the institution of marriage and it is not about individuals’ needs and fulfillment.

From respondent’s narrative, it comes as a reality of a joint family system where socially it is idealized to stay in all possible supports system from family members. She is married in a Brahmin joint family. She had to work while taking her daughter to her office shows that she was not taken as an eligible member to seek support because she has been a working daughter-in-law through love-marriage. The choice of marriage breaks the values-system and such woman of ‘choice’ is seen rebel and threat to the family. But a joint-family doesn’t allow a husband to express support for his wife which might have any potential to cause any split in family because of his wife, which of his choice. Ramu (2003) writes that conception of Indian patriarchal family, especially in a joint family, male-female relations are hierarchical and women lack economic material base thus have no power to assert them. It is strictly prevalent in Indian joint families that “interactions between husband and wife be limited to prevent the blossoming of close ties which might threaten the harmony of the joint family as a whole” (Carstairs, 1957; Das, 1976; Luschinsky, 1962: 65, 342; Sharma, 1978, 1980a: 3-4, 1980b: 219; Papanek, 1973; Kakar, 1981; Mandelbaum, 1988 cited in Derne, 1994: 49). Respondent’s narrative clears
that her being a professional does not liberate her in a joint family set up and she lacks vocal support for her choices even from her partner. She remains passive and silent for the sake of the unity joint family system.

Also, love-marriage disqualifies the couple from enjoying equal status in family like in an arranged-marriage system. Even the son loses his power in family for transgressing the traditional boundaries of an arranged-marriage system. The couple is seen criminally responsible to break the norms and their ‘choice’ is a threat to caste community. The economically powerful son is more eligible to defend the choice of partner rather than the one who is economically weaker. Working in poorly-paid job in Hindi journalism makes the couple’s negotiation weaker to assert their rights in their own family.

Noticeably, defending the choice of marriage makes a woman more vulnerable as she has to do more to appease the family whereas son has to become more patriarchal to defend his position in family. This is seen in terms of not at all actively supporting his partner in her domestic sphere and responsibilities in a family. Ironically, supporting or taking a stand for wife is also seen a sign of weak man thus even in love-marriage man choose to act more patriarchal to reinforce the male-power. Being in a joint family, superficially manifest the love-married couple a ‘pseudo-modern’ value which is ultimately reproducing the social order making man powerful patriarch and woman inferior.

Love-marriage reduces the certain social privileges given to a daughter-in-law which is entitled to receive in arrange-marriage. Parveez Mody (2002) writes that love-marriages are widely viewed as unholy union. Because they challenge caste-hierarchy and social considerations of class, status which deconstructs the community or group. She enunciates that love marriage is a matter of individual choice and compatibility whereas arrange marriage is about social compatibility. Love-marriage couples dramatically redefine the parameters of ‘Indian’ morality and ‘Indian’ marriage, but they do not do this by inhabiting a different social or moral universe.

The respondent’s negotiation of her choice of partner, choice of job and choice of being a mother remains always a continuous negotiation process where she has to be in a job due to economic needs despite being in a joint family. Family is an institution where
accumulation and allocation of resources is always depend on the reinforcing patriarchy through family’s norms and values thus her being a ‘daughter-in-law’ through love-marriage maker her more questionable in every aspect of her social role in particular family. Not only her but her husband is also considered as the one who has chosen to be in a marriage of his choice which made him to prove his choices more correct in family. In this vicious cycle of demonstrating her ability overall, ultimately a woman is responsible for the appeasement of the family and its honour on behalf of her husband. Defending the choice of partner is attained by accepting the conventional methods of social appeasement and performing family responsibilities.

Uncompromising attitude for her choices is certain about her being working mother because it is more to stay in a family where her economic need is more relevant than her being more independent to express her choices. She is an educated working woman but her choices are formulated into feminist ones because ultimately her choices are not challenging the dominant order of deeply embedded patriarchy in the family.

_Sangeeta: Yes, my dedication and devotion to work was the only thing which brought me respect and acceptance of my needs at work place. I used to work from 8 am till 11 pm and I always had a bold image regarding work. Thus I am known as a committed one to the work. Because of devotion my seniors gave me respect. My boss used to be carefree once I am in office as I used to get work done and always handled all the responsibilities._

_We have a two-wheeler, my husband used to drop me to the office, during election I did late night works and returned home with my daughter around midnight. I used to take less field work but did desk work, news writing and other desk-bound jobs._

_Yes, I appreciate my boss that he allowed me to bring my daughter to workplace._

_When I had my second daughter, by that time my elder daughter was five years old, I tried to make my work hours flexible to look after both which was another struggle for me. I used to leave my daughter at home; I used to do complete preparation for her whole day so that no one has to bother about these things. I used to give her at least one meal by myself. I used to take care of her food despite that she developed some irritable nature because many a times she was not properly attended. When she used to cry a lot, many a times my in-laws used to say that what kind of passion you have for your work that you are not able to attend your baby. My elder daughter has been very attentive for younger sister and she used to take care of her with their grandparents. By now situations were little changed as I could seek support from my in-laws but they desired for a son. I chose to have only two daughters which again add up to defend my choice._
Being a mother and a journalist demands an effort to balance between family and profession. It can be a choice of an individual woman but where fear is also shown of losing job and also of family reputation is experienced as a double risk. Thus she chose to save her both the roles at her own choice where her journalistic job gave her more recognition as a dedicated worker but it certainly brought the complete load of work with insensitivity towards her capabilities and genuine sense of responsibilities. Her work place considers her needs as a working mother at the cost of her working more than required which is actually an exploitation of her being a working mother. The work place also doesn’t offer professional returns to acknowledge the work engagement for such longer hours. The definition of being a devoted and committed journalist has less to do with the working for long hours.

The sense of not wanting to burden anyone else in her family for her daughter’s care shows that the family too could not take responsibility of a journalist-mother which means that perhaps a woman’s professional independence is seen as a ‘responsibility – free - independence’ where she is not supported for her mother-role by other family members. The reason is economic also, where a woman is earning so it is expected that she can spend on everything because she is executing her own independent choices.

Difficulties are seen to actually understand the image of an independent woman who is working in Hindi journalism and despite living her choices she is more compelled to save the family values and traditional boundaries. Narrating her experience for being working while being a mother has brought here a more ‘burdened image’ of her where she is loaded with domestic work with looking after her daughter and at her work place also she is equally burdened with more work. The decision-making is missing as her independent role has not emerged due to her being more in patriarchal family. Krishnaraj (2009) clarifies that maternal responsibility is used as an alibi to exclude a woman from power, authority, decisions, and from a participatory role in public.
Her in-laws reaction towards her professional choice is an expression of the existing patriarchy which believes in having son as a matter of family pride and proving a woman more worthy than having daughters. The centrality of being a woman remains being a mother of a son prominently. The desire for a son is strong indication of reinforcing the patriarchy and institutionalizing it through making a woman feel more worthy in social structure for being a mother of a son.

Woman is still seen in terms of all social-parameters which make her falsely proven according to the patriarchy and limiting herself to the appeasement of the social relations and family values. Perhaps the ‘adjustment’ in a family of daughter-in-law who is there through a love marriage, working as a journalist and failing to give a son still make her inferior to be in her family. It does not matter whether she is a working mother, independent, capable enough to move out of the family but she is defending her choice to accommodate with patriarchy. It suggests a fact of being regulated by patriarchal values. She firmly sticks to her choice of having two daughters which gives her tough challenge to position herself in a family where she is defending her choice amidst traditional desirability of son as a successor of the family name. Her move is to strongly challenge desirability of son in patriarchal society which can be seen as a feminist act.

The institution of motherhood is a matter of pride and honor but it gets certainly more prominent if a boy is born. Krishnaraj (2009) argues that a mother in essence transcends the binaries of gender as every child, boy or girl, is born of a woman. She further writes that since a major aspect of the female role is considered for being reproductive, mothering has continued to be basic to women’s lives as well as the organizations of the family, and is fundamental to the genesis of the ideology about women.

Not leaving a job is another thing or compulsion as it risks losing the income source thus her situation as a journalist-mother has been so challenging which she had to go through economic-emotional traps of the family institution. In such case her workplace took advantage of her weak situation and made her work without raising her pay which is again the economic relations in journalism where a cheap labour is more welcome no matter what are her due rights as a mother to be on maternity leave.
Moving from the location of a working woman to employer’s take on working mother, one journalist brought out that the concept of maternity leave is not followed in all the media organizations. The absence of such provision clears that the media organizations which do not provide maternity leave seem reluctant to employ women journalist.

Anita: Maternity leave is a right of all the women journalists but newspapers policies plays all the tricks not provide maternity leave thus this politics of not appointing a married women start at very beginning from editor’s end. It sounds ridiculous too that newspapers try their best not to entertain the possible demands as a professional coming from a married-woman journalist which is certainly maternity leave.

The attitude of newspapers not revealing the actual professional benefits and policies for women journalists is a common method to keep us out of this knowledge. If a woman journalist demand or applies for maternity leave, the decision making authority which is of male editors’ make it an attitude as if it is an obligation to a woman from newspaper or media organization’s side.

Not considering the provision of maternity leave leads to the debate that women are not accepted as a professional for claiming her right to maternity leave, it also limits the ‘maternity or motherhood’ as a domestic issue more under the lines of family. This narrative illustrates the dominant masculine definition on women's right over profession and reproduction, wherein the intersections between the two gets relegated within the dimensions of personal choices.

Keeping the policies and benefits controlled, highlights that newspapers organization are reluctant to consider married- woman professionals because it is seen as a burden in the name maternity leave rights. Regarding Bombay Maternity Benefit Bill 1929, Chhachhi (1998, p. 25) critically mentioned “The notion of such a 'right' would anyway be treated as 'foreign'. The representatives of labour interests in the assembly were constantly ridiculed and accused of being enamored of the west, unpatriotic and ignorant of the special conditions of labour in India.” Ironically, glorification of motherhood in nationalism contradicts when it comes to acknowledge legal maternity benefits as women’s right. Chhachhi (1998) critically describes as who should be bearing the cost of reproduction whether the state, capital or husband since all of these are patriarchal institutions which have been retrenching women’s role and rights as a producer too.

Rachita: It’s again a long path followed by systematic removal of women journalists from this profession. First of all continuing with the job is a struggle to negotiate with family, in-laws and your own career-plans. Even if you
reach to the stage where you are in need to avail the maternity leave, either you will asked to resign or will be given fake words from you editor that once you really feel like rejoining post-maternity at that time only we’ll think.

All newspapers do not have maternity leave because either woman gets married and don’t work or even if she rejoins, she starts with another newspapers or whatever job she is managed to get.

The respondent is pointing out ‘systematic removal’ from the profession which directly reveals that when a woman needs most important economic support in her important events like Marriage, Maternity leave, she is systematically kept out from following the same organization in most of the cases. The most needed economic support goes in Ping-Pong game where a woman is already insecure to lose her job because of her marriage, maternity leaves and organization equally negates her continuation not to spend on its women employee’s rights. In such situation women are weaker category to negotiate and their forceful withdrawal is seen in the form of resignation and switching to new organization. Ironically, women’s professional right is denied more when she needs them the most. Thus she is ultimately left with no choice but in dilemma. Woman’s inferior and dependent social location affects her bargaining position in professional spaces.

The need for maternity leave for women journalists is not considered as a professional right thus it is often not mentioned in media organizations. Also, the provisions of maternity leave need an understanding to consider women as a professional first which is a contested issue here. The interviews with women journalists themselves do not immediately relate to the concept of maternity leave because it is only required for those who wants to make a choice to continue work after marriage. For young unmarried women journalist they often do not have this information because they do not need it at that point. This understanding of need-based rights also limits the scope to raise the issue.

7.4 Aging in Journalism

Studies done on workplace age-stereotypes suggest that there is growing evidence of discrimination against older workers in organizations (Hedge, Borman and Lammlein,
2006; Lieber, 2007; Prewitt, 2005 cited Posthuma et al., 2009). This research focuses on the voices and experiences of women journalists on ageism in journalism. The notion of age is not just a number but entangled in multiple social realities and power relations. The younger woman is considered of more value in terms of beauty, body having greater energies. These qualities are socially constructed and have rarely to do anything with knowledge and maturity in patriarchal understanding because a woman is supposed to be docile, house-maker and abiding by traditional values to do for family. Woodword (2006, p. 183) writes

“Social age refers to the meanings that a society accords to different categories of age, with the instruments of social policy providing clear-cut measures. In the United States, for example, the ages 62 and 65 are linked to the entitlement to receive Social Security payments on the basis of chronological age alone; the effect is that these two ages are strongly associated—indeed almost transparently so— with old age and retirement. Like social age, cultural age refers to the meanings or values that a culture assigns to different people in terms of age, but here status and power are crucial.”

It is a noticeable fact that ‘age’ is an institution influenced with socio-cultural values. Dugger (1999, p. 91-92) argues that “to institutionalize (premature) old age, both the anger of the displaced and the fear and guilt of the survivors must be dealt with through the creation of otherness. (Simone De Beauvoir's Second Sex is the classic treatment of "otherness") The survivors of (premature) old age can curb their fear and guilt by coming to believe that other people, who let themselves go, begin a decline into old age. Other people let themselves get too old to pull their own weight. While other people are getting too old to pull their own weight, old age is denied in oneself. It is always the other, or so the survivors of (premature) old age come to think. Old age in others comes to be thought of as a disability. This allows the "healthy" survivors to believe that as others age, those others become increasingly disabled.” This is a strong social construct which reinforces the gender stereotyped assessment of one’s ability and productivity at workplace.
Barnett (2006) argues that most of the research on media and aging studied women’s images not men’s. Patriarchal society marginalizes women which also need an exploration of identities of women and multiple hierarchies. Age has certain social and moral values which society reinforces through gender roles and limitations. Ageism also adds one more layer to glass ceiling in number of ways where young women are encouraged but mid-age women are invisible. According to the International Federation of Journalists report (IFJ, 2015) the number of woman journalists decreases with their aging, while it increases for men, an older men have the highest numbers in the profession.

Presence of older-men in this profession creates a curiosity to understand the relation between age and gender in journalism. Without fail, it draws attention to the social construction about older women unwanted in journalism. Ageism in journalism brings elimination of the aging women with a social perception of considering them past their prime.

Hilt (1997) writes that the media perceive aging as a threatening life transition, best dealt with by humor rather than serious news analysis. An essay analyzing news coverage of older women written by Cynthia Rich (1991) who, in her deconstruction of a *Boston Globe* article on public housing, found that the media clumsily presented patronizing images of the elderly, casting them as weak, but spunky, attempting to de-legitimize their concerns (cited in Barnett, 2006).

In the context of this study, the ‘ageism’ at the work place in journalism is a reality of the nature of the print media where a woman as an ‘old female’ has to face multiple layers of oppression (Collins, 1986; 1998, cited in Barnett, 2006). Women in mass media often seen as objects and commodities and the age-stereotypes are also reproduced in mass media.

In journalism, the experiences of women journalists with their aging are uncounted which undermine their performance and expertise. Preference is generally given for young women journalists.

*Bhavna: Sometimes sexual politics is quite visible as newcomer women*
journalists are soft target of the manipulative masculine politics at work place. This sometimes put a young-risk-bearer woman journalist in trouble for some risky story assignment. Also, presentable and beautiful women are made the face of the newspapers and are taken as a pride.

The presence of young women journalists makes the work place pleasant whereas mid-aged women journalists are portrayed as ‘old-age’ journalist. It is really more than a puzzle that men at their 40s are taken as developing their career more in this profession whereas at the same age-scale women are seen less productive and considered as unqualified to work with their same age male colleagues. Career in journalism seems a battle to fight against ageism after encountering family, marriage, and motherhood.

The newcomers joining in this field come with a fresh mind but the inside reality makes them work according to the editor’s choice of work and beat. This could be a professional orientation for particular newspaper’s goals and objectives which certainly try to use a potential young mind that has capability with obedience too. Thus courage and enthusiasm of young journalists are used to materialize the professional challenges and motives. The notion of being young and beautiful journalist explains contradictory acceptance of a woman as a professional but judging her more on the basis of her physical appearance and age.

Kanagasabai (2016) in her work writes that in television newsroom ageism is more distinct fact though in print media too ageism plays its role in subtle ways. There is absolute absence of senor women journalists in a television newsroom because of its covertly ageist policies, also if women are denigrated for their post-feminist politics. Her work affirms that like many other existing unspeakable inequalities, issues of ageism are glass ceiling in Indian television newsroom which are embedded in the vocabulary of choice and freedom. It indicates that having women bosses could be redressing structural inequalities which is inherently exist in neo-liberal newsroom (ibid, 2016).

In an MA dissertation (2013, unpublished), Kanagasabai details that old bodies are seen as more of deviance in Electronic media. There is no room for old-tired women in such a ‘dynamic profession’ of journalism. In electronic media, women are majorly seen as
anchor with their short life careers whereas in print media it is further sexist as it not only finds aging women unfit for journalism but also unproductive at work.

In my study, women journalists’ experience echo ageism at workplace and print journalism make them feel unproductive despite giving years to their work.

Shivani: I am a single woman and have given my last fourteen years to this profession. In this profession it is an irony that women’s age doesn’t count professional-maturity and promotion. An aging women in this profession is seen a less productive for the profession whereas old men are taken as wise, intellectual and knowledgeable for the best decision maker position in any newspaper, city or country.

Yes, women do face so many biological issues with growing age but I wonder how men are never seen and shown with any biological problem which would make them unfit or less productive for journalism. Their mind is never questioned according to their age. But for woman crossing an age bring so many social prejudices disqualifying them to be in the profession.

It shows the male-mind’s which cannot take a ‘capable and mindful women journalist’ learning and growing at her efforts to challenge male-bastion of Hindi print journalism. Many a times paying an-experienced woman journalist is replaced by a young, less experienced journalist by organization with an intention not to spend much salary on an aging-journalist. It is an insult to hear from your same age male colleague that ‘now why don’t you take rest from your job you have given enough number of your years.”

Her narrative unravels how the patriarchal structure at workplaces discriminates women focusing on their anatomical changes, whereas biological changes in a man gets defined as the 'sign of professional maturity' and gaining expertise to deal with professional crisis, challenges. It has been a social construction about age that disqualifies aging women from expressing their wisdom, mindfulness and experiences in journalism.

If a woman is single, journalism question their age relating to their professional productivity for not being up to the mark. Her mind is never considered to be in journalism and it is questioned constantly no matter how long you have been working in this profession. Doress and Seigal (1987) write that there is a distinction between ‘aging’ and ‘getting old’ as aging is all about the biological changes that occur lifetime whereas ‘getting old’ is a social concept, a little related to the biological process of aging (cited in Desai, 1999).
These narratives demonstrate the attitude of male journalist in seeing a woman journalist’s age as a reason for her to discontinue working. Woman as a professional is not considered along with her need and eligibility to be in the job. ‘Age’ is a socially-biased criteria to assess her performance in journalism. Barnett (2006, p. 88) quotes that

“In a patriarchal culture, aging makes women unbeautiful' since women grow more powerful with time (Wolf, 1991: 14). For older women, the standards of youthful beauty are impractical to meet, ensuring insecurity and subordination to patriarchal authority.”

By age, a woman is judged according to the conveniences of the patriarchy which sees no difference between a job and career for women. Developing a career in this profession, woman needs to stay in the profession which is different from a job. For woman journalist no matter how many years she has worked in the field she is evaluated by her age not by her work whereas for men growing age makes them more eligible to be in the career making process of journalism. Dahmen and Cozma (2009) write that

“Women in particular suffer from ageism and ageist roles more than men. While men are routinely depicted as productive professionals, research shows that older women on television are often “invisible” and ignored because they no longer play the role of obedient daughter, child bearer or sex object. This invisibility is piercing for a mature woman not only because she is not perceived as being sufficiently worthwhile to be visible, but because she appears on society’s radar screen as a symbol of frailty, weakness and ugliness.”

The social understanding to describe a woman’s age is an act of repressing the stronger minds which reside in women journalists and their experiences. Age is another patriarchal value which determines Dos and Don’ts for a man and woman in a society marginalizing women. Age is not seen as an independent value thus journalism finds aging women unpleasant threats in professional fronts too. Media has represented youthful images of women ignoring the aging women.

Studies done on management and organization behavior have focused on age – stereotype at work place which finds that greater resistance among managers to offering training to older workers is sometimes based on beliefs that older workers would have greater difficulty mastering new concepts (Rosen & Jerdee, 1989 cited in Richard A. Posthuma
and Michael A. Campion, 2009). A research paper on “Age and Gender Stereotypes: New Challenges in a Changing Workplace and Workforce” written by DeArmond (et al., 2006) explains age and gender stereotypes in relation to adaptive performance which brings out that older workers may be at risk for being perceived as less capable of learning new tasks, technologies, and procedures; cultural adaptability; and physical adaptability.

The workplace ageism in journalism has been voiced by female journalists in news – article done by Alexandra Campbell which shares responses of several women journalists in Women in Journalism (WIJ) website writes that

“Sixty percent of the over-45s in the survey believed they’d already been turned down for at least one job or (in the case of freelance writers) assignment because they were perceived as ‘too old’. Sometimes phrases like ‘over-experienced’ or ‘over-qualified’ were used, at others the ageism was overt – ‘I was told I was too old’ said several respondents. ‘I was told nobody wanted to work with older journalists,’ said a woman in her early fifties. ‘I have been told that my age was problem – by a recruitment company,’ said another.”

Justifying the removal of the aging women journalists on unrealistic explanations depicts another layer added to the glass-ceiling. Women despite reaching higher positions, despite men low numbers, are still victims of ageism in media. The preference for young women journalists in itself shows that ageism is equally discourages women from continuing in the profession. Whereas Moore (2009) writes “older women perceive age as a real impediment to entry or re-entry into the labour market, confirming that recruitment processes can construct barriers based upon.” During the interviews conducted for this study, a respondent said that it is well-known fact that all higher position have aging-old-men which ironically shows that aging men are considered wiser as they have deep experience thus they are everywhere in their old age. Contextualizing ageism in existing gender-based stereotypes in Hindi print media reveals age-stereotypes is also a strong social perception being reproduced while discouraging women to make their way ahead in journalism. Age-discrimination requires greater study approach to understand women journalists’ disadvantage in journalism.

7.5 Conclusion

Women journalists’ experiences reveal that marriage is perceived by the organization as an obstruction which further puts women in vulnerable position. It hinders the career path of women generally pushing them out of the journalistic profession. Ironically marriage is seen to be inconvenient at their workplace because as women journalists as they are judged for not being dedicated professionals. Another critical aspect has been found that symbols of marriage like sindoor, mangalsutra are conventionally expected to be worn by women at their workplace to demonstrate that they are good women. A woman is judged on the professional front too if she chooses to continue working in journalism which compels her to prove her competence more. Many respondents mentioned that despite having a partner in the same field this does not allow them to have a balanced path because domestic responsibilities primarily demand that a woman be at home. Marriage is a patriarchal institution which subordinates a woman demanding that she fulfill domestic responsibilities in ways that her career or profession is rendered secondary. Despite working and earning woman may lack independence in married life. The nature of journalistic work may make women feel guilty for paying inadequate attention to their professional commitments since they are married whereas men are never made to feel guilty. Journalism seems to be a rigid structure which does not have the flexibility to accommodate married professionals, who are women. Similarly professional commitments of married women journalists are not usually welcomed in families. Whereas marriage is taken as matter of pride and remarkable event for a man and he is often then eligible to get an increment, women journalists are asked if they are going to leave or stay. Women journalists in all four cities Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior and Jabalpur strongly suggest that journalism is almost an anti-marriage profession.

Interviews with women journalists who are mothers bring out the challenges they face on an everyday basis. Their journey from a journalistic professional to becoming a mother remains critical under patriarchal institution of family. It is a constant struggle with more than one patriarchal structure in the form of marriage and then motherhood.
Here lies a paradox, as a working woman is not able to establish her identity as a journalist over her identity as a daughter-in-law. Between domestic and professional space, a working daughter-in-law is more socially celebrated identity for the sake of pseudo-modernity which accepts woman’s earning efforts but does not let her be free from social norms and responsibilities of being a daughter-in-law. Her professional identity as a journalist may also be seen as a threat to the dominant values of a family as she can raise her voice against her subordinated role. On contrary, she herself often chooses ‘silence’ to balance the degree of liberty for the sake of her journalistic work which makes her an earning member but not free to speak her mind. It is found that women who chose to go for a marriage of their own choice of partner face further complex set of conventional values in a joint family system as a they are seen as law-breaker which also reduces autonomy in the family. Thus a woman is located in a structured patriarchy which she constantly negotiates in institution like family and motherhood. Cities like Gwalior and Jabalpur have a stronger patriarchal character as women from these cities critically shared the controls exercised by social institutions like family, marriage and motherhood. They echo the typical stereotype of a woman’s pride being associated with being mother of a ‘son’, something which still has a high value. It was also found that legal maternity benefits are nowhere a matter of consideration at journalistic workplace.

Another strong social perception about women journalists has been found in the form of ‘ageism’ in journalism which further construct another gender stereotype. It encourages young women journalists who are considered to have a low-understanding of the professional dynamics and their minds can be conformed according to the professional need. Also traditional parameters of appearance and ageism actively function at the workplace. It is found that older men are considered as wise in this profession whereas for women it is considered opposite. Aging or older women professionals are taken as unproductive and unfit for continuing the profession and their whole work experience is disregarded with their growing age. This chapter argues that Hindi print Journalism actively functions through patriarchal norms making women more vulnerable category at workplace too. It is another form of patriarchal structure which doesn’t acknowledge women as an individual.