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Aspirations of Homemakers of Deoghar in Jharkhand, India: An Observation

Abstract

Aspirations generally mean the goals or desires that a person has, in their life. However, there can be certain terms and conditions applied to it as this term can be interpreted in various ways. This research is constructed on the idea of aspirations of 'homemakers', women who are not traditionally employed, which could be utilized as an indicator of not just Gender inequality, but also of development of peoples' mindsets regarding gender in Deoghar, Jharkhand. This study has been done, keeping in mind certain objectives. Primarily, it focuses on identifying and recognising the aspirations of the homemakers in the city. It also aims at tracing a link between the aspirations of homemakers to their status in the society, in socio-economic light. Further, the study focuses at correlating the view of the Male members and Working Women in the area, concerning Homemakers with/without aspirations.

Nazmul Hussain Laskar

*Department of Political Science, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Government Model College, Katlicherra
Email:mr.nazmulhussain@rediffmail.com*

Corresponding Author*: Nazmul Hussain Laskar

Email of Corresponding Author*: *mr.nazmulhussain@rediffmail.com*

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1. Introduction

Jharkhand is one of India's newest states, having been carved out of the southern portion of Bihar in 2000. It is located in the Eastern part of the country. Jharkhand has a population of roughly 32 million people, making it India's 13th most populous state as mentioned in Census 2011 which is the Fifteenth National census survey conducted by the Census Organization of India

Jharkhand's literacy rate has been increasing and now stands at 66.41 percent. Men have a literacy rate of 76.84 percent, while women have a literacy rate of 55.42 percent. In Jharkhand, the sex ratio is 948, which means that for every 1000 males, there are 948 females as per Population Census 2011. In Jharkhand, 68.40 percent of couples live in a small family according to 2011 Census. Dowry deaths decreased by 2.2 percent for every 1% increase in male education in the district. Fertility decreased by 0.15 percent and infant mortality decreased by 0.32 percent for every 1% increase in female education in the district as reflected in State of The States Report by India Today in 2016.

Deoghar district is one of the twenty-four districts that make up the state of Jharkhand in eastern India. Deoghar is the administrative centre of Jharkhand. Deoghar district is located in the western part of the state and is a part of Santhal Paragana. It is bordered on the north by Bhagalpur district, on the south by Dumka district, and on the west by Giridih district. Sex Ratio in the district is roughly 920, that is, 920 females for each 1000 male.

In (India) both rural and urban areas, about 92 percent (of women aged 15 and more who were engaged in domestic chores) spent the majority of their time on domestic duties. The reason for spending the majority of their time on domestic activities was cited by 60% of those in rural areas and 64% of those in urban areas as "no other member to carry out the domestic duties." About 8% of women in both rural and urban areas (India) were not obliged to spend the majority of their time on domestic responsibilities. Because of their own inclinations, around 50% of individuals who spent the majority of their time in rural areas and 51% of those who spent the majority of their time in urban areas continued to seek the same according to ¹ National Sample Survey report produced by 68th round of sampling conducted by NSSO (National Sample Survey Organization).

Statement of the Problem

There exists in the society, for a very long time, a prejudice concerning gender. Gender has always been a deciding factor in a lot of matters where practically it might even not be logical. Considering the fact that there has been a lot of improvement in the society regarding gender, but it cannot be denied that the status quo is still not very impressive. Dealing with the aspirations and the various elements that influence them, will be a new way to analyse the condition of homemakers in a particular area. A major component that is how the women themselves feel about their aspirations being or not being recognized or about the kind of mind-set their families have towards gender inequality- hugely affects their condition and status in the society.

Significance of the Study

This study hopes to contribute to the already existing literature in this field of research and also to the society as an institution.

- This study will put forward a fresh approach towards understanding aspirations as they play a huge role in the way homemakers are treated and the way they react to the treatment they get from the society.
- This study will also provide a analytical angle to the way social constructs perceive the existence of homemakers with aspirations as judgement and characterization of a female has always been done, taking into consideration what they aspire of.
- To understand the cause of all the issues that homemakers experience and its relationship with their aspirations can only be traced back to the mind-set of the society as a whole,that needs to be studied very carefully.
- To identify any form of coincidence between the aspirations of the homemakers and their socio-economic status.
- It will also give an image of gender inequality and stereotyping existing in the region as a homemakers' aspirations shape her impression among the social entities that she's surrounded by and vice versa.

2. Literature Review

The family is a place where women might feel safe and cared for, but it is also a place where they can face a variety of tensions (Desai, 2001). Families continue to exist, but women no longer play the same roles in them as they once did. Women's increased desire and ability to control the conditions of their lives, particularly the conditions of their family relationships, can be shown in their delaying marriage, planning fertility, participating in the labor division, and leading families. Women's ties to wifehood and motherhood are being questioned as a result of increased control (Kohen, 1981).

According to Bhasin (1993), the terms prescribed by the society to the homemakers for the mere purpose of addressing their "counterparts", such as "husband", that denote some kind of domestication of the former by the latter, or "Pati" and "Swami" literally mean "master" or "owner, denoting a relationship of master and slave between two people married to each other often lead to crushed aspirations of Homemakers. We need to analyze the magnitude of women's unpaid work and how it might be recognized in all aspects of life and the law. Above all, the purpose is to create awareness among both men and women of the enormous effort required to prepare a meal, raise a kid, and to make a harvest successful (Kotiswaran 2018). There are hundreds and thousands of women (in India) who have the capability, talent, imagination, creativity and drive, but hold themselves back to walk a step behind so that the family does not get disrupted. And this is the price the majority of women (in India) pay as it is not the balancing between the home and profession or society it is how the aspirations in dreams are held back by the baggage Indian Women carry (Parikh, 2009).

Premchand Munshi In his books "*Bade Ghar ki Beti*", "*Godan*" & "*Nirmala* explained the societal norms and scenario penned tough sentences and dialogues: "women are emotionally fickle and always ready to break down", "tears of women enrage the anger of men sometimes leading to violence towards them" and "women are the destroyers of any family, ergo, they need to be dismissed time and again by the male members of the family".

Gap in Literature

There has not been a lot of work on specifically aspirations of homemakers and even if there has been some, there are a few that actually try to analyse its interrelationship with the other factors such as structure of the family, economic status of the earning member of the family, and particularly what they themselves think about the idea of homemakers having aspirations of their own. What they perceive of the roles prescribed to them and how far are they willing

to go without demanding anything in return for the things they do for the society. Studies have been done on why a woman has to dream in a certain boundary or aspire very little for themselves, but the possibility that there can be women willing to work for the family, become a homemaker, but maybe at a certain point they realise their aspirations with a newfound desire to pursue them.

3. Research Methodology

The researcher has done an elaborate empirical study based on qualitative and quantitative analysis. The study has been carried in the form of both primary (collecting first-hand information from the concerned population) as well as secondary (reading literature-fictional and non-fictional) research which further gained from focused group discussions. The collection of primary data solely depended on the responses received from the interviewees and their correlation with the common perception of the society. The secondary data has been collected from certain portions from over five-six books, two articles and available interviews of people who have addressed issues concerning the topic of this research.

3.1 Research Objectives

- To find out about the way women who are not traditionally employed, think and what do they aspire of.
- To comprehend the situation considering gender inequality or gender bias and its ties with socio-economic background
- To analyse the obstacles and discrimination, if any, faced by the homemakers in Deoghar, Jharkhand
- To be aware of the aspirations women who are housewives have and how the society looks at homemakers with aspirations.
- To analyse the way the working population i.e., working men and women feel about homemakers.

3.2 Research Questions

- How and what do women who are Homemakers aspire of, if, at all they do?
- What do men and earning women view the Homemakers with aspirations of their own?
- What do Homemakers think about them being respected or supported in the society, at the consideration of whether they stand for their aspirations or not?

3.3 Research Structure

The research had been started with a basic study of the literature from this field, in a way that it helps the researcher to frame the questions, that would be appropriate and relevant. The second phase of research included study of the environment of the area, that is, the structure of the concerned societies. This enabled the researcher to personally interact with women belonging to the concerned group of people, that is, Homemakers from the area, with men and working women as well, to have a clearer and wider view for the topic in hand. The interviews and interaction have been over offline and online mode of communication. To cover the whole area properly, diverse selection of respondents and interviewees has been done. The research is not based on just one part of the city, rather it attempts to provide a thread of information about people from all over the city, to have a better understanding about the same. Also, the researcher selected people from various backgrounds, with different educational qualification, belonging to varied family structures, from different castes and religious inclinations, all in the age group of 25-65.

3.4 Limitations of Methodology

Nonetheless, the results drawn by the researcher must be interpreted with caution and a few limitations should be borne in mind, some of which can be:

- As the topic of my research is very sensitive and personal, some of the respondents were not very confident in giving direct answers to the questions of the researcher.
- Due to the prevalence and increase in the COVID-19 virus, many refused to interact in offline mode, that the researcher found more beneficial and informative.
- Some of the respondents had never thought about the things the researcher wanted to construct, that is, low consciousness level of the respondents regarding their aspirations, which led to confusions at times.
- The sampling size is not wide enough to reflect the true opinion and perception of the homemakers, men and working women regarding aspirations, or, in fact, gender inequality in the area.
- Reliability has been an important element in the whole period of study. The researcher had to take, accept and believe the responses and answers provided, by the sampling population as what they truly perceive and as the way the relevant society thinks and behaves.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Opinion of the Homemakers

1. Do you know what aspirations are?

YES	NO	MAYBE (BUT WILLING TO KNOW)
77%	18.7%	4.3%

Table 1. Awareness of Aspirations

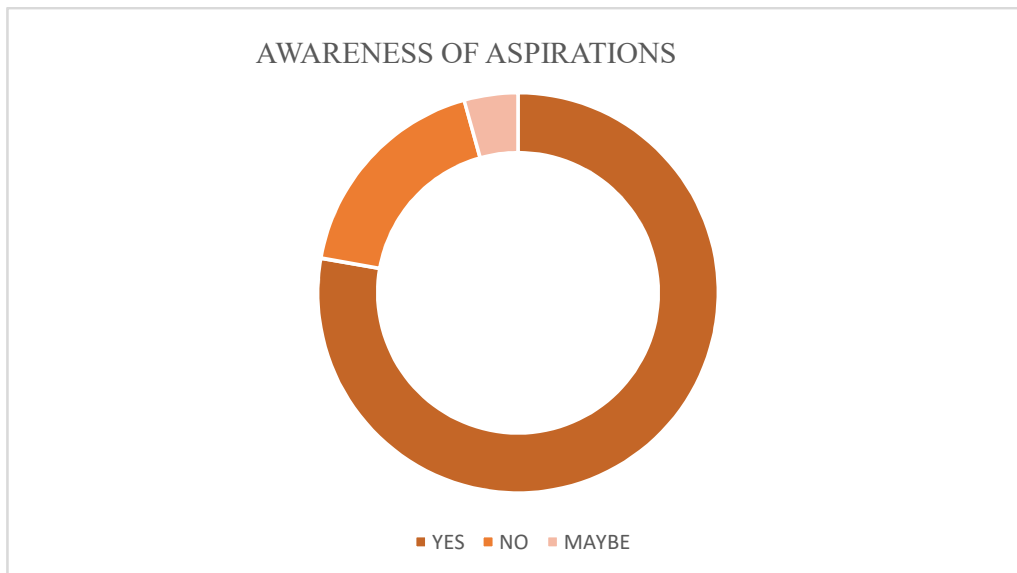


Figure 1. Awareness of Aspirations

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 77% of the homemakers are partially/fully/directly/indirectly aware of the idea of aspirations, which indicates that majority of the respondents could recognize the topic of the research and the questions being asked.
- 18.7% of the homemakers are unaware of the idea of “aspirations” and the rest 4.3% were not sure that they actually understand the idea but were keen on knowing about it.

2. Did you ever get a chance to realise your own aspirations?

YES	NO	MAYBE
34.8%	43.5%	21.7%

Table 2. Chance of realisation

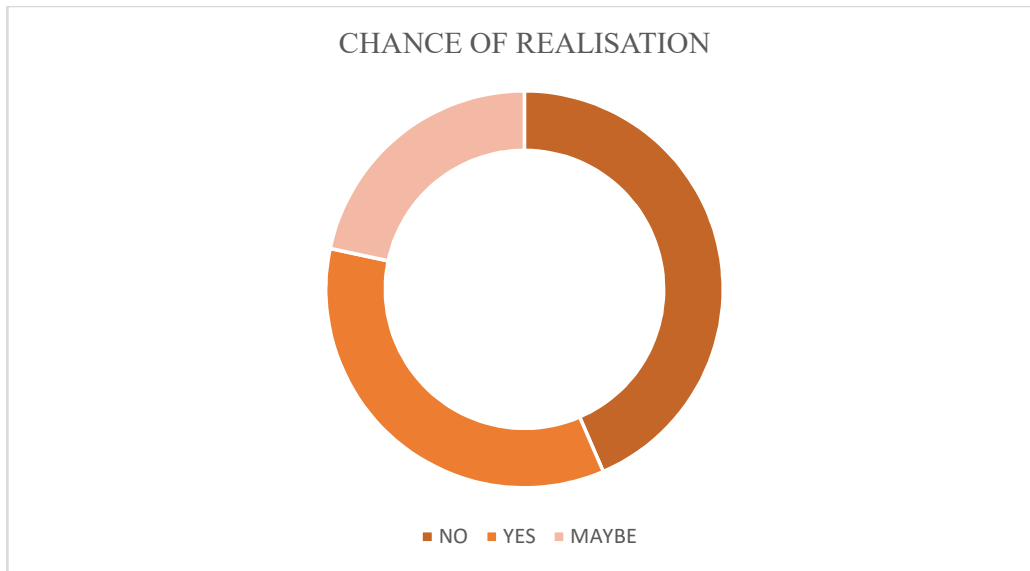


Figure 2. Chance of Realisation

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 43.5% of the homemakers did not even get the opportunity to realise or understand their aspirations but were well aware of what other members of the family aspire of.
- 34.8% of the homemakers had been given chances to realise their own aspirations and seemed to be happy about it.
- 21.7% of them were not certain whether they were given an opportunity and whether they ever demanded for that or not.

3. Do you feel if you would be earning, you would be respected more, in your family and the society?

YES	NO	MAYBE	BUT OTHER FACTORS EXIST
64.9%	21.7%	13.4%	

Table 3. Effect of Income on Respect

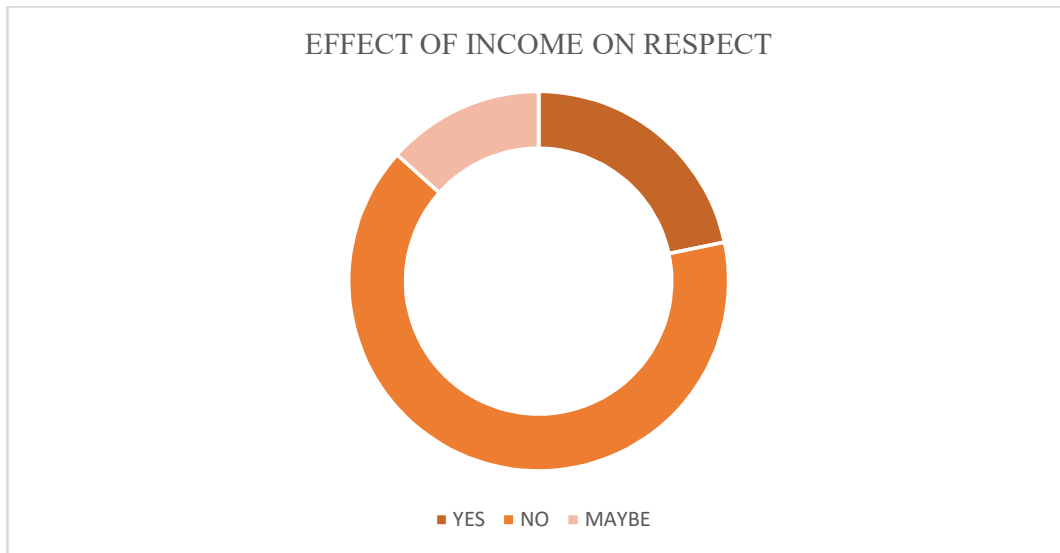


Figure 3. Effect of Income on Respect

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 64.9% of the homemakers think that if they would be earning, they would be respected more by their family members and/or they would be given more esteem in the society.
- 21.7% of the homemakers think that their personal income does not affect their position in their families and the society.
- 13.4% of the homemakers say that income is one of the many factors that determine the amount of respect they get, such as, external beauty, number of sons a woman has given birth to, etc.

4. Do you think a woman's life should be constructed without 'only' revolving around a man?

YES	NO	MAYBE
47.8%	43.5%	8.7%

Table 4. Construction of a Woman's Life

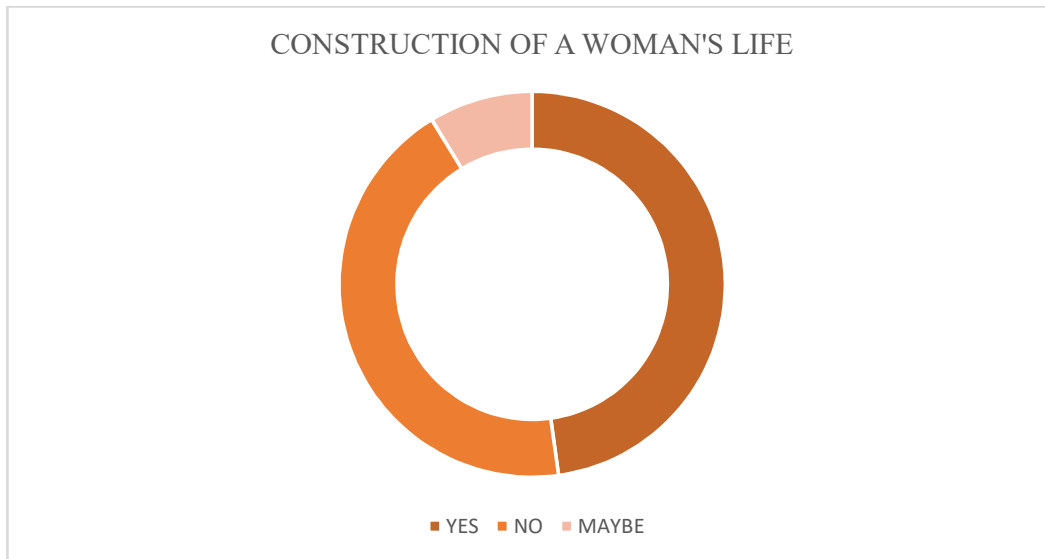


Figure 4. Construction of a Woman's life

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 47.8% of the homemakers feel that a woman's life should be constructed without 'only' revolving around a man and his aspirations.
- 43.5% of the homemakers think that a woman's life should not be constructed without 'only' revolving around a man and his aspirations as it brings instability to the family.
- 8.7% of the homemakers were not certain about whether it should be or it should not be because they never thought about their life as a separate event & process.

5. Do think a working woman is not actually "appropriate for the cultural maintenance" of the society?

YES	NO	MAYBE
55.2%	36.7%	8.1%

Table 5. Perception about Working women

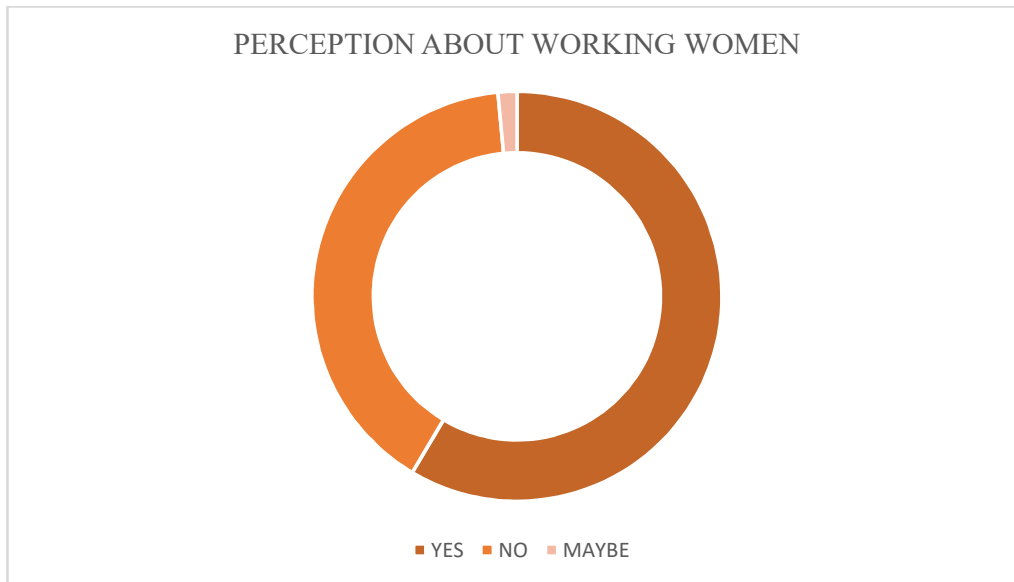


Figure 5. Perception about working women

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 55.2% of the homemakers perceive of working women as being appropriate for cultural maintenance of the society and play an active role in
- 36.7% of the homemakers think that working women are not apt for maintaining the cultural stature of the society and would lead to destruction of family & societal norms.
- 8.1% of the homemakers feel that it rather depends on the behaviour, attitude, 'sanskara' and mindset of women, that they will/can successfully maintain their families or not.

6. Do you feel that you would be normally accepted by your family and the society, if you would follow your aspirations?

YES	NO	MAYBE
30.4%	60.8%	8.8%

Table 6. Impact of aspirations on inclusion in family

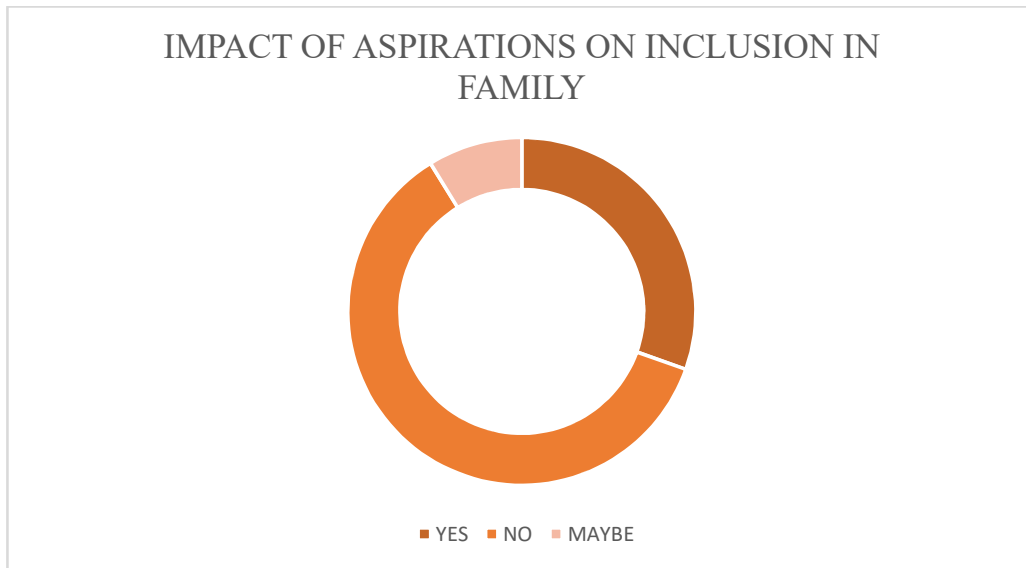


Figure 6. Impact of aspirations on inclusion in the family

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 30.4% of the homemakers think that if they independently follow their aspirations, they will be properly accepted by their respective families and the society in general.
- 60.8% of the homemakers are confident that if they follow their aspirations, they would not be accepted by their respective families and the society in general
- 8.8% of the homemakers are not certain about it, as they have never thought about it.

7. Do you think you could significantly contribute to the society, other than being a “homemaker”?

CONFIDENT	NOT SO CONFIDENT	NEVER THOUGHT OF IT
47.8%	33.5%	18.7%

Table 7. Contribution to the society

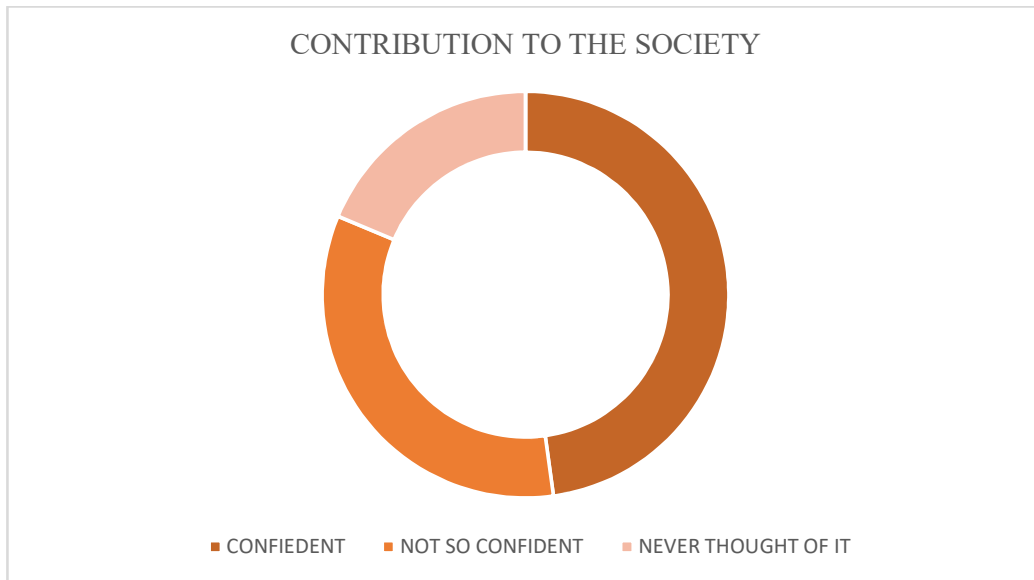


Figure 7. Contribution to the society

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 47.8% of the homemakers are confident that they can contribute to the society apart from handling, managing, nurturing and maintaining their families.
- 33.5% of the homemakers are not so confident about their abilities, aspirations and strength, as a human being, not as a homemaker.
- 18.7% of homemakers mentioned that they never gave a thought to this, thus they cannot answer to this question.

8. Will you let the women of the next generation in your family follow their aspirations freely?

YES	NO	CANNOT SAY
97.8%	1.2%	2%

Table 8. Aspirations of the future generations

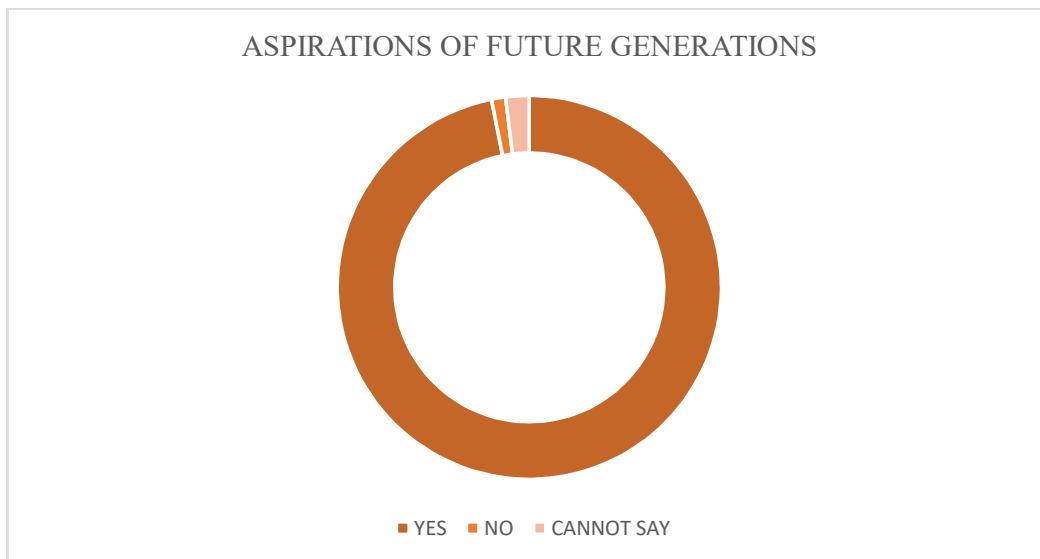


Figure 8. Aspirations of the future generations

With the help of the aforementioned analysis of data, following interpretations can be drawn:

- 97.8% of the homemakers are certain that they will let the females of the coming generations in their families, realise, identify, accept, and follow their aspirations.
- 1.2% of the homemakers feel that women should not be given much freedom or else they bring shame to the family, community and the society.
- 2% of the homemakers could not come to a conclusion, or even if they could, they decided not to answer this question.

Research Analysis

Q. How and what do women who are homemakers aspire of, if at all they do?

Aspirations of homemakers are not easy to study as there is a vast range of possibilities and high degree of diversity contrary to the common misconception, some homemakers actually aspire to be homemakers, even at the cost of their aspirations. Others like to be defined as homemakers but not being confined to this definition. There is an unavoidable pressure that homemakers face, as majority of them do not have the 'space for personal growth' in their respective family structures. As more than 40% of the homemakers feel that they had to give up one or more of their significant aspirations and desires, in order to fulfil the expectations of the family and society, it can be drawn that there is no such consideration and estimation of the independent aspirations of homemakers in the area.

Q. What do men and earning women view the Homemakers with aspirations of their own?

Majority of the working women view the lives of homemakers as easier and more prevalent than their own. There is a sense of respect amongst the man regarding what homemakers do for the families but it gets very rare beyond that. The men in the area are very dismissive of the need of considering the aspirations of homemakers as an important element that could contribute in the society and nation building. Notwithstanding, there are men and working women who are of opinion that everyone should be given equal opportunities at the very least. Working women in the area have struggled and still struggle to maintain their jobs and homemaking simultaneously up to the expectations of the society and in the exact way the family wants. Men are of the opinion that there has been an ample estimation of the needs of women in the area due importance has been given.

Q. What do Homemakers think about them being respected or supported in the society, at the consideration of whether they stand for their aspirations or not?

In the present study, 95% of the homemakers aspire to be supported in their decisions by the family members but unfortunately, 70% of them feel that they do not get as much support as they offer to their family. Their thought process and ideology is not given much space to pullulate, due to said and unsaid pressure, eventually it all gets neglected and ultimately vanished. Generality of the homemakers think that if they would be earning, they would be respected more by their family members and/or they would be given more esteem in the society. The whole research and study brings the topic to an understanding that there is a large scope for improvement and betterment, not just for Homemakers but also for the enhancement of the living standards and quality of the whole society. It is very unfortunate that still there are huge numbers of women who do not accept or pursue their aspirations for the sake of her family's and society's "way of living" and due to the feeling of being alienated.

5. Observations and Findings:

Throughout the period of study and the process of research, several observations could be and have been made, that would contribute to the conclusion of the project. They are as follows:

- The home makers have a lack of confidence in identifying and nurturing their desired the path from family affairs.

- There is a clear-cut distinction between the women who are earning, as working woman and the women who are not homemakers, measured and correlated by/to their roles in the society.
- Some of the homemakers in the area, belonging to a joint family with one or two breadwinners, regret not being one earning member of the family due to financial crunches and some belonging to a nuclear family due to ample availability of time, boredom and loneliness and others due to their desire.
- There is a familiar and highly accepted assumption that girls who independently follow their aspirations go astray and bring shame to the society and does marrying them off at a tender age would not give them a chance to realize much of what they want, ergo, leading to a stable familial and social structure.

6. Suggestions

The following suggestions can be made in order to expect small differences in the near future in a positive direction:

- Educational and motivational drives should be carried out to make women realise their aspirations. Similar kind of drives should also be carried out for the family members as well, to make them understand the role of women as a homemaker and an employed woman.
- On a very personal and subjective level, the younger generation should start opposing this conception of the society according to which earning, and homemaking are posed as opposites.
- Several NGOs (Non-Governmental Organization) should come forward and give the required support and direction to the homemakers who want to connect to similar types of activities and also to them who are not certain about what they want to do but are willing to look beyond the four walls of their homes.
- Government of India should take this area of study as an important component for nation building and the development of the country as women have the potential to become fine human resources.

7. Conclusion

The mere idea that a woman who is earning for herself and her family is said to be a working woman and not a homemaker and worse as one of my interviewees said “home wreckers” juxtaposed with the idea that women working day and night for this their families and eventually helping in the stability of the society in all forms is not addressed as a working

women establishes the basic thinking of the society that earning and home-making cannot and must not ever go hand-in-hand. This common perception or belief leads to a subconscious consensus on homemakers not having apparent independent aspirations. The undermining of the aspirations starts with the erection of basic distinction between the working women and the homemakers and the strict exclusion of earning from the umbrella term of 'home-making'. The portrayal of earning and home making as watertight compartments is one of the most significant reasons of homemakers not being fluent with their aspirations as they seem to be 'against' homemaking.

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