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# Literature Review

Traditionally written history did not consider women to be actively creating history. Problems, unless politicized, remain problems. The issue with the ancient way of writing histories was that women were considered as 'problems' (Kannabiran et al., 1989, p. 25).

With time, contributory histories started accommodating more women. They started from writing about notable women and their achievements to women's participation in mass movements. Even though these histories included women, the cultural and political biases still persisted and women were considered to be contributing, that is, adding to pre-existing history and not as a part of creating history. The only plus point about such contributory histories is that they could account for the different classes of women that came together as a group.

Ke Lalita and Vasantha Kannabiran in their book "We Were Making History: Women in the Telangana Uprising" (1989) make a shift in the way women are addressed in histories. From contributory histories, they move towards a history that "takes women seriously". This history is written with a women's point of view, the values and disciplines shared by them and they are not spoken about but they speak for themselves by sharing their experiences, views and beliefs. New categories, concepts and methodologies need to be created for a shift as such (Kannabiran et al., 1989, p. 26).

Situated knowledge is a state of knowledge production where the individual is actively taking a stand. By "actively taking a stand", Donna Haraway takes into account the lived experiences of an individual, that is, their knowledge produced is situated socially, culturally and historically. (Bjorkman, 2005). The approach of contemporary feminists is that of post-positivists, that is, "social contexts of people's lives are historically situated and constituted through people's activities"[5] (DeVault & Gross, 2012).

When analysing an object, feminist analysis would "de-naturalize" the object, that is, that particular technology is not examined apart from its origins, contexts and/or consequences but the actions and processes invested into making the technology is also considered to be a part of the nature of technology (Bjorkman, 2005).

There are various methodologies in feminist research, one such is the feminist interviewing. Contemporary feminist interviewing does not regard 'women' as the main subject of feminism because of its intersectional nature, that is, since "women" can be spoken about in different contexts like class, race, religion, caste, and more, "women" as such is not a stable subject in feminism. In addition to this,  similar to how "women" is not a stable category, all or any genders are not stable and gender itself is culturally produced (DeVault & Gross, 2012).

The feminist standpoint theories (FST) claim that it is situated knowledge that gives different insights from different groups, groups here could be dominant or marginal, and therefore, women

belonging to different caste, class, race, and religion would have different beliefs and values simply because of their different social locations which leads to differences in production of knowledge since it is socially situated (Hamel & Linabary, 2017).

For feminist research in technology, it is really necessary for feminists to expand the understandings and concepts of technology since technology creates culture of science which in turn is a part of the process of knowledge production. Therefore, technology undergoing gendered analysis brings in new perspectives and ideas about the technology and for this analysis, it is necessary to view technology from all social and cultural aspects.(Bjorkman, 2005)

A study conducted in 2015 answered questions surrounding the digital dating app ecosystem in India. Focusing on a dating app 'TrulyMadly', the author tried to understand the company's perceptions of "appropriate" male and female behavior on their platform. The main concern for the developers of this application was the safety of women, they should be able to form romantic and intimate connections without feeling unsafe. Therefore, the accounts were verified and trust scores displayed on men's profiles. This technology was created to explore and express sexual desires but it remained deeply gendered since as mentioned earlier, the key concern of the application still remained the safety of women (Das, 2019).

Reflexive interviewing is a method in feminist research in which knowledge is produced by experiences, experiences of the research subjects. Every experience recounted by a participant not only involves their social and cultural contexts but also how it is interpreted depends on the researcher's needs and desires from their projects. This makes it necessary for the researcher to be extra careful during interviews, that is, to not let their desires hinder the interview and when the interview takes a new turn, they might as well go along with it to discover something they had not foreseen. The research should be less of an inquiry and more of a conversation where the researcher and the participant act as co-participants, so that the risk of power hierarchies is somewhat tackled through this approach (DeVault & Gross, 2012; Hamel & Linabary, 2017).

While listening to the research subject, the interviewer needs to be wary of how they are interpreting it. They should actively listen to the experiences of the subject and gain knowledge as that would bring them closer to the interviewee. Since women's demands, experiences, views, beliefs have always been ignored, one of the central claims of feminists is to look out for these gaps and absences when women talk (DeVault & Gross, 2012).

In qualitative interviewing, researchers can adapt and change their questions as and when needed, depending on the situation. Feminist researchers conducting qualitative research produce relational knowledge and use mapping as a methodological tool (DeVault & Gross, 2012).

Feminist researchers wish to break down the power hierarchies, be reflexive during the entire process and include research subjects to actively participate and reflect on the research process (Hamel & Linabary, 2017). The different feminist methodologies claim that since knowledge is socially situated, it becomes necessary for us to look at the social locations of the researcher and

participant since the production of knowledge is linked to power and feminist research critically examines the issues of power. (Hamel & Linabary, 2017)

A study conducted in 1968 looked at the institution of mating patterns and explains "variables as a part of the cultural system which help in promotion and sustenance of arranged marriage" (Gupta, 1976). Gupta explains that since a person during their adolescence is not isolated from their family, this individual forms close ties within the family thus receiving care, support, and help from their family members. Due to the constant support, the individual starts becoming emotionally dependent on their family members and consults their family in important decisions like the decision of marriage. Having an extended family involved in your decision making, keeping the circle close thus hierarchies preserved, being emotionally and financially dependent on family, and providing no choice to the individual to make decisions regarding marriage are some reasons why arranged marriages still take place. Migration and media have majorly impacted marriage patterns (Gupta, 1976).

India has a growing number of temporary and circular migrants. Among it's permanent migrants, women make up about 83% of it. A study conducted on socio economic correlates of marriage migration from 1983 to 2008 concluded that marriage migration mostly occurred in households with lower per capita consumption and urban inequality was an important factor in female marriage migration (Rao & Finnoff, 2015).

Another study conducted from 1970 to 2012 examined spouse choice, inter caste marriage, consanguineous marriage, and the length of time spouses knew each other prior to marriage at a national level and analyzed the variations at the regional level, urban-rural residence and on the basis of caste and religion. Their sample included women who married in 1970 or later. They predicted the decline of arranged marriages using two theories, namely, modernization theory and developmental idealism theory. Modernization theory does not view arranged marriage compatible with urban lifestyle and developmental idealism theory predicts the adoption of developmental idealism by urban residents before rural residents but due to the gendered values and popular acceptance of caste endogamy, the chances of developmental idealism being a major factor in marital patterns reduces. This study examined marriage patterns using the above mentioned factors with respect to the demographic divide, that is, on a regional level, and also on the basis of urban-rural lifestyle and religion (Allendorf & Pandian, 2016).

A study conducted using the data from 2005 and 2006 Indian National Family Health Survey and 2004 Socio-Economic Survey used three sets of marriage pairing propensities, namely, contemporary patterns by age, contemporary patterns by age and education, and changing propensities that allow for greater education homogamy and reduced educational asymmetries and projected on future population (year 2050). The authors predicted three trends that would impact marriage patterns in future, namely, female deficit in SRB, declining birth cohort size and female educational expansion. They concluded that men would experience decline in marriage

due to shortage of brides, and women with higher education would experience nonmarriage and that pairing towards educational homogamy and gender symmetry can counteract this rise in non-marriage (Esteve, García-Román, & Kashyap, 2015).

A few studies have also conducted in-depth analysis looking at the changing aspirations of unmarried women who work as call center agents in India, inter-caste marriages in the rural Indian context, exploring marital satisfaction among arranged marriage spouses of Hindu faith and much more (Tara & Ilavarasan, 2011; Dhar, 2013; Bowman & Dollahite, 2014).

Reading these articles on qualitative feminist research and a number of research conduced on Indian marriages, I realized none of these studies took young adults, mainly belonging to the age group of 19-21 year olds, as their research subjects. All of the above mentioned studies conducted national level surveys and the articles which did qualitative analysis did not have teenagers as their research subjects. Therefore, an in-depth analysis on students belonging to the age group of 19-21 year olds is something that has not been conducted so far.

Thus, I have decided to study and understand the different expectations, experiences and perspectives of undergraduate students at a premier engineering institute on the question of roles for men and women in an arranged marriage and what factors they think influence these roles. Analyzing different perspectives of these participants will help us understand what marriage means to them; it also is a projection of what they desire. Through this study, we will understand not only the desires of the participants but also what they think is expected of them by their parents and other family members. This study will seek to answer the following questions :

- How do perceptions and expectations of an ideal, eligible mate vary for women and men in the context of marriage
- How do these perceptions and expectations compare to those of the previous generation, i.e. parents' generation? Do the parents of the participants have the same expectations, or do they vary? If yes, then in what sense?
- Apart from individual perceptions and expectations, what other factors are involved in deciding upon a mate?

The expectations and assumed roles of men and women in an arranged marriage usually gives more authority to men in making decisions about their families and their life, whereas women usually end up taking care of the families and their entire life revolves around the needs and expectations of their husbands (Menon, 2012; Esteve, García-Román, & Kashyap, 2015). I believe these assumptions of gendered roles are very unfair and this study helps us not only understand what Gen Z thinks about these roles and the expectations of their parents and family members, but also if they are willing to continue with these roles.

Once I understand the sentiments around marriage in Gen Z, I plan on analyzing different perspectives and desires of Gen X, that is, of parents. This would help broaden my knowledge about perceptions of arranged marriages in the Indian context and the changing sentiments across generations.

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