

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

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### ABSTRACT

Humans have been functioning based on gender roles since their birth. There is a certain amount of conditioning that has been the major reason behind abiding by it. Learning through modeling too plays a huge role in adapting to gender roles. Every person would've experienced gender roles or seen someone experiencing it. Gender roles inhibit people's freedom of choice and the opportunities that they receive. This study aimed to identify the gender role beliefs of current middle adults and used purposive sampling to identify middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs. The study further focused on identifying factors contributing to middle adults' traditional gender role beliefs and attempted to understand if middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs are willing to change. It helps one understand and reflect upon the current scenario regarding gender roles among middle adults in India. The data was collected with the help of Short Version of Gender Role Beliefs Scale (Kerr and Holden, 2012) and a semi-structured interview developed by the researcher. The sample included middle adults aged between 40 to 59 years. The sampling methods used are convenience sampling and purposive sampling. Percentage analysis and thematic analysis are applied. Majority of the respondents had feminist gender role beliefs while 9 of them had traditional gender role beliefs. The themes that were derived in the study are social conformity, predetermined roles and upbringing, men's approval, and presence of gender roles. The respondents' childhood experiences and their upbringing has played a key role behind the beliefs they hold on gender roles. Middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs were not willing to change, except for one participant who felt that taking up roles are necessary and that sharing between both the genders can be done. Certain responses showed their traditional gender role beliefs were out of concern, such as safety. Most of the responses drew back to the society. Most of the participants see peace and prevention of clashes to be the advantages of gender roles; and inhibition of freedom of choice to be the disadvantage of gender roles. Respondents also share somewhat similar childhood experiences of gender roles.

**Keywords:** *Gender roles, willingness to change, middle adults, freedom of choice, traditional gender role beliefs, childhood.*

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## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender roles as “socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women”. Most of the people, would have or would be experiencing gender roles being imposed on them. One major gender role that has been consistent throughout eons is that, between married couple, man has to provide for the family and woman have to take care of the children and the house. Why are two adults not given the freedom to decide for themselves on how they want to share their loads without assigning a role based on gender is something one has to think about. Gender roles have been traditionally followed since ages in many parts of the world. The reason behind existence of gender roles could have various explanations such as biological, cultural, structural and evolutionary. Women are encouraged and are respected by their families and the society when they leave their jobs to support and take care of their home and children. Men are encouraged and are respected by their families and the society when they earn salaries in big numbers. Boys are asked to man up since they were very young. They are shamed when they cry. Girls from the very young age are expected to serve the guests and help in the kitchen. Gender roles, apart from pressuring, have curbed the opportunities and have limited people from realizing their potential. Though there is progress towards addressing gender roles, one cannot deny its existence in the current age and time.

Middle adults, have been brought up in a society where gender roles were considered right. They might be expecting the same from the current generation, while the current generation expects equality and a gender-role free society. The current middle adults would have experienced gender roles as well as seen the fight against it.

Willingness to change is the readiness to amend which requires understanding, empathizing, recognizing and accepting. It is a measure of the cognitive and emotional buy-in to the change. While it is difficult to change, understanding the disadvantages and difficulties that an existing concept puts a person through could help in bring the change. To be willing to change, one has to thoroughly understand the problems in the current situation or in the concept, empathize with oneself or others, recognize and accept that a change is necessary.

We cannot deny the fact that certain gender roles have contributed to smoothly functioning families. There is absolutely no harm for a woman to be a housewife and a man to take up complete financial responsibility. However, what lacks in this concept, gender roles, is the FREEDOM OF CHOICE. People are expected to choose, behave and live in certain previously formed set of rules and are accepted, appreciated only if they follow it.

Researches have been conducted to find out the presence or degree of gender roles, its origin, influence and gender role attitudes (Mallika Das, 2010). The present study not only focuses on finding gender role beliefs among current middle adults but also strives to know if middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs are willing to change and also explores their reasons/stories behind it.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Research question*

Gender role beliefs among middle adults and if middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs willing to change.

#### *Objectives*

The objectives of the study are,

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

1. To find out the gender role beliefs among middle adults.
2. To identify the factors contributing to middle adults' traditional gender role beliefs.
3. To find out if middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs are willing to change.

### *Tools used*

- Short Version of Gender Role Beliefs Scale (Kerr and Holden, 2012)
- Semi-structured interview

### *Scoring*

The 10-item GRBS maintains the scoring system of the original scale - with responses measured on a 7-point scale where 1 equals "strongly agree," 4 equals "undecided," and 7 equals "strongly disagree." Thus, possible scores range from 10 to 70, with higher scores indicating more feminist gender role beliefs and lower scores indicating more traditional gender role beliefs.

### *Sampling*

Convenience sampling and purposive sampling methods were used for the present study. The sample to study gender role beliefs consists of middle adults aged between 40 to 59 years. The same sample was used to study the willingness to change, in which purposive sampling was applied to pick only those with traditional gender role beliefs. The samples were not given any monetary compensation. The data was collected with the consent of the samples.

### *Research Design*

Qualitative research design was used for this study. Data was collected with the help of a scale and a semi structured interview. The scale that was used to assess the gender role beliefs of middle adult is: the short version of the Gender Role Beliefs Scale developed by Michael J. Brown and Nancy Gladstone. The collected data through the scale and the semi structured interview was analyzed using percentage analysis and thematic analysis respectively.

### *Statistics*

The data collected was analyzed using percentage analysis and thematic analysis.

- Percentage analysis was used to analyze gender role beliefs among middle adults.
- Thematic analysis was used to analyze the willingness to change among middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs and the root cause of those beliefs.

## **RESULTS**

Distribution of respondents based on gender role beliefs among middle adults.

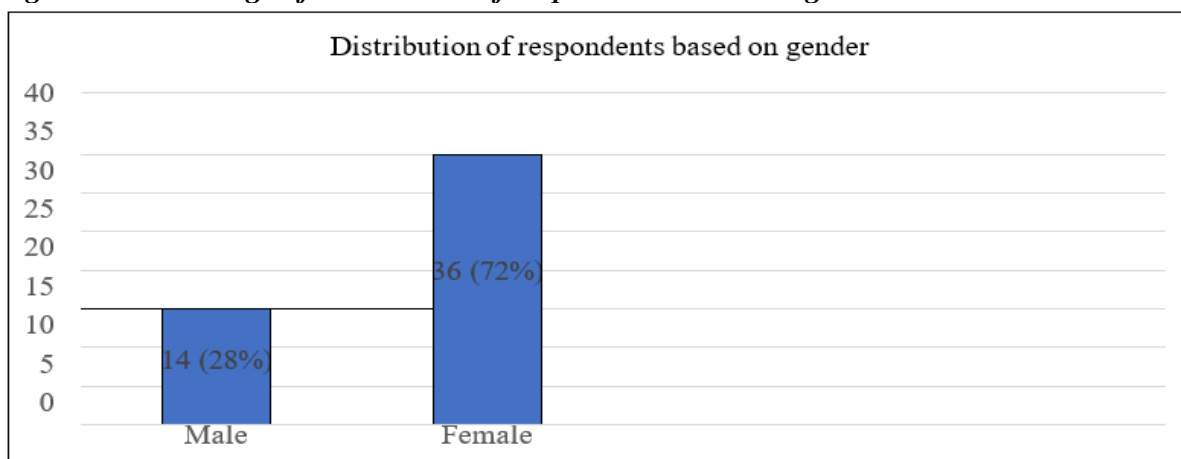
*Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on gender*

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Male	14	28%
Female	36	72%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents based on gender. 72% of the respondents were female and 28% of the respondents were male. Since the distribution of males and females are not equal, comparisons based on gender will not be done for the present study.

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

**Figure 1: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on gender.**



**Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on educational qualification**

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Schooling	8	16%
Under Graduation	29	58%
Post-Graduation	12	24%
Doctorate	1	2%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 2: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on educational qualification.**

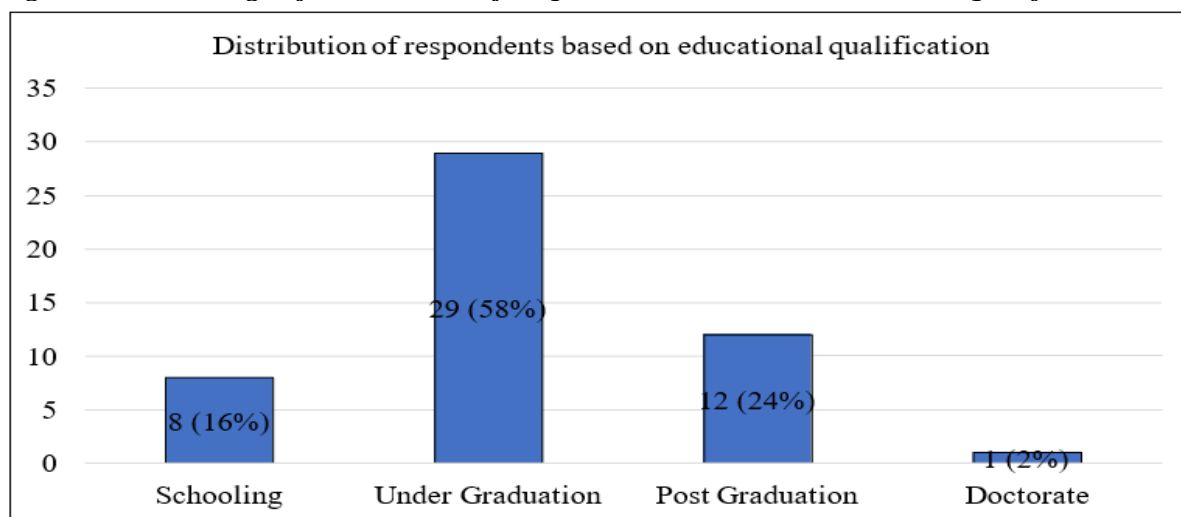


Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents based on educational qualification. 58% of the respondents have completed Under Graduation, 12% of them have completed Post Graduation, 16% of them have completed schooling and 1% of the them have completed doctorate.

**Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on family type**

FAMILY TYPE	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Nuclear	35	70%
Joint	15	30%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 3: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on family type

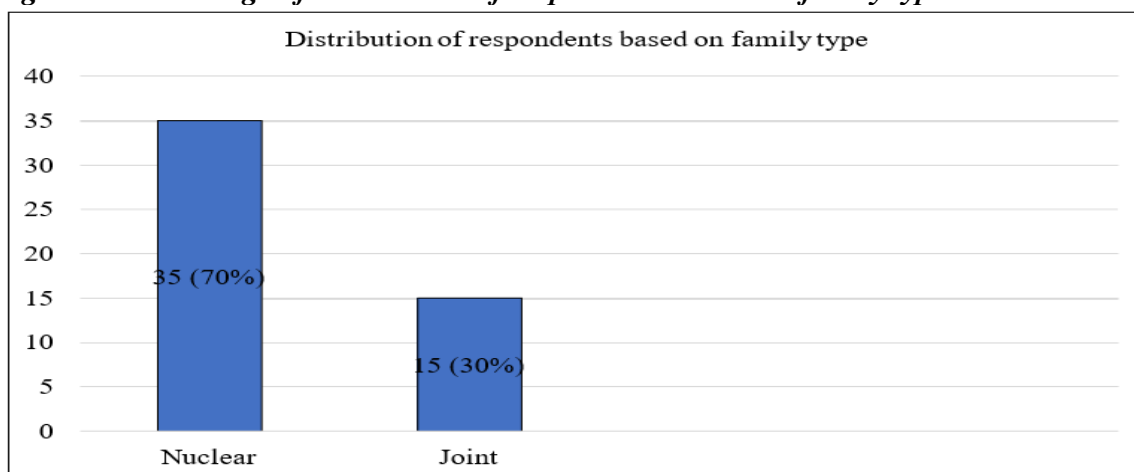
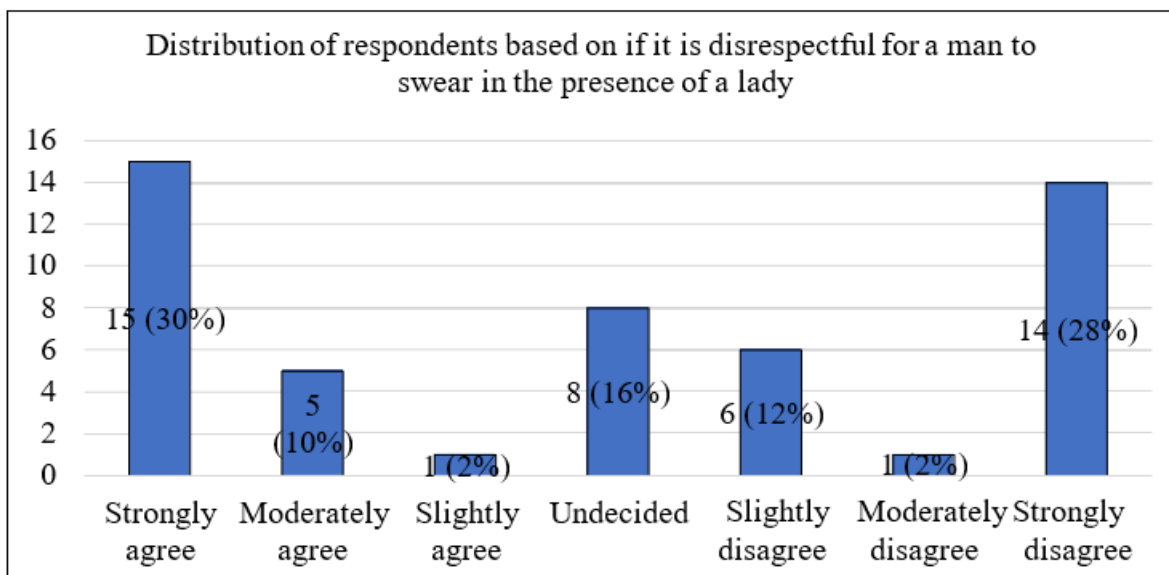


Table 3 from the results shows the distribution of respondents based on family type. 70% of the respondents belong to nuclear family and 30% of the respondents belong to joint family.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on if it is disrespectful for a man to swear in the presence of a lady:

S1 It is disrespectful for a man to swear in the presence of a lady.	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Strongly agree	15	30%
Moderately agree	5	10%
Slightly agree	1	2%
Undecided	8	16%
Slightly disagree	6	12%
Moderately disagree	1	2%
Strongly disagree	14	28%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

Figure 4: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if it is disrespectful for a man to swear in the presence of a lady.



## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

Table 4 from the results shows the distribution of respondents based on if it is disrespectful for a man to swear in the presence of a lady. 28% of the respondents strongly disagree that it is disrespectful for a man to swear in the presence of a lady, 16% of the respondents have not decided on this, 12% of the participants slightly disagree, 10% of the participants moderately disagree, 2% of the respondents slightly agree and 2% of the participants moderately disagree.

Majority of the participants (30%) strongly agree that it is disrespectful for a man to swear in the presence of a lady. It could be because of the way they were brought up, what they hear from others, their personal choice, etc.

**Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on if the initiative in courtship should usually come from the man:**

<b>S2 The initiative in courtship should usually come from the man.</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Strongly agree	9	18%
Moderately agree	4	8%
Slightly agree	4	8%
Undecided	11	22%
Slightly disagree	6	12%
Moderately disagree	7	14%
Strongly disagree	9	18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 5: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if the initiative in courtship should usually come from the man.**

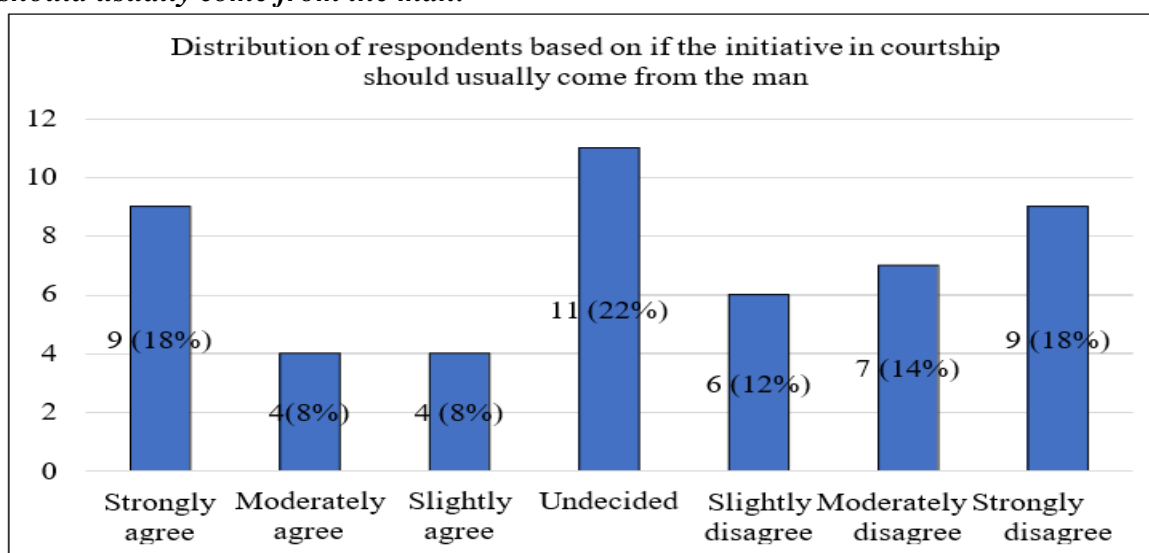


Table 5 from the results shows the distribution of respondents based on if the initiative in courtship should usually come from the man. 18% of the respondents strongly agree that the initiative in courtship should usually come from the man. 18% of them strongly disagree, 14% of them moderately disagree, 12% of them strongly disagree, 8% of the participants moderately and 8% of them slightly agree. 22% of the participants have not decided on if the initiative in courtship should usually come from the man. This could be because of seeing

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

men around them taking initiative in courtship, not seeing any problem with the way it is, or not having thought much about this.

**Table 6: Distribution of respondents based on if women should have as much sexual freedom as men**

<b>S3 Women should have as much sexual freedom as men.</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Strongly agree	22	44%
Moderately agree	11	22%
Slightly agree	4	8%
Undecided	4	8%
Slightly disagree	4	8%
Moderately disagree	1	2%
Strongly disagree	4	8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 6: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if women should have as much sexual freedom as men.**

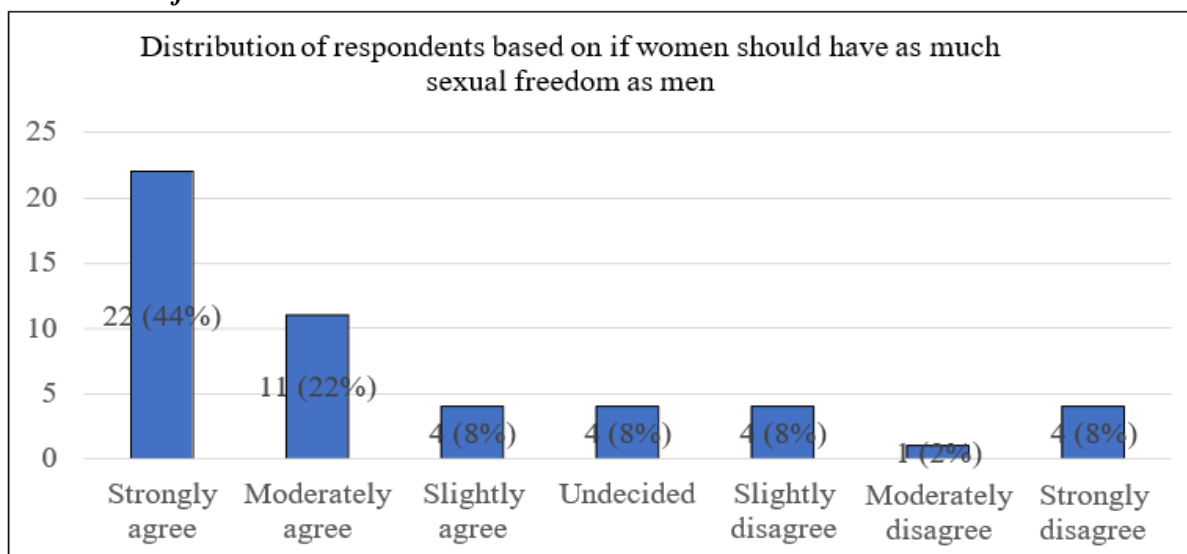


Table 6 from the results shows the distribution of respondents based on if women should have as much sexual freedom as men. 22% of the participants moderately agree that women should have as much sexual freedom as men. 8% of them slightly agree, 8% of them have not decided, 8% of them slightly disagree, 8% of them strongly disagree and 2% of them moderately disagree.

Majority of the participants (44%) strongly agree that women should have as much sexual freedom as men. This could be because of acknowledging that both the genders have their freedom of choice.

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

**Table 7: Distribution of respondents based on if women with children should not work outside the home if they don't have to financially:**

<b>S4 Women with children should not work outside the home if they don't have to financially.</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Strongly agree	5	10%
Moderately agree	2	4%
Slightly agree	2	4%
Undecided	5	10%
Slightly disagree	2	4%
Moderately disagree	5	10%
Strongly disagree	29	58%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 7: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if women with children should not work outside the home if they don't have to financially.**

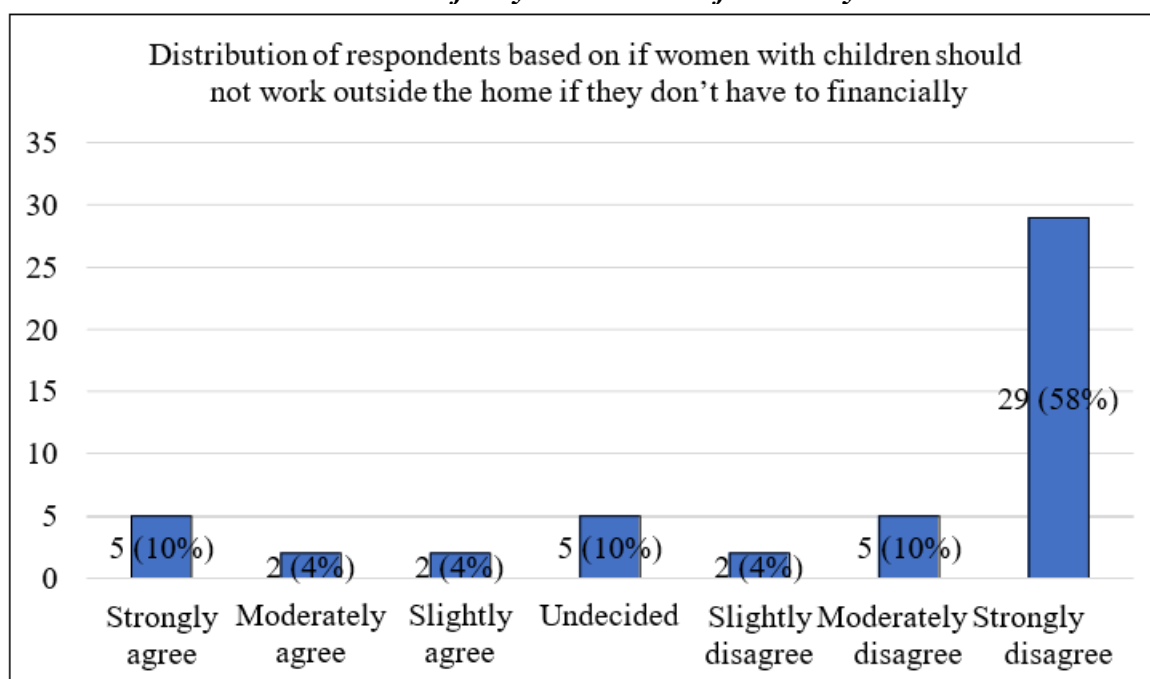


Table 7 from the results shows the distribution of participants based on if women with children should not work outside the home if they don't have to financially. 10% of the participants strongly agree that women with children should not work outside the home if they don't have to financially. 10% of the participants have not decided, 10% of the participants moderately disagree, 4% of the participants moderately agree, 4% of the participants slightly agree, 4% of the participants slightly disagree.

Majority of the participants (58%) strongly disagree that women with children should not work outside the home if they don't have to financially. This could be because of their belief system, not seeing anything wrong with women working even if they don't have to financially, or acknowledging an individual's need for their own identity.



**Table 8: Distribution of respondents based on if husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family:**

<b>S5 The husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family group in all matters of law.</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	7	14%
Moderately agree	4	8%
Slightly agree	3	6%
Undecided	3	6%
Slightly disagree	7	14%
Moderately disagree	6	12%
Strongly disagree	20	40%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 8: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family.**

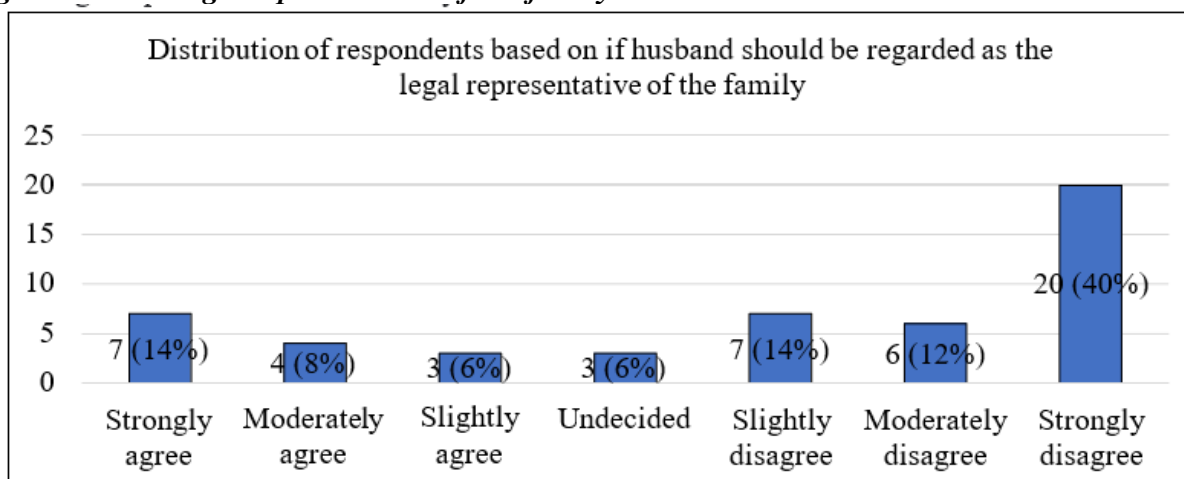


Table 8 from the results shows the distribution of participants based on if husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family. 14% of the participants strongly agree that the husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family group in all matters of law. 14% of them slightly disagree, 12% of them moderately disagree, 8% of them moderately agree, 6% of them slightly agree and 6% of them have not decided.

Majority of the participants (40%) strongly disagree that the husband should be regarded as the legal representative of the family group in all matters of law. This could be because of acknowledging that both genders are equal and capable of the role, not looking at it as a role where a person is eligible to be a legal representative just based on gender, etc.

**Table 9: Distribution of respondents based on if a man should never allow a woman to pay except perhaps in very special circumstances:**

<b>S6 Except perhaps in very special circumstances, a man should never allow a woman to pay the taxi, buy the tickets, or pay the check.</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Strongly agree	7	14%
Moderately agree	2	4%
Slightly agree	4	8%
Undecided	3	6%

### Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

Slightly disagree	3	6%
Moderately disagree	8	16%
Strongly disagree	23	46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 9: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if a man should never allow a woman to pay except perhaps in very special circumstances.**

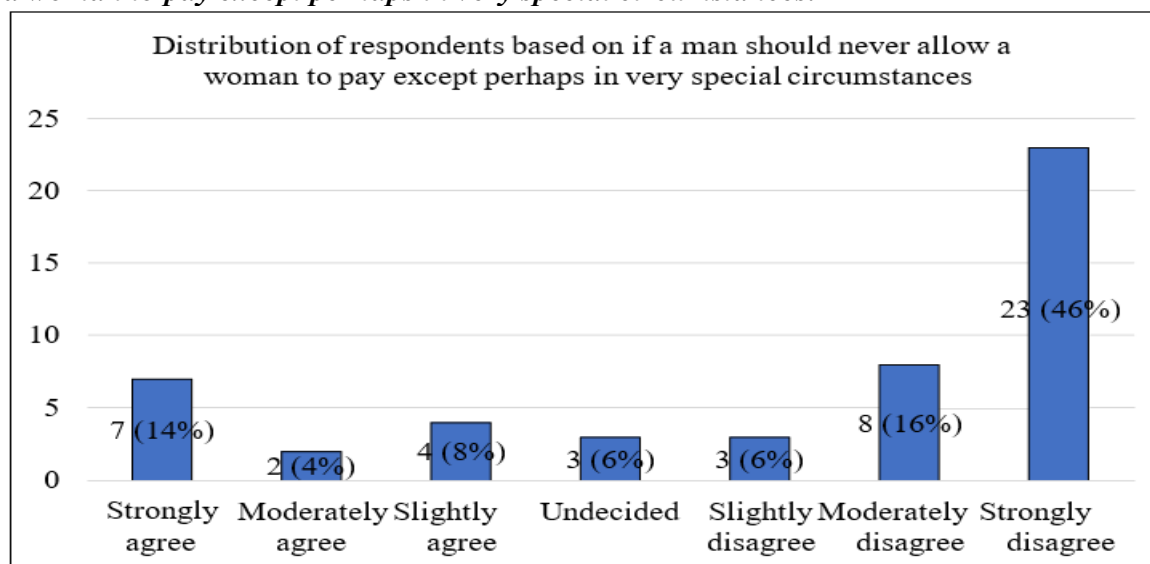


Table 9 from the results shows the distribution of participants based on if a man should never allow a woman to pay except perhaps in very special circumstances. 16% of the participants moderately disagree that a man should never allow a woman to pay the taxi, buy the tickets, or pay the check, except perhaps in very special circumstances. 14% of the participants strongly agree, 8% of them slightly agree, 6% of them have not decided, 6% of them slightly disagree and 4% of them moderately agree.

Majority of the participants (46%) strongly disagree that a man should never allow a woman to pay the taxi, buy the tickets, or pay the check, except perhaps in very special circumstances. This could be because of them being open to the idea that anyone can pay irrespective of gender.

**Table 10: Distribution of respondents based on if men should continue to show courtesies to women:**

<b>S7 Men should continue to show courtesies to women such as holding open the door or helping them on with their coats.</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Strongly agree	10	20%
Moderately agree	9	18%
Slightly agree	3	6%
Undecided	4	8%
Slightly disagree	4	8%
Moderately disagree	7	14%
Strongly disagree	13	26%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

**Figure 10: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if men should continue to show courtesies to women.**

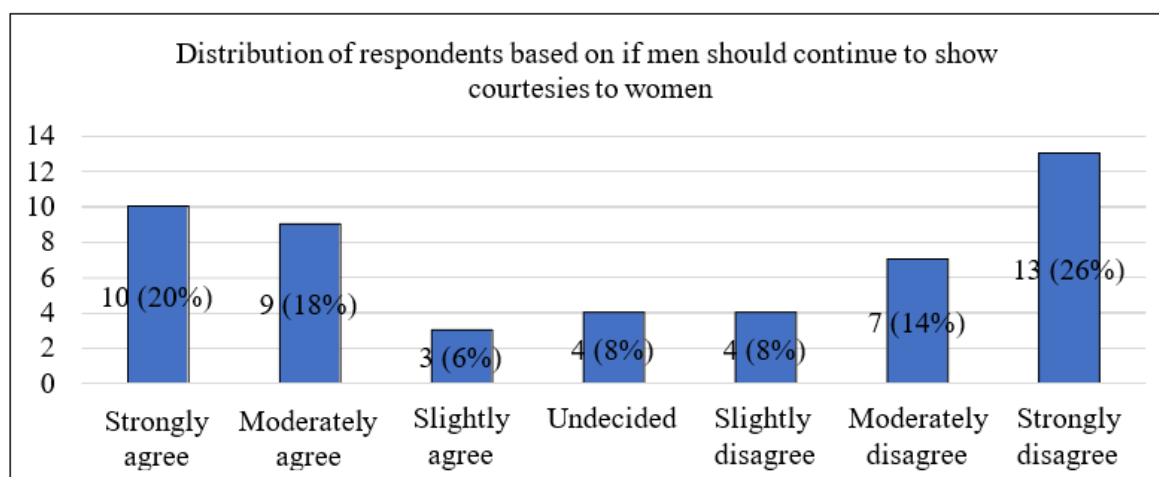


Table 10 from the results shows the distribution of participants based on if men should continue to show courtesies to women. 20% of the participants strongly agree that men should continue to show courtesies to women such as holding open the door or helping them on with their coats. 18% of the participants moderately agree, 14% of them moderately disagree, 8% of them have not decided, 8% of them slightly disagree and 6% of them slightly agree.

Majority of the participants (26%) strongly disagree that men should continue to show courtesies to women such as holding open the door or helping them on with their coats. This could be because of considering it a pressure for men to abide to, considering women to be able to help themselves, looking it as an etiquette rather than a compulsory act, etc.

**Table 11: Distribution of respondents based on if it is ridiculous for a woman to run a train and a man to sew clothes:**

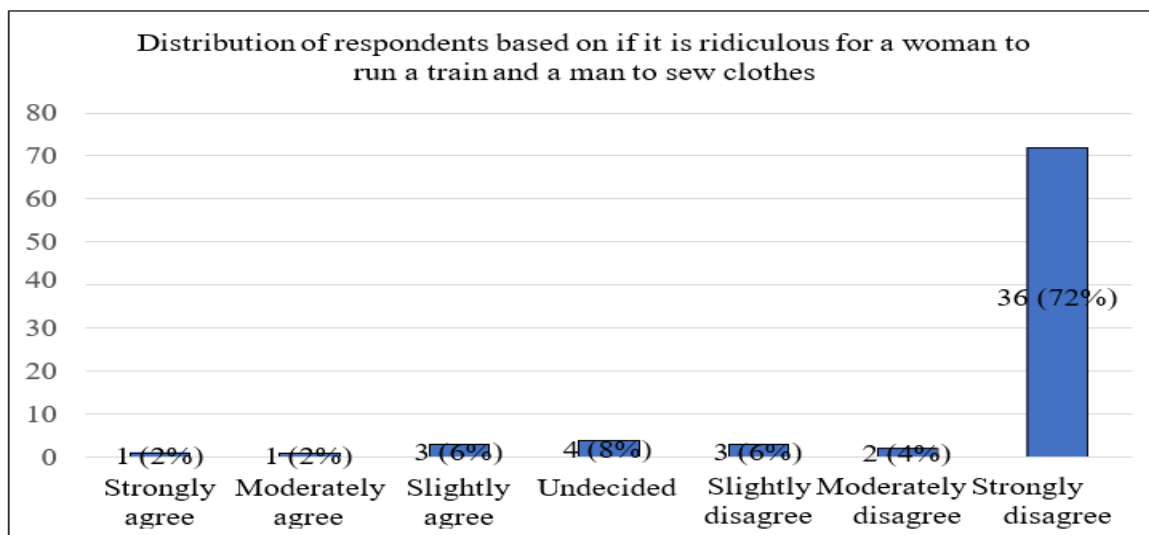
S8 It is ridiculous for a woman to run a train and a man to sew clothes.	NO. OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
Strongly agree	1	2%
Moderately agree	1	2%
Slightly agree	3	6%
Undecided	4	8%
Slightly disagree	3	6%
Moderately disagree	2	4%
Strongly disagree	72	72%
TOTAL	50	100%

Table 11 from the results shows the distribution of participants based on if it is ridiculous for a woman to run a train and a man to sew clothes. 8% of the participants have not decided if it is ridiculous for a woman to run a train and a man to sew clothes. 6% of the participants slightly agree, 6% of them slightly disagree, 4% of them moderately disagree and 2% of them strongly agree.

Majority of the participants (72%) strongly disagree that it is ridiculous for a woman to run a train and a man to sew clothes. This could be because of the respondents' way of looking at jobs, where it is not classified based on genders.

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

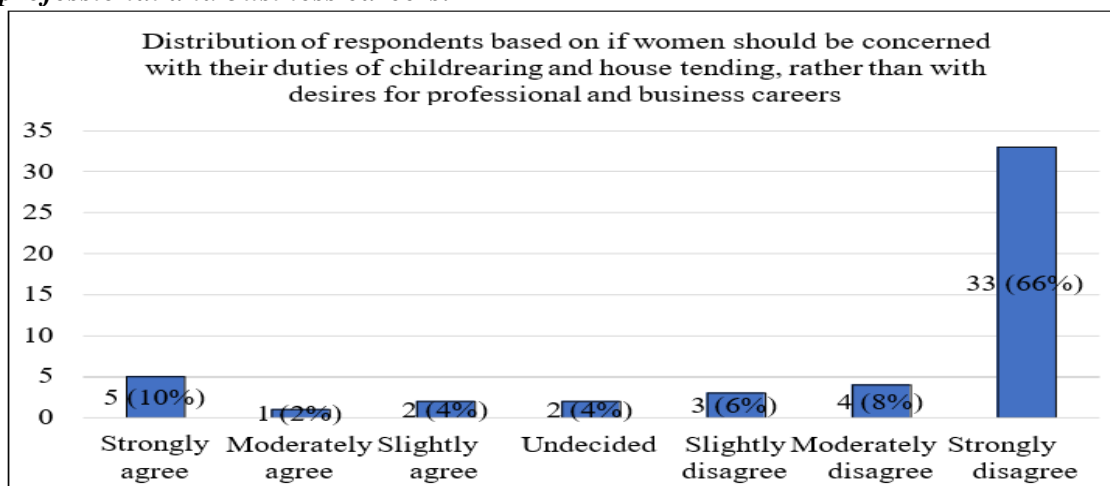
**Figure 11: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if it is ridiculous for a woman to run a train and a man to sew clothes.**



**Table 12: Distribution of respondents based on if women should be concerned with their duties of childrearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers.**

S9 Women should be concerned with their duties of childrearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers.	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Strongly agree	5	10%
Moderately agree	1	2%
Slightly agree	2	4%
Undecided	2	4%
Slightly disagree	3	6%
Moderately disagree	4	8%
Strongly disagree	33	66%
TOTAL	50	100%

**Figure 12: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if women should be concerned with their duties of childrearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers.**



## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

Table 12 from the results shows the distribution of participants based on if women should be concerned with their duties of childrearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers. 10% of the participants strongly agree that women should be concerned with their duties of childrearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers. 8% of the participants moderately disagree, 6% of the participants slightly disagree, 4% of the participants slightly agree, 4% of the participants have not decided and 2% of the participants moderately agree.

Majority of the participants (66%) strongly disagree that women should be concerned with their duties of childrearing and house tending, rather than with desires for professional and business careers. This could be because of acknowledging that both the genders have equal rights to choose if they want to have a career, and acknowledging that it could limit a person's potential and freedom of choice.

**Table 13: Distribution of respondents based on if swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.**

<b>S10 Swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONDENTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Strongly agree	4	8%
Moderately agree	4	8%
Slightly agree	5	10%
Undecided	11	22%
Slightly disagree	3	6%
Moderately disagree	6	12%
Strongly disagree	17	34%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 13: Percentage of distribution of respondents based on if swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man.**

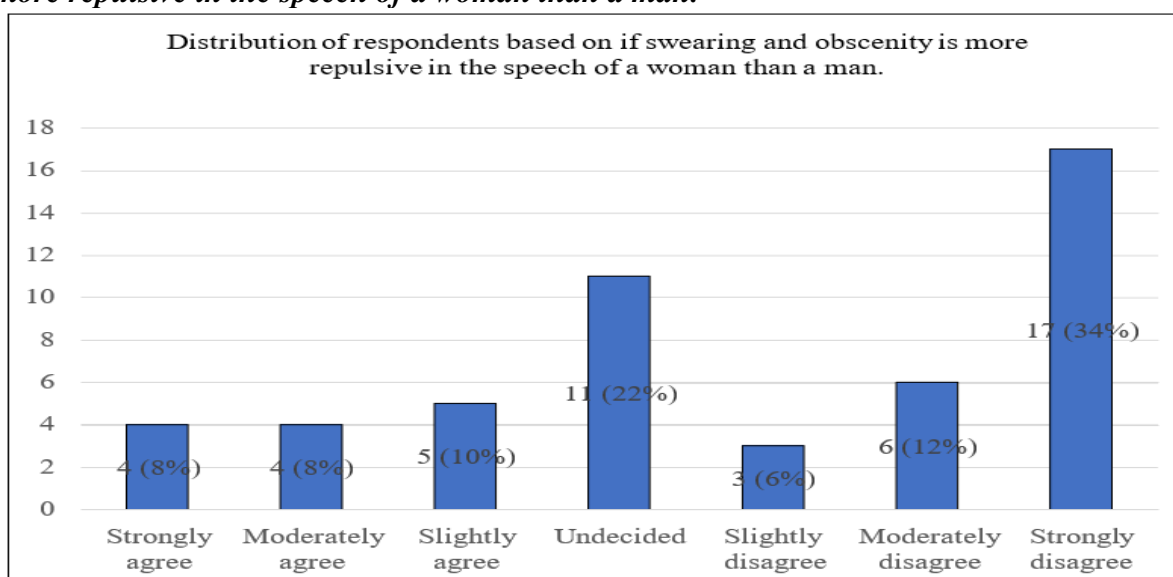


Table 13 from the results shows the distribution of participants based on if swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man. 22% of the participants have not decided if swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

man. 12% of the participants moderately disagree, 10% of them slightly agree, 8% of the participants strongly agree, 8% of them moderately agree, and 6% of them slightly disagree. Majority of the participants (34%) strongly disagree that swearing and obscenity is more repulsive in the speech of a woman than a man. This could be because of them not looking at the act of swearing and obscenity based on gender.

7 participants were interviewed for the second part of the study after applying purposive sampling. Out of the seven participants who had traditional gender role beliefs, 4 participants were female and 3 participants were male.

Below are the results after using thematic analysis on the responses on willingness to change. Four themes were derived from the responses of the participants.

### ***Theme 1: Social conformity***

This theme captures participants' thoughts on certain aspects such as if men can cry, dressing and society. Although the responses portray inhibition of freedom of choice, some participants have their reasons which points out to society. Social conformity is the process in which people's thoughts and behaviors are affected by those of other people in their societies.

While some respondents feel that men can cry and should express their emotions, others are against it with certain exceptions. One respondent wondered why men would cry.

When it comes to dressing, the respondents had various responses which related dressing to society.

The respondents are not for men wearing women's clothing. Some of them are fine with women wearing men's clothing while others are not. Some respondents spoke about if society would accept and how the society would name men if they wore women's clothing. Indian tradition was related to dressing by a couple of respondents.

Some responses show the importance that respondents place on society's approval.

### ***Theme 2: Predetermined roles and upbringing***

This theme captures the respondents' beliefs on certain roles for each gender. It also explores respondents' childhood experiences.

Some respondents believe that men and women have separate roles. They feel men have to take care of the family and earn while women should take care of the children and home. One respondent believes that god has designed women to be in kitchen and men to earn for family.

### ***Theme 3: Men's approval***

This theme captures responses that shows respondent's point of view where they mention about men's approval. It shows how approval of men is considered important.

### ***Theme 4: Presence of gender roles***

This theme captures what respondents think about the presence of gender roles, if they are willing to change and the barriers that's stopping them from changing (if they are not willing to change). Some respondents spoke on how roles need to be present for clashes to not occur and for the sake of peace. Gender roles have also been related to achievements.

Some respondents feel that not having gender roles could give freedom, comfort and that there will not be any limits.

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

When asked if they were willing to change and about the barriers stopping them from changing, the respondents' answers varied from not being interested in changing to finding gender roles right.

One respondent felt that roles are important and that sharing should be done if both partners are working.

### **DISCUSSION**

This study aimed to know middle adults' gender role beliefs and if middle adults with traditional gender role beliefs are willing to change.

The respondents were not willing to change from their traditional gender role beliefs since they were comfortable with the existing gender roles, find gender roles to be right, and were not interested to change. The 4 themes that were derived are: Social conformity, predetermined roles and upbringing, men's approval and presence of gender roles. The themes in this paper were derived based on the content of the responses and not based on the questions used in the semi-structured interview. Each theme will be discussed below.

Since ages, it has mostly been an unsaid norm that men shouldn't cry. This has in fact been inculcated in the minds of young boys throughout their childhood, leading them to face difficulty in expressing emotions, which acts as a disadvantage for both men and women. Men are expected to cry only when there is intense grief or during an unmanageable situation. They are sometimes expected to cry within themselves. If in case they show their emotions when they are sad, they are seen as weak, not manly and are compared to women.

Dressing is taken care by parents for their children. When the children grow up into adults, they are let to choose what they want to wear, but within a certain category. They are given the freedom to choose their clothing, but as long as it is respectable and doesn't irritate others. Then the freedom that people claim to give their grown up children to choose their clothing becomes questionable. There is also a fear among respondents that society hasn't changed and that the society might judge or be a threat. When it comes to clothing of men and women, there is acceptance to an extent for women wearing men's clothing and unacceptance when it is vice-versa. People are expected to dress according to Indian tradition. There is an exemption for men wearing women's clothing only when it comes to a drama or for acting.

According to gender schema theory, the culture also plays a role in gender development, providing the reference for the formation of gender schemata. Not only are children ready to encode and organize information about gender, but they do so in a social environment that defines maleness and femaleness (Bem, 1985).

There is also a belief that men will be compared to trans genders if they prefer women's clothing. Women wearing men's clothing is accepted as long as it is decent and fully covered. The respondents' responses also show the importance placed on society and how big a role it plays in people's decisions.

Most of the human behaviors and beliefs are based on what we've learnt since childhood and observed in that process. And that also explains our beliefs about gender roles. Some of us unlearn and relearn in the process and some of us might not.

## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

Children experience many sources of modeling and reinforcement, and these sources influence the development of gender-related behaviors (Beal, 1994). When their children are infants, parents interact differently with their sons and daughters. For example, children accept and show equal enthusiasm for toys typically considered girls' and boys' toys (Idle, Wood, & Desmarais, 1993), but parents use some gender-typical preferences in selecting activities and toys for their children. Social learning theory hypothesizes that these forces affect gender-related thinking, and children come to develop gender knowledge and gender standards for their own behavior.

There are predetermined roles in our society based on gender. The predetermined roles for men according to the respondents include earning, taking care of family and being good to the family. A man is also expected to not be a burden and take care of others who are dependent on him. Women are considered as having bigger role in raising children and are questioned about the upbringing of the children in Indian society. Those who believe in sharing all the works do not buy the idea of a women working and a man staying at home. These strong beliefs of predetermined roles and considering it right is rooted from the way people have been brought up and what they have observed around them. The father was seen going to job, lifting weights, and taking care of outside works while the mother was seen taking care of the children, cooking food and taking care of the household chores. People consider what they've seen while growing to be as right. A very few questions it.

According to social learning model, learning is produced by observation rather than by directly experiencing reinforcement or punishment (Mischel, 1993). Observation provides many opportunities for learning, including the learning of gender-related behaviors among children. The social environment provides children with examples of male and female models who perform different behaviors, including gender-related ones.

Any adult should not necessarily be seen as someone who require permission to choose for themselves on what they would want to do. Women staying out late at night is seen as something that no men would like. Women staying out till 10 pm is considered unacceptable. An unexpected point of view was revealed in the study, which is, women are considered to be under men's control. Women are expected to act and behave according to men in order for no problem to occur. If a woman chooses against a man, she is going to face problems continuously. When it comes to dressing, one respondent felt that since men do not like certain kinds of dressing for

women, they ask women to not use it; and if women wear in spite of men's disliking, it is not considered a good act. One respondent mentions freedom being given to women for doing like men and making similar choices, and further questions why women don't wear fully covered clothes like men. This again draws back to the freedom with limitations.

The questions in the semi structured interview would have made the respondents think and process about various gender roles that exists in the society, what they believe in, what they do not believe in, their life stories that could've contributed to their beliefs, the advantages, the disadvantages and good outcomes of changing from traditional gender role beliefs.

Gender roles are seen to be a necessary concept as the roles could prevent clashes and would promote peace and achievements in a family. Some find it to be limiting freedom of choice and comfort.



## Gender Role Beliefs and Willingness to Change Among Middle Adults

The respondents were not willing to change from their traditional gender role beliefs, except for one respondent who felt that roles are necessary and that sharing between the both genders can be done. Some respondents consider gender roles a must for peaceful life. Comfortableness with the existing gender roles in society and simply being uninterested to change are the barriers that are observed among the participants in the present study.

### CONCLUSION

- Majority of the respondents had feminist gender role beliefs and only 9 of them had traditional gender role beliefs.
- The themes that were derived in the study are social conformity, predetermined roles and upbringing, men's approval, and presence of gender roles.
- The respondents' childhood experiences and their upbringing has played a key role behind the beliefs that they hold on gender roles.
- Middle adults with traditional gender roles were not willing to change, except for one participant who felt that roles are necessary and that sharing between the both genders can be done.
- An unexpected point of view was revealed in the study, which is, women are considered to be under men's control and that women are expected to act and behave according to men in order for no problem to occur.

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The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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